



October 16, 2024

The Friends of Lambert's Point City Park

Re: Lambert's Point City Park

Dear Friends of Lambert's Point City Park,

On behalf of the Chesapeake Bay Foundation (CBF), we appreciate the City of Norfolk's efforts to protect its environment. We applaud the City of Norfolk for designating the former Lambert's Point Golf Course as Lambert's Point Open Space. The park includes some of the last public waterfront property in the city. It's a great spot for enjoying nature, taking a walk, or simply relaxing by the water.

We understand that the City also sought citizen input through an online survey, which revealed overwhelming support for three overlapping categories: "park," "green space," and "park & greenspace." Almost every other category listed consisted of features often found in municipal parks, such as bike paths, playgrounds, and dog parks.

Norfolk is underserved when it comes to parks and green space. It has the highest population density among the Hampton Roads cities, yet only 5% of its land is parkland, well below the national average. In comparison, Virginia Beach has 17% parkland, and Chesapeake has 27%. Additionally, the 5% figure includes school playgrounds, graveyards, and the Norfolk Botanical Garden, so free public parkland is even less than 5%.

Green spaces, such as forests, gardens, and other open spaces, are important to the health of the Chesapeake Bay for many reasons, including:

- Filtering pollution: Green spaces absorb rainwater and filter it as it soaks into the soil, preventing pollution from entering the bay. Trees and shrubs planted along streams, called riparian buffers, can remove up to 65% of nitrogen pollution, 45% of phosphorus pollution, and 60% of sediment pollution.
- Stabilizing soil: Trees and shrubs stabilize stream banks and reduce erosion.
- Providing habitat: Green spaces provide food and shelter for wildlife, including birds and butterflies.
- Cooling water: Tree canopies shade and cool water, which helps prevent temperature fluctuations that can stress aquatic life.

- Balancing heating effects: Open spaces help balance the heating effects of buildings and asphalt.

We particularly appreciate park management including no-mow zones in the park area. This will not only be beneficial now but for years to come. Mowing less not only makes for happy pollinators but for happy park staff and maintenance staff. This can also be a positive erosion control method to reduce sediment and other runoff coming from the property. By not mowing over extended periods of time it creates more permanent habitat and nesting areas for a variety of wildlife. Lawnmowers run on petroleum-based fuel can produce significant carbon dioxide emissions. By not mowing large grasslands for any period, fewer pollutants are released into the air and ultimately the waterways.

We appreciate the efforts of the Lambert's Point City Park Steering Committee, Friends of Lambert's Point City Park, and the grassroots citizen efforts supporting the positive future of Lambert's Point City Park.

We understand that there are many management decisions that localities have to weigh and appreciate consideration of our perspective. Thank you for allowing us to share our perspective on the matter, and we would be happy to discuss or answer any questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Christina M. Everett". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, looping initial "C".

Christina M. Everett
Hampton Roads Director