

## Community Meeting Notes: Future Park in Lyttonsville

March 30, 2023 – Hybrid Community Meeting, 7-8:30pm

---



Project Web site:

[Montgomery Parks Lyttonsville Future Park](#)

Meeting Video:

[Recording of Community Meeting Lyttonsville Future Park](#)

Project Manager: Ching-Fang Chen,

[Email Ching Fang Chen](#)

Parks Staff in Attendance:

- Ching-Fang Chen, Project Manager, Park Development Division (PDD)
- Patricia McManus, Design Section Manager, PDD
- Brian Lewandowski, Project Engineer, PDD
- Shirl Spicer, Cultural Resources Planning Supervisor, Park Planning and Stewardship Division (PPSD)
- Hyojung Garland, Master Planner/Supervisor, Park Planning Section (PPSD)
- Carl Heeralal, Park Manager, Southern Parks
- Melissa Chotiner, Community Outreach and Engagement Manager, Public Affairs and Community Partnerships (PACP)
- Michelle Ramirez, Public Outreach Specialist, PACP
- Christina Hudson, Public Outreach Specialist, PACP
- Trevin Sherard, Park Police Officer
- Kelly Caldwell, Meghan Page, Bridge Conservator, EverGreene Architectural Arts

Purpose of Meeting

The purpose of this community meeting was to present the recommended facility plan and the Talbot Avenue Bridge Memorial for public feedback.

Meeting Summary

The meeting began with overview of the project background, preliminary concepts and feedback from the prior public meetings and Open Town Hall surveys. Staff presented the bridge memorial studies and a recommended facility plan with 3D renderings and examples for public input. A study model and graphic exhibits were also on display to help communicate the design. The bridge conservation consultant presented the findings and general recommendations for conservation and storage of the bridge. Staff also shared a proposed approach for ecological landscape and meadow establishment testing work. Christina Contreras from MCDOT joined the meeting to answer questions related to the Purple Line and the Capital Crescent Trail. Paul Ellis from County Council-member Kate Stewart's office also participated in the meeting. There were 26 people who attended the meeting in person and 10 who attended virtually.

Staff encouraged participants to ask questions throughout the meeting. Following the presentation, a discussion and Q&A period allowed for community feedback.

### Comments and Discussion

- Long-time resident and Acting President of the Lyttonsville Community Civic Association, Ms. Patricia Tyson, expressed her endorsement of the plan. She shared the animosities and confusion between the African American and Caucasian families on both sides of the train tracks in the past and how much the bridge meant to the Lyttonsville community. There were times when people on the other side of the train tracks wanted the bridge to be removed to block the access. When the Purple Line decided to take down the bridge, the Lyttonsville community came to realize that people on the other side had appreciation for the bridge too. The bridge symbolizes the Lyttonsville community and the Woodside community on the other side. Both sides didn't want the bridge that meant so much to them to be taken down. Woodside residents joined and organized the celebration for the bridge before the demolition. The bridge that someone labeled "junk" became a relationship, and commanded three neighborhoods (Lyttonsville, Rosemary Hills and Woodside) to work together on projects that affect their lives.

Ms. Tyson shared the Citations to the *Talbot Avenue Bridge Committee* from Senator Chris Van Hollen, House Representative Jamie Raskin, and County Councilmember Tom Hucker recognizing what the bridge really meant: breaking down barriers of racial discrimination. She also expressed appreciation to State Senator Jeff Waldstreicher's support for the bridge and the park project.

- A neighbor on Michigan Avenue expressed his support for the design and asked a question about the water feature and whether it will be running year-round or will be running only during storm events.

Staff comment: This neighborhood park doesn't have the capacity to accommodate a permanent water feature that would require a lot of maintenance. The idea is to use the stormwater management facility as a feature during storm events.

- A question came up about whether the park will provide parking.

Staff comment: No. The park serves the neighborhood and trail and is not intended for people to drive here to use the park.

