

Concord Mews Pond Repair Feedback Spring 2025

Thank you to all who provided feedback on the Concord Mews pond project in Spring 2025. The Arlington County project team appreciates community engagement and neighbors' valuable input. Ultimately, feedback from both adjacent residents and the broader Concord Mews (CM) community favored the meandering wetland option. All respondents provided important feedback and the project team will incorporate or address the feedback in future engagement.

The Concord Mews pond repair will:

- Replace outflow and inflow pipes, which are damaged and not functioning,
- Allow water to flow through the wetland, instead of being stagnant,
- Add a sediment collection area for easier maintenance,
- Capture and filter runoff, removing nutrients and sediment and protecting Four Mile Run,
- Replant a healthy and diverse forest with a variety of native species and multiple layers of vegetation,
- Provide habitat for birds, ducks, turtles, tadpoles, dragonflies and pollinators,
- Include a natural look and feel with gently sloped sides.

The meandering wetland option will have more well-defined meanders in the water flow path, medium tree impact, and more robust replanting. Additionally, more accumulated sediment and gravel will be removed, and it is anticipated to be easier to maintain and a longer-term solution for the area.

Summary of Spring 2025 Feedback

- We appreciate community leaders' partnership in helping to promote the meetings and online feedback form.
- Received written feedback at 2/4/2025 in-person CM meeting and via the spring 2025 online feedback form. Input and questions were also heard and answered at the 3/3/2025 Green Valley Civic Association meeting and 4/10/2025 virtual CM meeting.
- Feedback form: 18 responses overall, 2 were blank, 1 repeated. 15 responses provided unique user comments. 14 respondents to the preference question.
- Prefer meandering: +9 (S Randolph residents who look directly over the pond: +6, In CM +3)
- Prefer small: +3 (S Randolph residents +2, In CM +1)
- Don't like either: +1
- Either is fine, as long as one happens: +1

Comment Highlights

- Reasoning and thoughts from residents preferring the meandering option:
 - I prefer the meandering option - I want to see a long term solution and believe the project should be completed to the highest standard and design we have available.
 - I understand it may take more time before the tree coverage grows back. But I like hearing that in the meandering option, there will be the opportunity to be more intentional in planting native plants, which will support more wildlife in the long term.

- Prefer the meandering wetland option. Although I hate to see any removal of trees, I think the meandering wetland provides the best long-term solution for improved water filtration.
- Meandering is visually nicer for folks overlooking via balconies.
- Preference: Meandering. Enduring solution, More aggressive replanting, Better mosquito mitigation, Better beautification effort.
- I like the meandering option better, as it seems to be a more robust solution that will set this area up for success in the long run and I think our community should take advantage of Arlington County's willingness to pay for that. But I understand that will come at a greater cost in terms of disruption during the short term - the construction period itself being longer and there being more impacted trees (i.e., a longer time until the area grows back big enough to provide as much visual and auditory buffer as we have now). I personally think the long term benefits are worth it.
- They seem quite similar. I like the look of the meandering pond. I can see the pond from my porch and have always thought there was a lot of potential for something beautiful.
- I believe that whatever option provided the most positive impact on our environment is the one we should go with. It seems like the meandering wetlands would be conducive to this outcome as it seems to provide the most tree growth.
- Definitely prefer the meandering option, for its cleaner water, for its modification of the tree setting to include a better mix of shrubs/trees fitting to the region and site.
- [Now] it's an okayish natural area that provides benefits to residents and wildlife. I would like to see it become an awesome natural area that provides better benefits to residents and wildlife. Thanks for doing this project.
- Considerations to address during the design process: General considerations identified include importance of trees/evergreens as screening and privacy/noise barrier, mosquitoes, trash accumulation and maintenance, stormwater filtering, better water flow/less stagnant water, wildlife/nature/peace, aesthetics of the view, ecological benefits/robust micro-ecosystem, foot traffic, erosion on hill and ground stability.
- Specific concerns and considerations from people preferring “small wetland” or “neither” included: Prioritize keeping healthy native trees, tree coverage for screening and privacy, ease and cost of maintenance, erosion and structural stability of hillside, ponding between berm and W&OD trail, preventing floods, mosquitoes, concerns about public entering the area from Walter Reed, the pond potentially drying out in drought conditions/impact on plants, and cost.
 - The project team will address these comments in the design and engagement process.
- One resident wanted to “Allow the channel to function as originally designed” saying: “Why not replace/repair the pipes, remove the sediment, and allow the temporary water from rain to flow? Cleaning out the sediment every few years, maintaining the pipes, removing invasives, and planting more trees would be less costly in both money and effort.”
 - We appreciate this individual sharing their honest thoughts; the question deserves a bigger picture answer. We will be happy to follow up with the individual to ensure mutual understanding.
 - To respond in brief: This option was explored by the project team, and it was determined that “cleaning out the sediment” would create a similar or more

