

Proposed bike and pedestrian trail from Round Hill to Purcellville

The Round Hill to Purcellville bike and pedestrian trail was rolled out in two phases. The Round Hill phase was introduced in 2014, at which time Loudoun County Equine Alliance (LCEA) spoke out about its impact on the equestrian trail and sledding hill. We were told that in order to be ADA compliant, the trail needed to serpentine down the sledding trail at a shallow grade. Not only will this completely remove the hill for sledding purposes, it runs down very close to the equestrian trail, especially as the equine trail turns from behind the pool to run up the hill on the outside of the tree line. We were told the trail could not be modified and to look to move the equestrian trail. After several meetings with parks and recreation seeking to swap the equine and walking trails in this area, we were told that the side slope was too severe to control erosion for horses along the walking trail, and more importantly, the high school needed the outer walking trail for their marathon course and any change would ruin the distance of the marathon. In addition, we were told not to worry about the trail situation as the project was far from being finalized.

Now, the second phase of the trail is being proposed. I, as president of LCEA went to the public input meeting last week. The ADA trail is to continue from the sledding hill past the pool house, cross the entrance road and run through the equestrian parking field before turning north along park property that parallels Tranquility Road and runs to route 7. The equestrian and pedestrian trails in the park currently run along this same border of Tranquility Road. Mark Hoffman could not tell me how much it could/would impact our existing trail. This route was proposed because it runs along more park owned property thereby reducing the number of easements required. LCEA's concerns are:

1. This ADA trail really impacts the equestrian trail and parking.
2. The ADA trail obliterates the sledding hill.
3. The proposed trail along route 7 to Purcellville will be on one side of the road only and will be 10 feet wide. This means any bike traffic will be going against vehicular traffic in one direction.
4. Any bike traffic from Purcellville to Round Hill will have to go through Franklin Park or risk riding along route 7 west of the park without designated bike lanes.
5. The master plan for Franklin Park did not allow bikes. Why are bikes going to be allowed without reviewing and altering the master plan?

In a private conversation with Mayor Scott Ramsey of Round Hill, he suggested that the trail through Franklin Park may not need to go through the ADA application. After all, it is a bike trail mainly. If it does not need to be ADA compliant, it could enter the park from the park entrance, run along the park road (mark it with sharrows) to the performing arts center. From there, it can connect to an existing gravel road that runs to the west side of the park and along the border with Lakefield road. The portion along Lakefield is the current combined walking and equestrian trail and it is gravel. This could be modified to be stone dust or asphalt for bikes and pedestrians at little expense. An equestrian dirt trail could parallel it to take us away from the bikes. This would eliminate ALL of the problems that the ADA trail creates as it pertains to the horses, would maintain the sledding hill and would easily connect bikes to the proposed trail on Lakefield road. The bike trail out of the park to Purcellville would need to start further west, and

would require more easements, but we believe in the long run it is a better plan. The sight lines at the park entrance are better than at route 7 and Tranquility. Furthermore the two towns could eventually look to extend the route 7 trail west all the way to Round Hill, thereby giving walkers and bikers two routes between the towns.

Respectfully
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President, LCEA