

Algonquin-Cary Subarea Plan

Community Engagement Summary

To better understand and address the communities' needs and vision for the future of the Subarea, several community engagement activities were conducted to gather public feedback. These activities were designed to include residents, businesses, property owners, and other stakeholders in the decision making process, particularly those who live, work, and recreate in the area. Over 1,500 residents and stakeholders participated in the planning process, whose input informed the plan's vision, goals, and recommendations. More than 870 people provided input through the online survey and in-person community workshops, while others engaged with the plan at community events. Over 1,500 people visited the virtual open house page, with 22 individuals participating in the discussion forums.

Overall, participants held many of the same concerns and desire to create public access to the large lakes. Several viewed the sites as a "blank canvas" to create a unique destination and space for the community to promote economic development and unity between the two villages. Ideas for development and amenities include outdoor recreation, event space, natural resources protection, and context-sensitive commercial and residential development that takes advantage of the lakes and reduces negative impacts to surrounding neighborhoods. Providing safe connections to existing trails and expanding the trail network was also commonly cited. Many raised the need to generate revenue for long-term maintenance and management of parks and open space.

This summary provides more detail about community engagement activities held throughout the planning process, including:

- Steering committee meetings
- Stakeholder interviews (July 2018)
- Community workshop (July 2018)
- Online survey (April – June 2019)
- Public visioning workshop (May 2019)
- Community events (August – September 2019)
- Virtual open house (February 2021)

Targeted Outreach

Steering Committee

The Steering Committee, comprising local residents, business owners, and elected and appointed officials, was tasked with providing guidance and feedback throughout the planning process. Members of the steering committee include:

- Jerry Glogowski, Village of Algonquin (Trustee)
- Scott Hennings, McHenry County Division of Transportation
- Dan Jones, Cary Park District
- Elizabeth Kessler, McHenry County Conservation District
- Patrick Khoury, Village of Cary
- Ellen McAlpine, Village of Cary (Trustee)
- Dennis Sandquist, McHenry County Planning and Development
- Alexander Voigts, Village of Algonquin
- Randi Wille, LafargeHolcim, Ltd. (parent of Meyer Material)

The steering committee kickoff meeting was held on May 30, 2018 at Algonquin Village Hall to introduce members to CMAP and the planning process, and begin a conversation about the specific issues and opportunities in the study area. CMAP staff led an exercise to identify assets, issues, concerns, and potential improvements. While opinions varied, members coalesced around the idea of the mining areas as a “blank canvas” to create a unique destination and space for the community to promote economic development and unity between the two villages. Ideas for development and amenities included outdoor recreation, event space, and mixed commercial and residential development, among other suggestions. Detailed comments can be found at the end of this appendix. As the planning process progressed, the steering committee met three additional times to provide input on the existing conditions report (3/18/19), preliminary recommendations (9/5/19), and draft plan (1/27/20).

Stakeholder Interviews

To gain further insight into the issues and opportunities presented by future activity in the mining areas and surrounding study area, CMAP staff conducted interviews with eight individuals representing a variety of interests and perspectives, including institutional leaders, business owners, and community residents. While the discussions were confidential in order to promote an open dialogue, several broad themes emerged, including:

- Revenue generation from recreation and development, while also allowing public access
- Recreation, programming, and events for all seasons
- Natural areas for preservation, environmental education, and passive recreation like hiking
- Context-sensitive commercial and residential development that take advantage of the lakes and reduce environmental impact
- Parking management
- Noise and light pollution control
- Trail connections to Route 31 side path, Prairie Trail, and downtown Algonquin and Cary

Public Events

Community Workshop

To initiate the public’s involvement in the planning process, a public workshop was held on July 23, 2018 at Cary Park District Community Center. More than 25 individuals attended the meeting, including residents from both villages, local and county staff and elected officials, and representatives from nonprofit organizations and local businesses.



At the meeting, CMAP staff presented the purpose of the subarea plan, introduced the project team, and gave an overview of the planning process. CMAP staff also facilitated a small group activity to hear from residents and other participants about the strengths, issues, and potential projects for the planning area. Participants recorded this information on

Public visioning workshop

A public visioning workshop was held on May 15, 2019 at St. John's Lutheran Church in Algonquin. The workshop began with a brief presentation by CMAP staff to provide an overview of the planning process and key findings from the existing conditions phase. Participants divided into three groups and responded to a series of discussion questions related to the environment, parks, recreation, economic development, and transportation. The groups then took part in a mapping activity where they used examples of different development, preservation, and open space options to develop a vision for Subarea 1 and Subarea 2.



