

# LAKE ACCOTINK PARK MASTER PLAN

Trails Workshop

December 5, 2016

The following contains the questions and summary of comments received on December 5, 2016 at the Lake Accotink Park Trails Workshop.

The same questions will be made available online so that those who were unable to attend the meeting can still add their input to the discussion.

## ① IN WHICH AGE BRACKET ARE YOU?

Under 18	2
18 - 29	5
30 - 39	7
40 - 49	9
50 - 59	16
60 - 69	22
70 and above	24

## ② INCLUDING YOURSELF, HOW MANY PEOPLE DO YOU TYPICALLY USE THE TRAILS WITH?

Just you	31
2	34
3 - 4	9
5 or more	7

## ③ DO YOU USE THE TRAILS WITH CHILDREN UNDER THE AGE OF 15?

No children	58
1 child	8
2 - 4 children	8
5 or more children	3

④ **DO YOU BRING PETS WITH YOU?**

No pets	45
1 pet	23
2 – 4 pets	2
5 or more pets	0

⑤ **WHAT SEASONS OF THE YEAR DO YOU USE THE TRAILS AT LAKE ACCOTINK PARK?**

Spring	74
Summer	72
Fall	73
Winter	67

⑥ **HOW OFTEN DO YOU USE THE TRAILS AT LAKE ACCOTINK PARK**

Daily	13
4 – 6 days a week	9
2 – 3 days a week	33
Once a week	6
Every other week	6
Once a month	5
A few times a year	7

⑦ **WHAT TIME OF DAY DO YOU USE THE TRAILS ON WEEKENDS?**

Before 9 a.m.	11
9 a.m. to 1 p.m.	25
1 p.m. to 5 p.m.	22
After 5 p.m.	7
It varies	33
I don't use the trails on weekends	2

⑧ **WHAT TIME OF DAY DO YOU USE THE TRAILS ON WEEKDAYS?**

Before 9 a.m.	14
9 a.m. to 1 p.m.	14
1 p.m. to 5 p.m.	25
After 5 p.m.	24
It varies	22
I don't use the trails on weekends	2

⑨ **HOW MUCH TIME DO YOU SPEND ON THE TRAILS IN AN AVERAGE TRIP?**

Less than 1 hour	9
1 – 2 hours	58
2 – 4 hours	13
More than 4 hours	2

⑩ **HOW DO YOU USE THE TRAILS AT LAKE ACCOTINK PARK?**

Hiking/walking	60
Running/jogging	19
Casual/recreational biking	22
Mountain biking	17
Dog walking	22
<b>WRITE IN COMMENTS</b>	
Commuting	3
Volunteering	4
Art	1

**11 WHY DO YOU USE THE TRAILS AT LAKE ACCOTINK PARK?**

Relaxation	37
Exercise	67
To enjoy the Scenery	51
To get Children Outside	14
Connection to Other Areas	17
Wildlife/Nature Viewing	42
Dog Walking	21
Events	12
<b>WRITE IN COMMENTS</b>	
All of the above	9
Access to Wakefield	4
Local Historical Sights	1
Commuting	3
Physical Therapy	
"Plein Air" Painting/Journaling	
Walking to boats	

**12 WHAT CHARACTERISTICS OF A TRAIL ARE MOST IMPORTANT TO CREATING A HIGH QUALITY TRAIL EXPERIENCE?**

Trail length	44
A looped connection	26
Clear signage/wayfinding	22
maintenance	23
Attractive scenery	40
Use restricted to like users	1
Amount of trail traffic	8
Opportunity to view wildlife	40
Trail challenge	19
Proximity to parking	7

Proximity to restrooms	6
Paved trail surface	11
Natural trail surface	40
<b>WRITE IN COMMENTS</b>	
Benches along trails for seniors	3
Paved trails for wheelchair access	2
Consider dirt trails next to asphalt	

