



Comments of the Friends of Accotink Creek on the Braddock Road Project Public Meeting January 13, 2021

"Begin with the premise that the automobile must accommodate the earth, rather than vice versa."

It's a bit disappointing to hear a presentation discuss this much new asphalt without mention of stormwater controls or tree canopy loss. No stormwater features were shown on slides. There was no mention of the environment or trees until asked by one or two members of the public. Even then, the response to a question about stormwater and climate change brought the response that those are the "sort of details we've not gotten into yet".

Danbury Forest Drive Intersection:

- We applaud the innovative "R turn" solutions of the Base Option at Danbury Forest Drive that avoid incursion into the wetland areas along Long Branch.
- The area proposed for the Danbury Forest Drive realignment of Option 1 is entirely stream floodplain and forested wetlands crossing over Long Branch, a tributary of Accotink Creek. Paving this area and relocating Long Branch for the convenience of cars will not help Fairfax County or Virginia meet our obligations for stormwater control enhancements to preserve the health of our waterways and the Chesapeake Bay. Nor will trading forest for asphalt contribute to achieving any of our vital climate change goals.
- Lake Accotink, just downstream from Braddock Road, requires urgent dredging at a cost to taxpayers of some \$50 million. This dredging is necessitated by excessive stormwater runoff from paved surfaces. Adding pavement to wetlands and stream valleys will not improve this situation.
- Long Branch is already a designated impaired stream subject to a [TMDL plan](#) (along with Accotink Creek). It is also the subject of the [Long Branch Central Watershed Management Area Project](#) for extensive stream health restoration work to address this stormwater runoff. The Braddock Road project must be done in coordination with the restoration plan to avoid creating greater stream impairment. Merely observing environmental legal minimums is no longer acceptable.
- People are overly skeptical of the unfamiliar, but will soon become accustomed and see the advantages. Stick to your guns regarding the Danbury Forest Drive improvements of the Base Option. The old-fashioned square intersection of Option 1 offers no advantage, either for travelers or for the environment. Let's go forward with the innovative solution of the Base Option.

Burke Lake Road Pedestrian Bridge - Let's make the pedestrian bridge at Burke Lake Road an esthetic gem that will attract admiration and photography, rather than a utilitarian eyesore.

Multimodal - The automobile still rules. This and other road projects are labeled "multimodal", but there are no transit lanes, nor integrated planning for transit. The designation "multimodal" too often equals road widening plus even more asphalt for bikes. That is the case here. In response to a citizen question about sound levels, a staff member indicated no sound study was required because no lanes are to be added. Yet two 10 foot wide asphalt paths plus attendant tree clearing are equivalent to adding 1.5 traffic lanes.

Existing bicycle trail - What happens to the old trail when new shared use paths are installed - abandonment in place or environmental restoration? Of course, we could spare trees by simply refurbishing the existing trail and foregoing the new shared use paths.

Stormwater –

- This project provides the opportunity for incorporating stormwater retrofits to control runoff from existing pavement. Accept no excuses for foregoing this rare opportunity to correct past oversights.
- Rather than sacrifice additional forested habitat for stormwater ponds, incorporate advanced stormwater controls within the roadway itself, and widen the concept of the corridor to find opportunities for enhanced stormwater controls outside the right of way, such as installing nearby green roofs, bioswales, and pervious paving.
- Again, please coordinate fully with the [Long Branch Central Watershed Management Area Project](#) to achieve synergy and savings to accomplish mutual goals.

No net loss of tree cover or habitat should be caused by the project. Equivalent replanting should occur in closely adjacent areas.

The project corridor is thick with invasive alien plant species. Long-term invasive plant control should be instituted on whatever vegetated areas remain along the right of way.

Planting shade trees of suitable native species along any shared use paths will improve user comfort and also somewhat reduce the heat island effect of increased asphalt pavement.

A citizen raised the question of snow clearing on the pedestrian bridge and was offered only “melting”. Solutions should be found to avoid the bridge and shared use paths becoming the usual winter obstacle courses shown in this [video](#) .

Again, the Base Option at Danbury Forest Drive is the best for both travelers and for achieving the environmental goals of Fairfax County and Virginia.

“Dominion over nature is a gift which has been given us yoked to the trust for its preservation.”

Friends of Accotink Creek

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