

Time-Sensitive Community Update from GOCA, 24 January 2023

Dear Friends and Neighbors,

We wanted to share some important and time-sensitive community developments with you, in addition to other items of relevance to our community.

Community News

AT&T Property Development. Some 75 nominations, including one for the site of the AT&T campus in Oakton at 3033 Chain Bridge Road—the corner of Rt. 123 and Blake Lane, have been proposed as possible amendments to the County’s Comprehensive Plan as part of the County’s Site Specific Plan Amendment (SSPA) process. The SSPA is a County-wide opportunity for land owners to propose changes to the Fairfax County Comprehensive Plan. The [nomination for the AT&T site](#) is for a mixed-use development that would include a significant amount of housing and limited retail on this large parcel. **The public is invited to participate in a virtual meeting this Wednesday, January 25 (tomorrow) at 7 pm**, at which the nominators will present their proposals relevant to the Oakton/Vienna/Merrifield area. **There will also be a Planning Commission workshop with the public on March 2nd at which the public will be invited to speak.** The Planning Commission will recommend a list of nominations to the Board of Supervisors that would be subjected to a more substantial and detailed consideration and evaluation by the staff, Planning Commission, and Board, all with public engagement. You can follow the SSPA process and receive updates from the County by linking to the following site [Site-Specific Plan Amendment \(SSPA\) Process | Planning Development](#).

We encourage you to become involved in helping determine what happens with this property so central to Oakton. To participate in the Virtual Meeting, click on the following hyperlink: [Virtual Meeting - MS Teams](#). If you prefer to join by phone (audio only), the call-in number is +1 571-429-5982, with Conference ID: 261 555 964#. If you have questions, email County planning staff at DPCSSPA@FairfaxCounty.gov. You can also reach out to Providence District Supervisor Palchik’s office at providence@fairfaxcounty.gov or the Providence Planning Commissioner Phil Niedzielski-Eichner at phillip.niedzielski-eichner@fairfaxcounty.gov.

Hunter Mill Sidewalk. GOCA has also continued to engage with Supervisor Palchik's office regarding the need for a sidewalk along Hunter Mill Road to ensure the safety of all those who make their way on foot along that busy road to Oakton Community Park, Oakton Library, and Oakton's commercial district. We are assured that this project is a high priority for the Supervisor, fueled in part by the close to 600 signatures we got on our petition, but it will need approval by the entire Board of Supervisor to move to the next step. Our understanding is that the County will soon initiate an online survey to help it prioritize such projects, and your participation will be crucial to help advance this project. We will let you know as soon as the survey goes live.

New Initiative by the Fairfax Families for Safe Streets (Ffx FSS). Ffx FSS is a nonprofit, all-volunteer organization that brings the community together to create safe streets for all people to walk and bike, by telling impact stories, educating the general public, and educating policymakers about policies and investments that can eliminate pedestrian and vulnerable road user traffic-related fatalities in Fairfax County. Ffx FSS has a new initiative to track pedestrian incidents or areas that need safety improvements- go to the [Fairfax Families for Safe Streets](#)

[\(Ffx FSS\) Near Miss / Dangerous Location Survey](#) and report what happened, where it happened and when it happened. You can submit reports in English, Spanish, and other languages spoken by Fairfax County residents based on your device's language settings. This crowdsourced data is used to inform VDOT, FCDOT, and our elected officials where there are high risk locations that require attention before people are killed or injured. When you contribute your report, you are adding to the thousands of incidents that we are recording and sharing to advocate for action. More information is available on the [Ffx FSS website](#).

Grant for Blake Lane Park Invasive Removal Efforts. Congratulations to Invasive Plant Management Area (IMA) site leader Jen Pradas and the dedicated team of IMA volunteers at Blake Lane Park who have just been awarded a \$20K grant from Dominion Energy Charitable Foundation's Environmental Education and Stewardship program. The funding, which is being administered by the Fairfax County Park Foundation, will support the removal of invasive plants and replace them with new seedlings. Blake Lane Park was chosen for this program due to the high density of *Ailanthus Altissima*, a host tree for the spotted lanternfly, which is a rapidly spreading pest threatening both forests and agriculture in Virginia, as well as strong community volunteer support for the [IMA program](#). A Fairfax County Park Authority funding match will also provide long-term maintenance and community engagement at the site.

GOCA News

Historian Jim Lewis at the Schoolhouse and on the Road. On Sunday, March 26th at 4pm popular local historian Jim Lewis will present on the topic of "Oakton in the Civil War" in the historic Oakton schoolhouse in Oakton Community Park. If you would like to hear this presentation, please sign up [here](#). We have room for 45 people in the schoolhouse. GOCA, together with the Vale Club, has also invited Jim to guide us on another bus tour of the historic landmarks in the area on April 15th. This program will be a follow-on to last year's tour, not a repeat, and will cover different parts of the area—see [here](#) for more detail. Space on the bus tour is limited to 22 people. If you would like to join us, please sign up [here](#).

Bluebirds To Find Homes in Oakton Community Park. With the help of the [Virginia Bluebird Society](#) (VBS), Fairfax Master Naturalists and local volunteers, our Park will soon have four bluebird houses. A volunteer for VBS builds the specialized homes which will be installed in February in time for the Spring nesting. Stay tuned for a future educational opportunity to learn more about these efforts and our bluebird friends.

Upcoming Community Events

Invasive Plant Removal and Native Plant Installation in Oakton Community Park. Upcoming dates are February 4th, March 4th, April 1st, and May 6th. If you would like to be notified directly about these opportunities, please email [Mark Deaton](#).

Invasive Plant Work Days at Blake Lane Park. Upcoming sessions are this Friday, January 27th, from 10am to 1pm and this coming Sunday, January 29th, from noon to 3pm. Please email [Jen Pradas](#) if you plan to come.

Invasive Plants Removal at Difficult Run Stream Valley Park. Participate in a Girl Scout Silver Award project by helping remove invasive plants in Difficult Run Stream Valley Park. Register [here](#) for March 11th at 10am-12pm and register [here](#) for March 18th at 10am-12pm. All ages and abilities are welcome.

Upcoming Activities and Events at the Oakton Library. [Click here](#) for a listing.

For additional updates, please visit [GOCA's website](#) periodically. For a broader listing of community events, and to stay up to date with a wide range of developments in Providence District, in which Oakton is located, consider subscribing to Supervisor Dalia Palchik's "**Palchik Post**" by signing up [here](#).

Help wanted! GOCA is an all-volunteer nonprofit organization, and your support is greatly appreciated. Please help spread the word about GOCA among your neighbors who may not already be on our mailing list. We would also appreciate, for those of you in homeowners' associations, your letting us know who the current leadership is so we can enlist them in our outreach efforts. Our database is already robust, but we'd like to make it as comprehensive as we can. Finally, please also contact us if you would like to become more actively involved. Email us at contact@greateroakton.com and we can match you with the right opportunity.

Warmly,

The GOCA Board

Lauren Crum and Shelley Deutch, Co-Chairs

Jody Bennett, Linda Byrne, Jackie Davey, Mark Deaton, Michelle Fisher, Janet Kerr-Tener (Founding Co-Chair), Kris Olsen, Robin Thurman, and Gary Wong