extensive tree loss due to accessing the area, physically pulling the sediment out, disturbing tree roots, and transporting sediment out. The amount of tree loss “to allow the channel to function as originally designed” would likely exceed that of the meandering or small wetland.

- Second, the financial investment of only replacing the inflow and outflow pipes would still be very significant and would not add water quality benefits, and the reduced cost/benefit balance would not meet County goals/objectives.
- Another resident asked if CM residents would have to pay extra costs. Staff contacted the resident within the feedback timeframe to clarify that the County will assume the costs for the project and maintenance. In fact, the County will be required to maintain the area as part of its MS4 Stormwater Permit with the Virginia Department of Environmental Quality.

Please see below for additional specific written feedback provided. Note that individuals’ names, addresses, and contact information have been removed from the comments.

2/4/2025 In-Person Concord Mews Homeowners Association Meeting, 12 attendees (7 CM residents), Written Feedback Provided

What do you value about the pond now?

- Biodiversity: Deer, Foxes, Ducks; Trees, Canopy
- Shelters our community from the main road
- Natural to support wildlife (birds, foxes, deer)

What would you like to see change about the pond?

- Less mosquitos, more dragonflies
- Less stagnation
- Reforestation... with a vengeance
- More groundcover, lush area where plants and animals can accumulate
- Generally cleaner/less stagnant water (already covered)
- Keep in mind a place to collect and easily remove trash accumulated

Do you have preferences between the meandering and small wetland options? What do you see as the positives of each? What considerations should we take into account as we weigh the options?

- Meandering: Fresher, moving water.
- Meandering is visually nicer for folks overlooking via balconies.
- The meandering option seems to have greater long term benefits.
- The meandering option looks more planned [positive comment]
- Importance of receiving feedback from neighbors who back up to the pond area.

Other questions or concerns

- Trash accumulation - Water goat
- Maintenance - frequency of maintenance

Spring 2025 Feedback Form Results

What do you value about the pond area now, in its current condition?

- It's an okayish natural area that provides benefits to residents and wildlife.
- I value the coverage from the trees (light and sound from Four Mile Run Dr) and the wildlife that we see in the area.
- Keeps the area secluded. It's pretty to overlook via the balcony. Can overlook the street in the winter. Hosts animals is nice.
- Plenty of shade, screening of the busy streets, some home to wildlife, filtering of storm runoff
- It sounds like it's in bad condition and needs replacing. But Hi Lily!! I think you and I grew up together and your mom Dale was our Brownie troop leader!! Are you the sake Lily?!
- I like that the trees and pond area provide pretty visual barrier and a natural environment for wildlife
- Ad a newbie I can't really say either way. I love nature and it certainly seems like it needs repair.

- Privacy barrier
Noise muffling
Ecological restive
Beautiful view
- I live in concord mews and wasn't aware there was a pond lol
- Privacy screening between our community and a busy road / bike trail. Habitat for a lot of local wildlife. So much green surrounding our community makes it feel peaceful and less urban.
- Trees and vegetation that buffer sound from Four Mile Run Drive. Trees and vegetation also block the sight of vehicles on the street.
- Not much value. It is a muck-filled water body that scarcely moves, and is filled with trash/bottles.
- I do not think that I am sufficiently expert to decide which system is better as a system for collecting and moving run off. However, I do have goals for whichever system is chosen. Per my goals valued most, the chosen system would:
 - 1) remove runoff without creating large ponding
 - 2) after the source of the runoff is no longer active, leave behind little to no ponding, so that the area as dry as possible
 - 3) does not contribute to erosion of the hillside between the system and the building on S. Randolph Street
 - 4) preserve as much as possible healthy trees on the hillside (identified in 3 above) that stabilize the ground and, also, contribute to privacy and noise abatement
 - 5) plant and nurture the growth of trees to replace those lost (I think, due to flooding), helping to effectuate ground stabilization, privacy, and noise abatement.