**13 WHAT TRAIL IMPROVEMENTS WOULD YOU MOST LIKE TO SEE?**

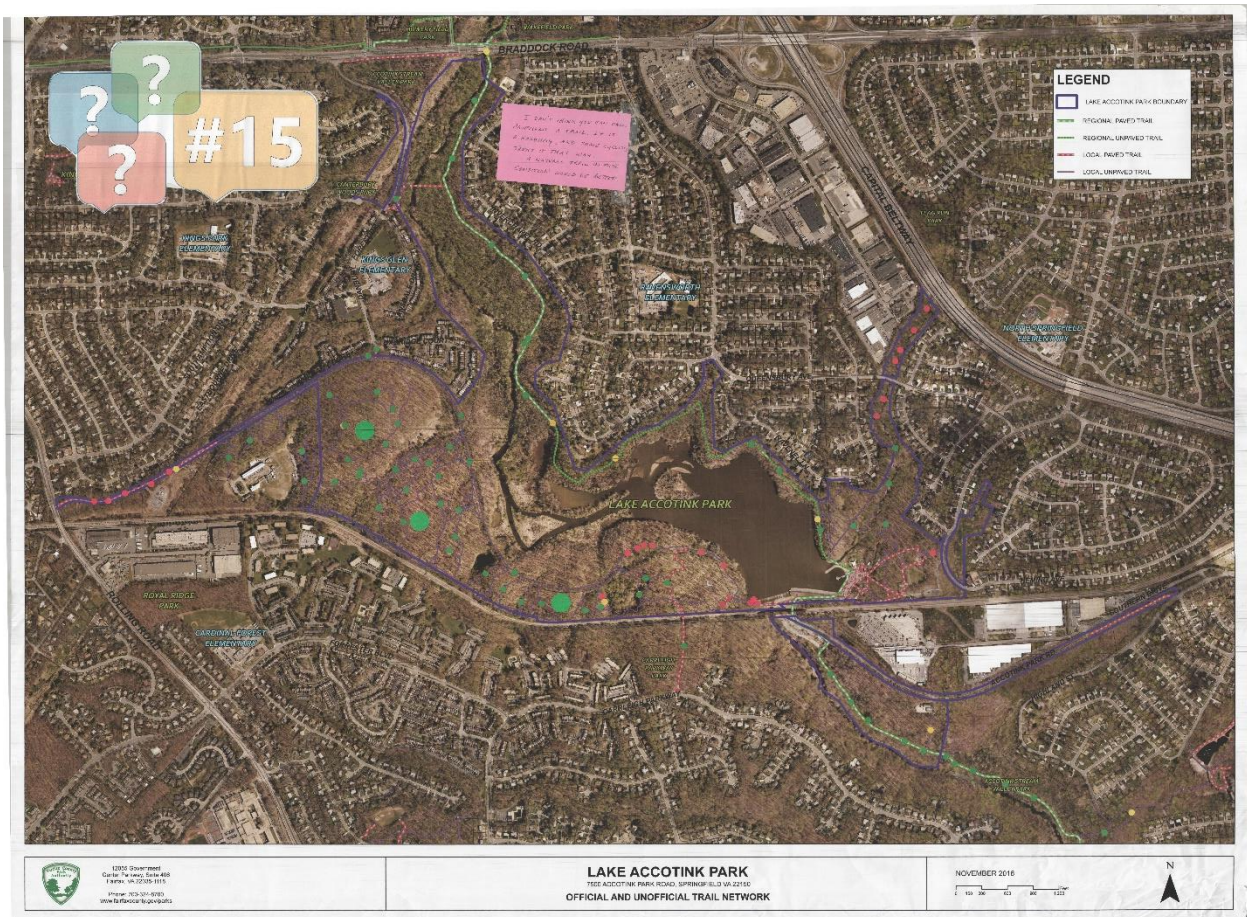
Longer trails	21
More loop trails	23
Advanced skill trails	19
Increased connectivity	17
Improved trailheads	5
Improved trail signage	25
Increased maintenance	25
Fewer duplicate trails	3
ADA accessible trails	5
Additional benches	13
More environmentally sustainable trails	24
<b>WRITE IN COMMENTS</b>	
Clean water fountains	4
Fitness stations	2
Restrooms	3
Trail to avoid Danbury Forest	4
Keep trashcans	8
Less "Deer Hunting" signs	1
None unless for safety	2
Pack it in, pack it out	2
Historical markers	5

Bird blind for photography/viewing	5
Fishing platform	2
Exercise park	3
Less rocks on hills	1
Maintain the existing benches	1
Enforce leash laws	1

**⑭ WHAT WOULD YOU SUGGEST TO BETTER BALANCE THE NEEDS OF THE VARIOUS TYPES OF TRAIL USERS WITHIN THE PARK?**

- Cyclist give warning when passing
- As a biker, I suggest the “biker yield to runners/walkers” signs to educate other bikers. Careful with earbuds!
- Multiple trails – walking vs. mountain biking. Leave mountain biking areas intact – no paving creep.
- Enforce leash laws. Put signs up about “rules of the trail” that state 1) stay on the right, 2) Announce passing on left.
- Keep some soft trails. Reduce hunting warnings about staying on established trails – or show “established trails”
- Signs at trail entry points to alert bikers to the heavy foot traffic. While most bikers are very respectful (many calling out “passing on left”), some go much too fast for the amount of foot traffic – particularly on weekends.
- Intentionally developed areas along the trails to facilitate viewing, photo take, resting. Near the beach area in wood are many trample areas that people left (*illegible*) of demand for relaxation, resting, viewing.
- Signage explaining the rules of multiuse trails. IMBA good resource.
- Steep hill at dam – make less steep
- More signage for rough spots. I broke my ankle on a hill on the upper side of Accotink. It was the first time I had run that spot so I didn’t know how bad it was.
- Bring back the habit of saying “on your left”. Reminders that bikers must yield on shared use trails
- Signage on the trails that give location and difficulty level of trail
- “Balance” is good now – a non-issue. Take no action.
- Bicycles must yield to pedestrians, especially small children, those who cannot hear them coming, dogs on leashes – or anyone who does not like jumping out of the way
- 15 mph speed limit on shared trails

