



Comments Regarding Plan Amendment SSPA 2023-IV-4S

Costco - Boston Blvd

TO: Fairfax County Planning Commission

February 25, 2026

We the Friends of Accotink Creek are committed to protecting, promoting, and restoring the water quality, natural habitat and ecological well-being of the Accotink Creek watershed.

Subject property is part of the Accotink Creek watershed and located near [Accotink Gorge](#), one of the most biodiverse locations in Fairfax County and part of Fairfax County Parks.

Accordingly FACC would be most concerned with:

- habitat loss, especially mature native trees
- stormwater runoff
- Poor landscaping practices which would negatively impact the watershed such as:
 1. planting non native species,
 2. planting any invasive species,
 3. usage of pesticides and herbicides,
 4. poor usage/storage of deicing (salt) materials and any litter/chemical spills from the properties.

FACC General comments:

In regards to the staff report submitted Feb. 4, 2026 we are extremely pleased with the language specifically speaking towards Accotink Creek and Resource Protection Areas. The inclusion of specific wording in the proffer document allowing for Friends of Accotink Creek and Fairfax County Park Authority access from the Costco parking lot to the Accotink Stream Valley Park will be extremely helpful.

Additionally we noted many references to tree preservation, removal of nonnative invasive plantings, enhanced stormwater runoff, and other environmental conditions as we had suggested. From what we see, this development has potential to improve conditions in Accotink Creek and therefore to be commended. The Bradford pear trees previously used to landscape the perimeter of the store seemed beautiful when in bloom, but as has been shown that their fruit seeds are spread by birds and this tree has become highly invasive.

We do have one concern in the staff report that we would like to highlight, although it does not specifically pertain to this project. In the section talking about **Multimodal Analysis**:

“ Efforts should be made to connect the site to these future planned trails, like the planned stream valley trail along Accotink Creek.”

We have been told previously by the Active Fairfax office that those lines along the stream valley are NOT planned trails but wildlife corridors. We would be against any trail development in the Resource Protection Area that would require even moderate equipment usage.

Thank you so much.

PUBLIC TESTIMONY

TO: Fairfax County Planning Commission

February 25, 2026

Public hearing for RZ-2023-MV-00023/PCA-C-526-03 Concurrent with SE-2023-MV-00045 (Concurrent with SSPA 2023-IV-4S) – Costco Wholesale Corporation

I speak tonight representing the Friends of Accotink Creek

Costco is located on the heights overlooking the [Accotink Gorge](#), a geological feature of utmost importance to the mission of the Friends of Accotink Creek. This feature, where Accotink Creek passes over the Fall Line, offers appealing scenic views among rocks, rapids, and small waterfalls. More importantly, it contains an exceptional assemblage of native flora not commonly found in our area. The Friends of Accotink Creek have put particular focus on maintaining the quality of the Accotink Gorge habitat, especially by defending it against invasive exotic plant species.

Given our interest in preserving the Accotink Gorge, we worked with the Mount Vernon supervisor's office to help achieve the environmentally positive elements of the staff report and proffer document providing for:

- Incorporation of high-quality stormwater features
- Increased tree canopy coverage
- Use of native species in restoration and landscape plantings
- Avoiding disturbance to the slopes of Accotink Creek
- Improved gates and parking for public access to this section of the Accotink Stream Valley Park
- Support for invasives control activities in the Accotink Gorge
- Avoiding contamination of streams and aquifers by winter salt use on pavement
- Reduction of trash entering the park

Following through on these concepts has the potential to turn this property into a showcase of watershed-friendly land use. We hope Costco will proudly inform its members of these enhancements with signs or other forms of communication.

If all the recommendations are fully realized, our only regret may be that Costco did not forego the fossil fuel pollution of the past in favor of the future by installing only a bank of electric vehicle chargers powered by solar panels.

One concern worthy of special mention is water contamination by winter salt use on paved surfaces. Even now the County's [Chloride TMDL Action Plan for Accotink Creek](#) is open for public comment. Protecting fresh water from winter salt must become a part of all land use planning.

Another concern we have is seeing that the staff report mentions "the Countywide Trails Plan calls for trails along Accotink Creek". This must not happen here. The forested habitats and floodplain of the Accotink Gorge are already surrounded, constricted, and crossed by dense human infrastructure. They cannot be improved by the addition of yet more pavement and lighting. Protecting the Accotink Creek Environmental Quality Corridor must be the priority.

- We must avoid ever repeating here the mistake that is being made just to the east of this location, also within the Springfield Planning District, of building the [Cinder Bed Road Bikeway](#).
- Even this very staff report calls out the "Sensitive environmental areas, such as the Long Branch of Accotink Creek", where the Cinder Bed Road Bikeway is planned to intrude.

- The 2025 joint [Public Works and Park Authority Memo](#) lays out in the clearest terms why we should not locate new paved trails in streamside Resource Protection Areas such as this - or such as that of the Cinder Bed Road Bikeway.

The exceptional assemblage of native flora in the Accotink Gorge is threatened by a heavy infestation of invasive wisteria. These vines have become so pervasive they pull down small trees and block out the sun. The ambitious plans of the Friends of Accotink Creek to address the 90-plus acres that are affected have so far come to little.

Our hope is that the invasives control measures incorporated into the Costco project will become the anchor for a larger ongoing Accotink Gorge project involving all landholders and neighbors in collaboration towards a good neighbor policy of preserving this natural gem.

Thank you to all who have worked to make the positive concepts of this plan come into being.

Friends of Accotink Creek

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