[Edited to add] I want to amend this. Subsequent thoughts made me vote for the SMALL option. This option serves the goals mentioned earlier. It seems easier to maintain.

- I question whether plans for planting should be solidified after the ground reprieved from inundation for lengthy periods can be assessed in relationship to any ponding that occurs with the newly installed system.

What would you like to see change about the pond area?

- I would like to see it become an awesome natural area that provides better benefits to residents and wildlife. Thanks for doing this project.
- I would like to see more coverage of trees to bring privacy and continue to provide light and sound barriers. I am concerned about mosquitos and wondering if this is due to the standing water in the current design. It would be nice to know if the meandering design will alleviate this.
- Just routine maintenance to keep it clean, natural, and without trash. Trash keeps building up in the woods over the years and ends up in the creek. Mostly due to people leaving trash on the walter reed hill lacking trashcans at the bus-stops and the wind picking it up.
- Improved ecosystem for wildlife, better storm runoff filtering, improved screening long-term (possibly something that provides some additional screening in winter if possible with evergreen/conifers of some sort?)
- Improve the water flow, maybe add evergreens that can increase screening in the winter?
- More tree planting and less stagnant water
- I'm sure it needs a lot of work. I would love to see wildlife in and around the pond!

- Remove dead, fallen trees
Ridged of mosquitos
More canopy
- Make sure floods are prevented
- I'm concerned that run off is not being well managed and is contributing to problems in our local and regional waterways. We live on a giant hill, so if there are any problems with erosion / integrity of the ground, I want those to be addressed and prioritized.
- Replace/repair both ingress and egress pipes. Remove sediment to allow channel to function as originally designed. Plant more trees once the standing water is gone. Remove sediment every few years to prevent standing water. Do not turn this into a wetland that will bring in mosquitoes and ducks.
- I would like to see thicker tree coverage as a S. Randolph Street resident. At present, the coverage is so sparse during most of the year that I can see two gas stations and the road from my balcony and back windows. I would much prefer more coverage/privacy.
- I'd like to see water movement through the pond, and replenishment of endemic species of trees/shrubs that make for a more robust micro-ecosystem.
- I recently amended this document to indicated that I support the smaller system. We received a notice on Friday to submit comments. I am taking this opportunity to do so.
First, I have a question. Does the ponding reflect in some way the flooding that can occur south of the berm and between it and the walk/bike way along Four Mile Run? If that would be case, I trust that it is being considered.
Second, I want to reaffirm my choice for the smaller system. I think that it will be easier to maintain. Sorry to be somewhat cynical, but I have lived here since 1997. The ponding has been an issue since then and has grown. I think that whatever is less costly to maintain has a better chance of being properly maintained over time.

Do you have a preference between the meandering and small wetland options? What do you see as the positives of each option? What considerations should be incorporated in choosing an option?

- They both look good to me. I have some concerns about tree loss. If we keep depending on future trees, will we hit a climate wide tipping point? It feels like we are already getting there with all the oak loss lately. And I also see the value in doing what's best stormwater wise so that we can protect habitat and people downstream. I'm okay with either option as long as one of them happens.
- I prefer the meandering option - I want to see a long term solution and believe the project should be completed to the highest standard and design we have available now. I understand it may take more time before the tree coverage grows back. But I like hearing that in the meandering option, there will be the opportunity to be more intentional in planting native plants, which will support more wildlife in the long term.
- Meandering looks nicer and seems to have more vegetation.
- Prefer the meandering wetland option. Although I hate to see any removal of trees, I think the meandering wetland provides the best long-term solution for improved water filtration
- They seem quite similar. I like the look of the meandering pond. I don't have a strong preference, but I think I would like whichever option provides the most trees long term.
- I believe that whatever option provided the malt positive impact on our environment is the one we should go with. It seems like the meandering wetlands would be conducive to this outcome as it seems to provide the most tree growth.