- A virtual participant commented that she really likes the new concept B with the bridge parallel to the trail, and also likes the idea of a natural looking climbing structure. Her son specially asked for this.
- A virtual participant commented '*What a thorough and lovely presentation. I love it.*'

- A participant expressed endorsement for the plan. He commented that the bridge seems wider than expected for the historic bridge. All other elements fit together well on the plan. He suggested to use “Greater Lyttonsville” to refer to people living in the neighborhood including people living in Woodside, north of the train tracks. He made a request to possibly create an elevated viewing station in the park so people can have an overview to watch the trains. A viewing station could be part of the landscape by the Michigan Avenue entrance and the trail. He pointed out that there are two sides of the train tracks at this location. There are long freight trains, rapid commuter MARC trains and Capitol flyer trains on the CSX side. The Purple Line light rail will run on the side that curves in right next to the park. It would be hard to see the trains from the bridge memorial.

Staff comment: The concept includes a climbable play structure for a similar purpose, but space in the park is limited. This is a nice idea, but it may be better to incorporate a viewing station along the Capital Crescent Trail. This idea will be explored and coordinated with MCDOT in the detailed design phase of the project.

- A community member expressed her gratitude for the design and commented that the design is beautiful. The presentation materials really help to visualize the future park. Plan B with the bridge parallel to the Capital Crescent Trail works very well and honors the bridge. She commented to make sure safety and visibility is considered in the bridge preservation work.

Consultant response: The key bridge components will be at an accessible ground level especially around kids. The core components are structurally sound, and rust will be stabilized. The bridge structure may be recoated and could include anti-graffiti coatings that can be easily maintained and not adversely affect the bridge.

- A participant commended the team for the inclusive community outreach effort and the hard work going into the design. A great design evolved by really listening to the community and incorporating feedback from the last meeting. She thanked the team for the work and credited historian, David Rotenstein, for raising awareness and educating the community about the bridge. She also expressed relief to know preservation experts have been hired for bridge conservation work. She mentioned there are other people who couldn’t attend the meeting but are very supportive of the project.
- Paul Ellis from County Councilmember Kate Stewart’s office, who represents all three neighborhoods, thanked the community for attending the meeting. He expressed appreciation for the team’s responsiveness to the community input, creativity for coming up with the plan, and reverence for the history of this area. He reiterated the importance of the bridge and history and expressed continuous support for the Lyttonsville community.
- A virtual participant who lives in Lyttonsville on the corner of Pennsylvania and Michigan commented *“I can’t wait for the park. Thanks so much.”*

- A participant commented in favor of the location and the way the bridge memorial is sited. There is only one access point from the trail to the bridge memorial, which deters trail users from using the bridge as a trail bypass.
- An immediate neighbor and long-time resident on Michigan Avenue expressed appreciation for the work and commented that plan really looks good, and it's awesome to see how the plan been set in place for the community. It will be a new start, new day, and a different look. He asked the park team to continue staying in touch for the development of the project.
- A participant who moved from Adelphi to the neighborhood expressed great appreciation for the plan. He learned the Lyttonsville history from neighbors. He remarked that this is how people connect with history, and we have history around us.
- A participant who used to serve on the Georgetown Branch study group and was involved in the former master plan committee commented that things are coming together. She expressed her excitement to see all the things that are going on and the beautiful addition to the neighborhood. She thanked the community for its continuous efforts.
- Staff from the Parks Cultural Resource team expressed anticipation for working with the community on historic interpretation in the detailed design phase of the project.
- The representative from the Department of Transportation expressed support for working together to protect the bridge at the current storage site.

At the conclusion of the meeting, staff notified people of the opportunity to testify at the Planning Board hearing to provide any additional comments on the project and to request funding for final design and construction of the project. The Park Planning Section Supervisor shared information about upcoming community engagement for a project to add amenities to improve the nearby Rosemary Hill Lyttonsville Local Park.

**Next Steps:** Develop site engineering work for stormwater management and coordinate required permits. Prepare recommended plan and submit to the Montgomery Planning Board for approval.