Mapping exercise

Using large aerial maps and provided sample images, participants placed representations of their vision and comments on a map of the area.

Group 1

This group's vision embraces the water, with active recreation in Subarea 1, passive recreation in Subarea 2, and development such as restaurants, banquet halls, and 'higher-end' apartments making use of water frontage. In their vision, Subarea 1 featured canoeing and kayaking opportunities, fishing and possibly swimming, and paths for runners and walkers. Subarea 2 would be more passive, serving as a nature preserve with outdoor education opportunities for school groups. They wondered how to connect all existing and proposed paths together and to attractions such as the Prairie Trail, the Fox River Trail, and the east side of the river. They also saw room for small-scale, recreation-based retail, concessions in Subarea 1 near the water, and a possible walkable community development along Route 31 in Subarea 2.



Group 2

Group 2 wanted to see parks and open space maintained and enhanced, including non-motorized boat launches, all-seasons recreational opportunities, and keeping a sense of tranquility. The group concentrated potential development, including restaurants, cafes, and townhomes, along Route 31 and Klasen Road. They also located natural areas between residential neighborhoods and park space or other development to act as a buffer and maintain picturesque views.



Group 3

This group's vision sought to maintain and take advantage of the views from the lakefronts while striking a balance between open space and recreation and development. They proposed ideas like event spaces and multi-family housing to generate revenue. Their vision is about 'being different' to draw people to the area and expand amenities instead of replicating existing parks or single-family housing developments in nearby areas. They also want the areas to be pet friendly. The group voiced concerns about the potential cost of extending utilities to developable sites along Route 31 and Klasen Road. The stability of the land for new construction in Subarea 1 and Subarea 2 and the current condition of land in Subarea 3 were also concerns voiced by the group.



Group Summaries

Using booklet guides provided by CMAP staff, groups responded to questions to encourage discussion. Below is a summary of their responses.

Environment, Parks, and Recreation

What types of recreation activities would you like to see in the area?

- Canoeing and kayaking, both carry-in and rentals
- Paddleboats
- Passive recreation – preserving views, nature preserve, fishing, birding
- Swimming area and beach
- All-season opportunities
- Improve/build paths for runners, walkers, and cyclists

Are there opportunities to enhance and protect natural resources and water quality?

- Protection of resources and the environment through conservation design, stormwater best management practices, and green infrastructure
- Tree planting program and preserve existing tree cover
- Limit what can be done with water in lakes for protection

How can we promote environmental education?

- Eco-friendly nature center

Economic Development

What types of new businesses or services are needed and where should they be located?

- Restaurants with patios to take advantage of lake views
- Coffee shops and cafes
- Small-scale, recreation-focused retail

What type of housing would you like to see and where?

- Apartment complex with walkable community elements on Route 31
- Affordable townhomes along Klasen Road
- Lakefront condominiums

Are there opportunities to increase tourism and economic growth?

- Any development should utilize lake and views
- Replicate Chain O'Lakes business development along Fox River

What types of activities or events would attract people to the area?

- Develop outdoor amphitheater or entertainment space overlooking waterfront
- Wedding venue and event space

Transportation

What destinations would you like to reach by walking or biking?

- Prairie Trail connection
- East side of Fox River

- Connection between Subareas 1 and 2 across Klasen Road
- Cary Metra station

What intersections need improvement to reduce traffic and/or make it safer for people to walk or bike?

- Klasen Road is currently busy and narrow

How can the Villages make it easier for people to navigate the trail network?

- Connections and signage
- How to connect to trails north of U.S. 14?

Do you think residents would benefit from providing transit service to/from the area?

- Pace bus on Route 31 would be great
- Utilize existing park & ride on west side of Route 31

Other Topics

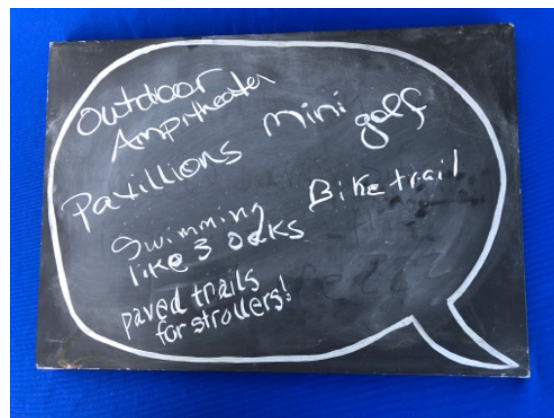
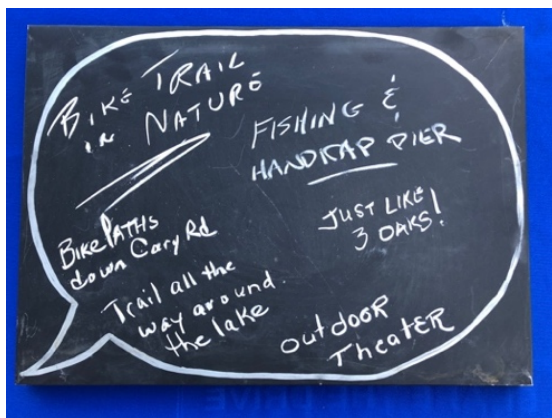
What other topics should be addressed in the plan that we have not discussed?

