



**DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION  
AND ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES**

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July 19, 2010

Frances McCreary Holland, Ph.D.  
1901 Hawthorne Avenue  
Alexandria, Virginia 22311

James W. Madden  
6207 Holmes Run Parkway  
Alexandria, Virginia 20031

**RE: Holmes Run/Chambliss Crossing and Stream Bank Restoration/Stabilization  
Virginia Marine Resource Commission (VMRC) Public Notice  
Alexandria, Virginia**

Dear Ms. Holland and Mr. Madden:

Thank you for your recent comments provided in response to the Virginia Marine Resource Commission's public notice for the proposed Holmes Run/Chambliss crossing and restoration project. In advance of the VMRC's hearing for the project, we would like to take this opportunity to address the concerns raised in your comments and let you know what actions we are taking to address those concerns.

The goals of the Holmes Run stream restoration project are to restore and stabilize (short- and long-term) a 400-linear-foot severely eroded stream reach of Holmes Run without increasing flooding, and to improve the stream's water quality. The goal of the Chambliss crossing project is to provide a planned regional transportation connection for pedestrians and bicyclists between existing greenways in Dora Kelley Park and Glen Hills Park in Fairfax County. The stream restoration and crossing have been combined into one project based on feedback from the community. This will enable the two projects to be designed to complement one another, and it will minimize costs compared to doing each project separately.

Our staff and design team have worked closely with the Alexandria community in addition to the Virginia Department of Transportation, Fairfax County Sanitation Authority, Fairfax County Park Authority, adjacent Fairfax County landowners and the regional pedestrian and bicycle community to understand concerns throughout the public outreach process, which included four public meetings between March and September 2009. A summary of information provided at previous public meetings and other correspondence can be found on the project website: <http://alexandriava.gov/localmotion/info/default.aspx?id=20184>. In addition, revised project drawings incorporating the design changes noted below will be available on the project website by July 30th.

We have heard your concerns with regard to the projects, which we understand to be primarily related to flooding, the crossing, and loss of meadow, and have worked to find solutions that address those concerns while still meeting the primary goals of the projects as noted above. Below is a summary of responses to your concerns, including updates on some recent design changes that have been made to address additional concerns.

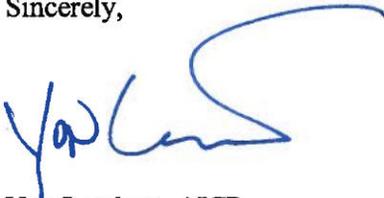
- The 100-year flood (FEMA-regulated) water surface elevation is not being increased by the proposed projects. The design and construction will adhere to local, state, and federal (FEMA) standards, design criteria and permit requirements to ensure that the project is designed and constructed in a manner that does not increase this regulated flood elevation.
- **The handrail has recently been removed from the crossing design.** This should reduce potential debris jams and maintenance.
- The deck elevation of the low profile crossing is set  $\pm 2$  feet above base flow to allow floating debris to pass under the structure during normal flows. The top of the deck is 3-4 feet below the top of the stream banks to allow higher waters and any debris (such as logs) to pass over the deck during high-flow events.
- Both the position and angle of crossing and the stream restoration/bank stabilization techniques that will be used take into account the storm drainage outfalls (including pipes and channels) and other constraints (e.g., power poles and underground sanitary sewer lines) in the project area.
- The grading of the pedestrian paths will not create a pathway for flooding toward the homes. Instead, it will direct water back toward Holmes Run.
- The proposed low profile/elevated crossing provides a much higher level of accessibility for pedestrians and bicyclists than a fair weather crossing. In addition, research shows an elevated low profile crossing is better for stream ecology than a fair weather crossing.
- The former meadow area that was lost to erosion is being rebuilt (up to 20 feet) and returned to "green space." The water's edge is being pushed away from Holmes Run Parkway and the eroded areas are being regained. However, the regained area is being sloped and planted with native trees, shrubs, and herbaceous plants.
- The project will increase the green space on the Alexandria side of the channel. Although the area of maintained grass/fescue will decrease, there will be an overall increase in natural area and buffer between your homes and the stream.
- Restoring the grassed meadow to its previous condition (flat grassed area with a vertical bank) would INCREASE flood water elevations, even without the crossing.
- Building the meadow back out would require a boulder wall or gabion baskets to protect it from erosion, or the erosion that happened to the previous meadow would occur again. Using gabions would have negative impacts on the water quality and stream ecology of Holmes Run. This would be considered a negative impact to Holmes Run by the state and federal resource agencies. In addition, the funding that is being used to finance the stabilization and restoration are tied to water quality improvements.
- The sizes of the proposed rocks and boulders to be used in the restoration for bank protection and stabilization are larger than 2 feet in diameter along the toe of the bank slope and even bigger (3x3'x4' (3+ tons)) in the proposed grade control/bank protection and habitat structures to be used in the channel.

- Natural channel material/cobble (currently in the stream) will be positioned in the channel to improve habitat, but it is not for stabilization. Stabilization will be provided by added boulders and the roots of the newly planted native woody vegetation.
- The proposed restoration converts the bank to a stable geometry with trees, shrubs, rocks, and boulders placed for stabilization. This will provide a stable buffer between the homes and Holmes Run, improve water quality, and not increase flooding.
- The erosion control matting shown on the plans is designed for this type of application and has been used on similar projects. This erosion control matting provides temporary protection (1-3 years) against erosion until vegetation can be established.
- The existing elevation and bank heights were considered in the design. The Fairfax County side of the stream will remain lower than the City of Alexandria side, as it is today. The Fairfax County side will flood before the Alexandria side, as it does today, since it is lower.

Overall, we feel the project achieves both the goals of the City and the community and addresses your primary concerns of not increasing flooding and stabilizing/restoring the stream bank. As requested, we can provide you with a set of clearer plans (i.e., printed at a larger scale) and sit down with you to answer questions you may have about the plans. We thank you for your input to date and hope this helps answer some of your questions and concerns.

If you have any additional questions about the crossing portion of the project, please feel free to contact me at (703) 746-4081 or [yon.lambert@alexandriava.gov](mailto:yon.lambert@alexandriava.gov). For specific questions about the stream bank restoration, please contact Claudia Hamblin-Katnik at (703) 746-4068 or [claudia.hamblin-katnik@alexandriava.gov](mailto:claudia.hamblin-katnik@alexandriava.gov).

Sincerely,



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Principal Transportation Planner  
Pedestrian & Bicycle Program, Dept. of Transportation & Environmental Services  
City of Alexandria

cc: Elizabeth Murphy, Virginia Marine Resources Commission  
William Skrabak, Director, Office of Environmental Quality, City of Alexandria  
Claudia Hamblin-Katnik, Office of Environmental Quality, City of Alexandria