**15) WHAT TRAILS DO YOU USE MOST OFTEN AND HOW WOULD YOU RATE THE CONDITION OF THOSE TRAILS?**



**16) WITH AN UNDERSTANDING THAT THERE ARE AREAS OF THE PARK THAT SHOULD BE PROTECTED FOR THEIR NATURAL AND CULTURAL RESOURCES, ARE THERE AREAS WHERE TRAIL CONNECTIONS ARE MISSING THAT YOU THINK WOULD BE VALUABLE?**

- New connections equal habitat destruction. Keep the loop trail on Danbury Forest and improve signage.
- Should be a plan for a trail connection that avoids Danbury Forest. I think it would be possible with a few boardwalks between Danbury Forest and Accotink Creek)
- This trail exists. It is in fair shape from the bridge link to the power line cut. It is fairly impassible from the power line cut north to Braddock. This should be refurbished /rebuilt as part of the Braddock Road project. (reference to trail section within Accotink Stream Valley Park paralleling Danbury Forest Drive)

- A trail around the lake – the current trail is too long and take you into neighborhood
- Make no new connections
- Keep as many mountain bike trails as possible. It is an excellent resource. The more trails there are also reduces interface with other users.
- Trail (loop) should avoid Danbury and school – add trail closer to creek or add another bridge even if shorter.
- Please improve signage when the park exits at Danbury Forest
- A Flag Run trail would be great!
- We would prefer NO TRAIL behind Lonsdale Drive. It would be directly in back yards and cross private property (I think)
- Do not put a trail behind Lonsdale Drive!!
- Consider a connection between the trail just south of Danbury Forest and the paved trail on the east side of Accotink Creek. You need a bridge over Accotink Creek but the trail would only need to be about 750 feet long and would make a nice loop trail around the lake.
- A trail below Danbury Forest would be much more acceptable, and have less impact on the floodplain, if limited to 3-4' wide.
- New installments like new parking be pervious materials – to help with flooding and water quality.
- Re-establish parking on Rolling Road entrance
- Add parking at Rolling Road entrance.
- Mountain bikes got their multiple trails at Wakefield. Don't add any more at Lake Accotink Park.
- Close trail proximity maximizes the limited acreage for MTB. Riding the same trails in opposite directions doubles the trail distance. Winding trails take advantage of land contours to aid sustainability. Stacking those trails provides variety.
- A trash can for the trash issue here or better enforcement or trash trap on creek (reference to area near dam and spillway)
- Concern that the work done on the dam was done improperly. Visual cracks.
- Access trail (CCT) from this area and further downstream (reference to area south of Lake Accotink Park within Accotink Stream Valley Park).
- Add the trail that connects Highland Street to the CCT to the map!
- Maintaining the old Flag Run trail and keeping it from eroding would be nice.



**17 MOUNTAIN BIKING IS A SPORT WITH INCREASING POPULARITY IN FAIRFAX COUNTY. MANY ENTHUSIASTS CURRENTLY RIDE THE TRAILS AT LAKE ACCOTINK PARK. HOW CAN MOUNTAIN BIKING BEST BE ACCOMMODATED WITHIN THE PARK? WHAT CAN BE DONE TO INTEGRATE THIS POPULAR ACTIVITY WHILE PROTECTING PARK RESOURCES AND RESPECTING OTHER PARK PATRONS? WHAT WOULD IMPROVE THE RIDERS' EXPERIENCE?**

- Nothing can be don't to "integrate this popular activity while protecting park resources." Mountain biking is inherently destructive of natural areas and is incompatible with preservation. It is an activity only slightly preferable to ATV/dirt bike riding.
- As a taxpayer, the mountain bike trails are the best thing going at Lake Accotink and the gravel trails. Keep the mountain bike trails.
- Suggest consideration be given to making the Accotink trail a closed loop within the park by connecting the trail behind Kings Glen School and Danbury Forest communities.
- Love to mountain bike here – please preserve this activity
- Stay back from water's edge/stream banks. Hold education summit for bikers – they are happy to help!
- Signage on trails – signage should include location and trail difficulty.
- Night riding – allow mtbing to be the eyes and ears of the park.
- Allow night riding at Accotink
- Suggest signage for "sensitive" areas – just trying to block them merely creates an obstacle course/"more fun"
- Leverage partner organizations ability to apply for RTP grants and matching.
- By allowing volunteer organizations to partner with the park on maintenance, development and patrolling, the integrity can be maintained.
- Please consider alternate natural surface trails next to paved paths.
- Agree with this! (referencing previous comment)
- Consider trail along Flag Run as part of the Flag Run stream restoration project from Queensbury to the lake.
- Nice to ride/run in here (Flag Run) but erosion is an issue
- Signs help keep bikers and other park patrons aware of each other. Open areas also help visibility. Town hall meetings & local news help spread the work and bring others to the park.
- The mountain bikers that follow the posted rules are just fine – BUT there are a few that don't follow the rules and are therefore dangerous to all and will someday cause a

