

## **MEETING MINUTES**

To: Esther Bowring (AFCA), Rick Epstein (AFCA), Bernadette Gullón, Erik Beach, Lyndell Core, Susan Kalish, Vincent Verweij, Kevin Stalica and Tom Mitchler

From: Joshua B. Serck

Date: November 17, 2021

Re: [Lubber Run Park – 2020 Pedestrian Bridge Renovation](#)  
**Project Update to Arlington Forest Civic Association (AFCA)**

### **Meeting Summary:**

As requested by the AFCA, the Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR) staff attended their November 2021 general meeting to answer submitted questions they wanted DPR to answer during the meeting. A brief update on the project was given, staff answered these questions and then took additional questions from the members.

### **SUBMITTED QUESTIONS:**

1. **QUESTION: Why was the former bridge location was chosen?**

**RESPONSE:** The location was selected based on an analysis and evaluation by the Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR) staff and the engineering consultants of the pros and cons, as well as community feedback from the May 2021 online survey. This location was selected because...

- It provides the best overall connectivity to the various trails within the park.
- The new renovations at Edison Park which include an improved trail access, have increased usage and with that the desire to connect to the other side of the stream and vice versa.
- Nature trails, which are predominantly on the west side of Lubber Run, are used significantly and approximately as much as the east/paved trail.
- The southwest portion of Lubber Run Park will have a
- Placing the new bridge at the location of a former bridge, helps to reduce impact on the site/stream, it will not require modifications to FEMA flood mapping.

2. **QUESTION: What will prevent a new bridge from being washed away at that location (which has happened twice)?**

**RESPONSE:** The new bridge will be a pre-manufactured structure, designed to withstand the forces from a 100-year flood. The bridge will be similar to the

bridge that was replaced at the north end of Lubber Run Park near the community center.

3. **QUESTION: Is there a plan to raise the bridge somehow and still make it ADA accessible?**

**RESPONSE:** The bridge will be located in a floodplain which is regulated by FEMA. The elevation of the new bridge will not be changed/raised. Raising the bridge elevation will require new fill material in the floodplain and act as a dam, which will require flood plain map revisions. Any increase in the base floodplain elevation would require Conditional Letter of Map Revision (CLOMR) process mandatory by FEMA. The process is lengthy, upwards of six months and costly.

DPR Staff and engineering consultants have determined there is no benefit to raising the bridge or triggering the CLOMR process. The integrity of the bridge can be addressed by the structural design and materials specified.

The path leading to the bridge and the bridge itself will be ADA accessible. However, the bridge will not connect to an accessible path on the west side of the stream; this is a natural trail which is not accessible.

4. **QUESTION: Upstream from the proposed location the banks are higher (although perhaps the velocity of the stream will be faster there in a flood situation) so would that be a better location...if not, why not?**

**RESPONSE:** The northern location was evaluated by staff and the engineers. A number of conditions makes this a less preferred option. For example, a long stretch of the footpath on the west side of the stream is deteriorating so pedestrian accessibility from the southwest would be difficult.

There are poor soils immediately west of the bridge. Staff have expressed ongoing challenges with erosion and drainage issues with this location. This area is outside of the scope of work for this project, neither has funding been identified for that area.

5. **QUESTION: At the proposed location, the bank/stone buttress on the west side is being seriously eroded, so what is proposed to protect the bank on both sides of the stream at that location? The proposal includes removal of a very large tree on the west side embankment and replacement tree(s) on the opposite bank - but won't those new tree(s) be washed away in short order in the event of flooding?**

**RESPONSE:** The new bridge will be founded on new abutments on both sides of the stream. The abutments may include wing walls that prevent bank erosion. In addition, rip rap will be further placed on the banks to stop erosion and prevent undermining of the soil behind the abutments/wing walls. New trees will be planted outside of normal flood elevations.

6. **QUESTION: If I understand correctly, CIP monies have already been designated for the new bridge, but will those monies be sufficient to build a flood resilient bridge and also to protect against the stream embankment being eroded with future flooding, undercutting the bridge structure?**

**RESPONSE:** There is sufficient funding for the improvements necessary to design and construct this bridge including the immediate bank stabilization to prevent undermining of the bridge abutments and the adjoining asphalt paving necessary to provide the trail connections.

As background information, funding for the bridge replacement comes from the Trail and Bridge Modernization Program within the CIP. It is an on-going program focused on replacement and major renovation of the County's 39.7 miles of off-street, multi-purpose trails, as well as replacement or repair of the County's 42 pedestrian bridges and 11 low-water fords. Funding for trail and bridge projects are requested annually and approved by the County Manager and County Board. Annual funding allows trail segments to be milled and repaved, up to two pedestrian bridges to be replaced and some repair work performed on other bridges to increase their useful life. For FY2021, \$2.575M was approved in the CIP.

7. **QUESTION: Will part of the bridge replacement project include an appeal to the State of VA to enlarge the Route 50 underpass to keep floodwaters from backing up along the length of the stream?**

**RESPONSE:** DPR is not requesting any changes to Route 50 as part of this project. The engineers did inform DPR that any modifications to the Rte. 50 structure will require extensive coordination and approval with FEMA. If you have would like a further response, please contact Elizabeth Thurber [Ethurber@arlingtonva.us](mailto:Ethurber@arlingtonva.us), Stormwater Infrastructure Program Manager.

8. **QUESTION: Is there a plan to raise the low ford by the Amphitheater to prevent frequent flooding so this access point is more usable?**

**RESPONSE:** Currently DPR does not have plans for renovating this ford. The County has over 60 pedestrian bridges and fords in their inventory. A prioritization list for maintenance/repair/replacement is currently under development.

9. **QUESTION: Is there a plan to address the severe erosion along Lubber Run Park that is undermining the mature trees and causing serious loss of tree canopy?**

**RESPONSE:** There is currently no plan to restore this stream corridor. The Department of Environmental Services (DES) has undertaken other stream restoration projects in the County. They can provide more information about

future stream projects. If you would like a further response, please contact Elizabeth Thurber [Ethurber@arlingtonva.us](mailto:Ethurber@arlingtonva.us), Stormwater Infrastructure Program Manager.

**10. QUESTION: When will the online survey responses be available to review?**

**RESPONSE:** 106 responses were received. The raw data and comment tagging is being summarized/tallied by DPR staff before posting. DPR anticipates posting the results on the project webpage the week after Thanksgiving.

**ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS:**

**11. QUESTION: How can we be sure the bridge won't be washed away again?**

**RESPONSE:** See response to Question 2.

**12. QUESTION: Has DPR/engineers considered a 'break-a-way' bridge design for this site?**

**RESPONSE:** The consulting engineers are not familiar with this type of bridge system. It's possible to design a bridge that will wash away with a significant flood, something like a 'disposable' bridge. However, the cost and time to replace frequently would be cost prohibitive.

**13. QUESTION: What are the next steps?**

**RESPONSE:** DPR will make the final decision about the location of the bridge and begin the development of construction drawings and specifications that will be used for permitting, bidding and construction.