

ANTICIPATED QUESTIONS

Is this the only time the public will have a chance to comment on the plan? The record will remain open until March 18, 2009. Written comments will be accepted by email or mail. Due to the scope of the Master Plan, as projects move forward, and as the funding will occur over several years, the public may provide comments at County Council meetings as part of the budget development process.

What is going to happen to the farm? The County is committed to maintaining the majority of the Dairy Farm in agricultural use. The Proposed Draft Master Plan focuses only on the 140-acre Hammond's Connection and approximately 40 acres on the west side of Dairy Farm Lane. The majority of the farm will remain under cultivation. The current tenant farmer, Maryland Sunrise Farm, has a lease until February 2010. Currently a Request for Proposals (RFP) is being developed for the long-term lease.

What about the buildings? In 2008 the Maryland Historical Trust determined that the 66 of the 68 buildings and structures in the Village are contributing features of the historic landscape of the Dairy Farm. Under state and federal laws, specific historic preservation practices must be undertaken to protect the historic character of the Village. Over the next year, the Department of Recreation and Parks will decide which buildings they require for park operations. The long-term farming lease will allow the farming operation to determine which buildings they require and will maintain. The remaining buildings will be available for agricultural, environmental, and community based organizations to lease.

Will Billy the Goat have to re-locate? The Naval Academy mascot, Bill the Goat will be housed at the Dairy Farm and will be cared for by the farmers.

What will happen to the 4-H Dairy Leasing Club? The 4-H will continue to operate out of the Dairy Farm as part of the tenant farmer's lease. They will always be welcome to be part of the Dairy Farm. Contact Gail Yeiser at (410) 757-3327 if you are interested in joining the Club.

When will the Dairy Farm be open to the public? The current farming operation is leasing the entire site and the majority of the buildings, so public access will be restricted to allow the farmers safe operation of the large farming equipment. Current phasing would take approximately six years, with the initial phase completed in early 2010.

Groups may rent the Pavilion, Firehouse, or Marketplace from Maryland Sunrise Farm, 410-923-0726. The Department will grant special permission for events such as bird counts, stream surveys, and other programs.

How much will it cost to visit Hammond's Connection? The Master Plan does not address the administrative or programmatic issues surrounding the proposed amenities. Some costs will be based on what is charged at other sites, such as the Picnic Pavilion rentals. Otherwise, no specific fees, permits, or hours of operation have been determined. Those determinations will be included when funding for various phases of the park has been approved.

What is the funding level for this project? In the current fiscal year (FY2009, FYs run July 1-June 30) there are both operating funds and a Capital Projects budget for design and some construction. Funds have been requested for the FY2010 budget, although a final budget will not be available until later this spring.

Will the Advisory Committee continue to meet after this meeting? The Advisory Committee has successfully completed their task of developing recommendations for the Draft Master Plan. They have worked hard over the past 7 months to create a vision which highlights the agricultural and rural beauty of the area and provides unique opportunities and experiences for the public. As we move forward the Department of Recreation and Parks will form an Advisory Board, and eventually a Friends organization, to guide decision making into the future. Additionally, volunteers will be needed in certain phases of development such as designing, installing, and maintaining gardens, helping with routine maintenance of buildings such as painting and landscaping.

What happens next? The County will be accepting public comments until March 18, 2009. Comments may be submitted online http://www.aacounty.org/RecParks/contact_forms/public_comment3.cfm or by mail. At that point a report will be compiled listing all of the comments and will be reviewed by staff and recommendations will be made if any changes to the plan are deemed necessary. Depending on the scope of the changes the County may choose to solicit comments on the changes and may conduct additional meetings.

Why is it called Hammond's Connection? "Hammond's Connection at the Dairy Farm" was chosen to differentiate the park from the farming operations. The Hammonds held patents and land grants aggregating thousands of acres throughout Anne Arundel, Howard and Frederick counties and large estates on the Eastern Shore of Maryland. The Dairy Farm property was formerly part of the Hammond family estate. The Hammond family cemetery and manor house foundation are located along the western edge of the current Dairy Farm property. The Hammond Manor House was built around the year 1700. The family cemetery consists of 18 grave sites, the earliest is dated 1760.