



[Frontier Drive Extension](#)

Comments of the Friends of Accotink Creek

25 July, 2022

Please understand our concern is largely with the ever-shrinking tree canopy and natural habitats in our region. In this case, the loss is up to 22 acres. We are aware of no plan to mitigate the loss.

How ironic it is to build what is effectively a Metro station bypass with one hand even as we putatively improve Metro access with the other hand by building the [Cinder Bed Road Bikeway](#).

How ironic to spread more and more asphalt replacing trees and imagine there will be no climate consequences. The loss of 22 acres of woods also means the loss of 500-600 tons per year of CO2 capture. This must be either avoided or compensated by other means.

How ironic that the recent construction of Metro Access Road was not coordinated with this project. We now find ourselves building a duplicate parallel route at enormous cost. The goal of connecting Frontier Drive and Loisdale Drive could be largely accomplished simply by unlocking the Metro Access Road gate. Since the current design has reduced the through traffic on Frontier Drive (southbound) to a right turn, let's reconsider the viability of using the existing Metro Access Road.

Thank you for the promise in the July 12th public meeting to repair the bike trail connecting Metro and Loisdale Road along the south side of the Franconia-Springfield Parkway. In addition to this repair, we urge that:

- The repairs (and modernizations) be extended to shared use paths running the length of Loisdale Road, improving the user experience on this connection between Metro and the Fairfax County Parkway Trail,
- Other bicycle and pedestrian routes leading to Metro be comprehensively repaired, upgraded, or installed,
- These bicycle and pedestrian routes include advanced safety treatments, such as these [VDOT models](#),
- The possibility of bikeshare facilities at Metro be considered, and
- These bicycle and pedestrian enhancements be pursued now, without awaiting Frontier Drive Extension funding.

The addition of a barren asphalt bus plaza replacing a currently wooded area is regrettable. Can we not find an already-paved area for this purpose?

Exclusively native species should be used for all planning and replanting, including during construction.

Invasive plant species control should be incorporated during construction and for a follow up period of several years to allow native plant species to reestablish themselves.

Sound walls also provide replanting opportunities for native vine habitat, including wild grapes.

The Natural Resource Technical Report in the draft EA states that as the design is advanced measures will be incorporated to avoid and minimize impacts to Long Branch and its tributaries and to wetlands through measures such as modification to slopes to reduce footprints and other measures. Friends of Accotink Creek looks forward to being able to review these proposed measures to reducing impacts to the Long Branch watershed.

Lighting over Long Branch and its riparian woods must minimize impact on wildlife below. Insect friendly wavelengths would help, as would limiting lighting as much as feasible. It should go without saying that dark sky lighting should be the standard.

Why not use underground stormwater control structures under the pavement to spare tree canopy? If they must be placed aboveground, stormwater facilities should be habitat-providing designs such as vegetated wet ponds.

Again, our concern is largely with the ever-shrinking tree canopy and natural habitats in our region. Every loss contributes to a cumulative slide for the climate, the Chesapeake Bay, and local flora and fauna.

Friends of Accotink Creek

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