serious injury to worse – the rules need to be stressed to the bikers (and the walkers and hikers that insist on taking up the entire path!)

- Trails need to be built to accommodate multi-use (bad sight lines, room to pass and ways to check speed). Intersections should not be 90° between the bike trails and cinder walkway

## **SHARE YOUR THOUGHTS . . .**

- I would like to see trail signs with pictures/drawings of the history of the area (even back to prehistoric times) along the trails. Also, there could be viewing areas for the culverts and railroad tunnel that remain. An overlook is needed at the high point along the trail to the southwest of the lake. Trail loops should connect the north and south sides of the lake. A smaller lake would allow for more trails and boardwalks thru wetlands where the lake is now.
- I would love it if you could publish a trail map of Accotink Park or even a trail map of all Fairfax County Trails. I would be willing to pay for such a map.
- I personally prefer the natural surface trails but see the need for some paved. The rustic aspect of the park is what I love. Would be great to find a route around Danbury Forest instead of through it.
- Better signage for rough spots. I broke my ankle on one spot on the upper trail. I was running and hit a rock twisting my ankle. Better signage for when you exit out of Danbury Forest. Fix the broken trail on Hunter Forest so that the trail connects to Rolling Road.
- No more development
- I would like the park to work with MORE to establish a night riding program. This not only provides opportunity to ride bikes in the evening during the winter but also provides eyes and ears for the park. It has worked very well at Wakefield Park. As more people come to the park, security becomes an issue. However, there is less money in security and park police. By allowing cyclists in the park at night and by having an organized program for this, the mountain bikers can provide more security.
- Concerned about snagged, leaning tree in the park system.
  - Two categories – on/over trail & “out-in-the woods”.
  - Trail related snags are generally taken care of but, at least in the area between Wakefield and Guinea Rd., there are “leaners” that could fall on the trail.
  - Out in the woods – kids love to be off the trail exploring, playing in the creek, playing games amongst the trees – There are many trees snagged on other trees – when they will come down is totally unknown and they represent a significant potential hazard.

I believe that quarterly (minimally) trail surveys should be made by knowledgeable FCPA personnel to identify and initiate corrective action to remove all leaners/snagged trees – then let them lie where felled and disintegrate over time.

- Improve water spillway during heavy rain so the hiker can cross the spillway near the dam – Maybe a short footbridge would be helpful.

- Trails need more physical safety measures at some locations. Possibly hard surface in some select areas. Dog/animal droppings are a concern, and an app is being developed regarding this issue. Keep the lake!! It is a temperature modifier. The lake supports the mental support of the area and those who use the park. Restrooms are very clean considering their location. Unfortunately, this is not the case in other public areas. The creek leading to the lake has eroding banks, which are polluting the lake. Is there options for controlling the erosion? I.E. the one bank has moved 10 feet or more in the past 10-20 years. Overall, the park staff has done an excellent job, considering resources available to them.
- Lake Accotink is a well-developed park. It needs few or no “improvements” to trails. Only safety issues should dictate changes to the trail system. Certainly no more asphalt is needed.
- The trail system in Lake Accotink works pretty well, it seems like though the overall mountain bike area still needs a plan. It is pretty random. I definitely support paving the remainder of the CCT through the park. The existing paved section is lovely and really gets & handles a lot of use.
- Please add more signs regarding trail courtesy. Specifically I have almost been run over twice when changing my trail position. (1 by a bicycle, 1 by a runner). The single sign which I have seen at Accotink is the one at the trail head by the Merry Go Round. Alas the message on trail courtesy does not jump out at one unless you are walking. So yes, there is a sign (only one) but it has little actual value for its primary purpose – Cautioning bikers/runners on trail courtesy i.e. “passing on the left”.
- The boating is very important to my wife and I. We walk into the park or bike-ride just to go boating. From the water is by far, the best way to see wildlife. Loss of boating would be a major problem for me.
- I live below the dam all the way down between the two bridges. I walk from the Mendota Place entrance to the lake which is over a mile and a half. It would be nice to have one bench along this stretch. Thanks.
- Fantastic presentation. I especially like your use of the boards to collect data from the community.