- Preference: Meandering
 - Enduring solution
 - More aggressive replanting
 - Better mosquito mitigation
 - Better beautification effort
- Small wetland. We've lost a lot of trees already so to minimize tree impact.
- I like the meandering option better, as it seems to be a more robust solution that will set this area up for success in the long run and I think our community should take advantage of Arlington County's willingness to pay for that. But I understand that will come at a greater cost in terms of disruption during the short term - the construction period itself being longer and there being more impacted trees (i.e., a longer time until the area grows back big enough to provide as much visual and auditory buffer as we have now). I personally think the long term benefits are worth it.
- Until the ingress and egress pipes stopped working, Concord Mews cleaned the channel area which was dry except after heavy rainstorms. We begged Arlington County for assistance and reported the broken pipes 30+ years ago. We installed a pump to send water into the storm drain but the failure by Arlington County to repair the pipes overwhelmed our efforts to clean the debris and prevent standing water. After refusals by the County to repair the pipes and remove sediment, Concord Mews stopped our efforts to clean the area. The water and debris ponded because it could no longer flow. The result was the stagnant water you see today.

The wetland concepts do not take into account that the storm water basin was never called a "pond" until the wetland concepts were presented. Wetlands introduce accumulation areas with water deep enough for wildlife to drown. These areas are going to have standing water and mosquitoes which the dragonflies are not likely to control. Why not replace/repair the pipes, remove the sediment and allow the temporary water from rain to flow? Cleaning out the sediment every few years, maintaining the pipes, removing invasives, and planting more trees would be less costly in both money and effort.

While the meandering wetland is attractive on paper, the damage to the tree canopy and the area will negatively impact Concord Mews for too many future years. The new opening on S Walter Reed Drive for access to clean the accumulation area will remove trees and allow the public to enter the area.

The small wetland introduces a wetland area but its impact on Concord Mews should be less than the meandering design.

Will the County change wetland plantings that don't survive when dry weather prevails and there is no water flowing? Or does the County plan to add water to maintain the wetland concepts?
- It's not clear to me whether there would be a cost difference to Concord Mews residents. Will this result in a special assessment and more fees on top of our HOA fees? If so, and if one of the two options is less expensive than the other, this would be a primary priority. The video also mentions that it would take time for the trees to grow large. In the interim, would that mean even less tree coverage between our residences and the road, path, etc. than we currently have? Since I'm not sure if I will live in this community long-term, I want to minimize the amount of tree coverage lost during the time I know that I will be here. In sum, if the meandering wetland option is more expensive for residents and will result in less tree coverage than what we presently have in the immediate future (as is my impression), then I would prefer the small wetland option. If the meandering option is not more expensive and will not result in less tree coverage than what we have presently, I would be more open to the meandering option.

- Definitely prefer the meandering option, for its cleaner water, for its modification of the tree setting to include a better mix of shrubs/trees fitting to the region and site.

If you live in the Concord Mews Condominiums, Green Valley, or in a neighboring community, please share what neighborhood you live in here. If not, please share your interest in this area (i.e. W&OD trail user, general interest, etc.)

- I'm a W&OD trail user and I frequent Shirlington. I live in Penrose.
- I live on S. Randolph street (2200) which is right towards the middle section of the area. I also live in a lower unit and so I am very close to the standing water and we look right out at the area from our windows and balcony. ; I live in the Concord Mews Condominiums.
- I live in Concord Mews living on South Randolph in a top unit overlooking the creek.
- Live in Concord Mews, directly looking over the current pond.
- I own a condo in concord mews.
- I'm on [exact address redacted] S Quincy St.
- Concord Mews Condominiums, S Randolph St
- Concord mews
- Concord Mews Condominiums, S Quincy St
- I live in Concord Mews Condominium.
- S. Randolph St
- I live in Concord Mews. I ride my bike on the trail, and love that general location. I'd like to see a more healthy and natural set of trees there, along with more diverse wildlife, including not just trees and birds, but also other aquatic wildlife and land-based wildlife.

General Comment: Please share any overall thoughts, comments, or questions.

- Thanks for making improvements to this area! Making sure that everyone has nature near them in Arlington is important to me.
- I do have a concern about foot traffic. We see folks hang out in the wooded area at night, and unfortunately leave trash in the woods and in the water. I am wondering if in the meandering option, is the design intended to discourage foot traffic? I want to see a design that is clearly not inviting to be used as a path to cut up the hill into the neighborhood.
- Thanks for hearing the community out!
- Love this project! I can see the pond from my porch and have always thought there was a lot of potential for something beautiful
- Hi to Lily Whitesell! I'm [name redacted] and you and I were in Brownies together with your mom as our troop leader! Small world!
- Thank you for allowing us input
- Thank you for prioritizing this piece of Arlington"
- Keeping existing native healthy trees should be priority.
- Thanks for this work, and for the well presented options. Much appreciated!
- I prefer the meandering option