



Comments on the George Snyder Trail Public Hearing

October 13, 2020

October 21, 2020

Mayor and members of the City Council,

If we are not mistaken, the most recent iteration of the route has been nudged a bit farther from the streams and from their associated floodplains. We thank the planners for this adjustment.

Based on comments and questions heard at the public hearing, a few informational observations:

- Dead and dying trees are to be expected in any forest population, just as aging and passing are part of any human population. Moreover, where they pose no danger to human infrastructure, dead trees continue to be a contributing part of the forest, providing habitat, food, and nutrients as they decay and eventually enrich the soil.
- Rain falling in forested areas to a great extent percolates into the soil, recharging the aquifers that feed perennial flow in streams. It is the runoff from paved surfaces down storm drains discharging into streams that is the greatest cause of stream erosion and sedimentation. Engineered stormwater controls cannot hope to truly replicate the benefits of natural percolation.

The proposed costs of the trail seem to be 10 to 20 times higher than standard per-mile trail cost estimates. We urge the City to consider if this disproportionate cost is the wisest use of the grant funds. The grant making authority would surely be receptive to a proposal to more effectively apply the funding for greater benefit toward the overall goal of improved non-motorized travel.

The Friends of Accotink Creek have advocated for an on-street route along Ranger Road in lieu of new paved surfaces in the wooded corridor. Seeing that this very route is included as a "Neighborway" in the draft [Bicycle Transportation Plan](#) for completion within seven years only and impetus to the merits of this low-cost, low-impact alternative.

Sincerely,

Friends of Accotink Creek :

"Of all the paths you take in life, make sure some of them are dirt." - John Muir

Friends of Accotink Creek

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