- Incorporate best management practices (BMPs) and green infrastructure throughout the area
- Something 'fun' with existing/old mining equipment to attract visitors and serve as a reminder of history of area
- Protect beauty and restore natural ecosystem to help whole area

Summer outreach events

Algonquin Summer Concert (August 1, 2019)

The Village of Algonquin hosts an annual summer concert series in Towne Park. CMAP staff attended a concert to speak with attendees about their ideas for the subarea. Attendees expressed interest in bike paths, paved trails, an accessible fishing pier, pavilions, mini golf, an outdoor amphitheater, and, in general, amenities similar to what is found at Three Oaks Conservation Area.



National Night Out (August 6, 2019)

As part of National Night Out, the Village of Cary hosted an event with food and games where the community was invited to learn about and interact with local public safety agencies. CMAP staff spoke with residents and visitors about their ideas for the future of the subarea. Suggestions included a fishing pier and fish stocking, swimming area, paved bike paths, trail connecting to Hoffman Park, playground, coffee shop or restaurant, paddle sports, and other outdoor and adventure recreation opportunities like a zipline or obstacle course.



Cary Main Street Fest (September 14, 2019)

Cary Main Street Fest is an annual festival with live music, food, and family activities in Downtown Cary. CMAP staff attended to inform residents and the public about the subarea planning process and get their ideas for the future of the planning area. People suggested developing the land as a large recreation area, and proposed a swimming beach, outdoor amphitheater, youth center, and water fountains for dogs.



Photo credit: MidWest Drone & 3D Imaging and Cary-Grove Area Chamber of Commerce

Online Engagement

Project Webpage

A project webpage for the plan is located on CMAP's website to share project deliverables and keep stakeholders informed about outreach activities:

<https://www.cmap.illinois.gov/programs/ta/algonquin-and-cary>.

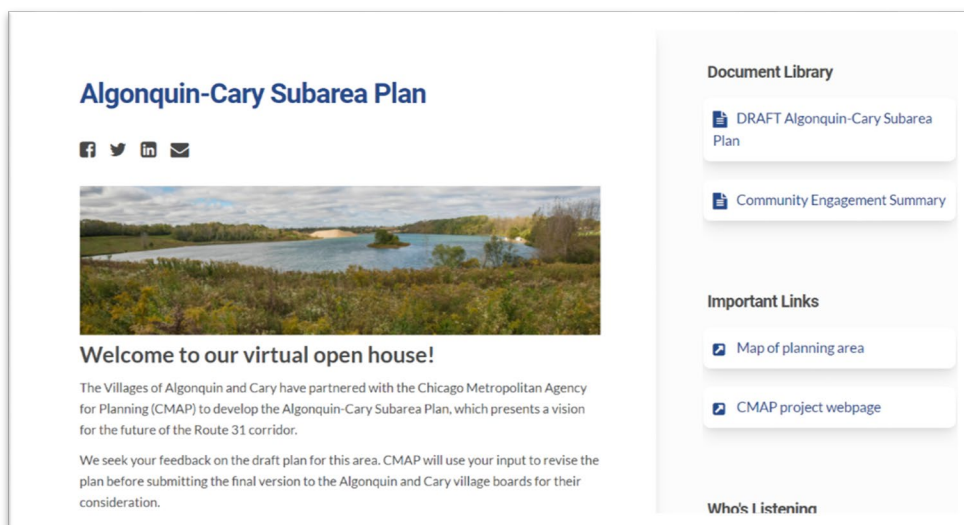
Virtual Open House

CMAP developed an online engagement webpage to seek public feedback on the draft plan, in compliance with the State of Illinois' Executive Orders regarding COVID-19 and public health guidance. The virtual open house, hosted at <https://engage.cmap.illinois.gov/algonquin-cary-subarea-plan>, was open and accepting public comments from January 27, 2021 to February 28, 2021.

The virtual open house featured five "stations" with information about the draft plan, including a short video, a text summary, and a discussion forum. It also provided a link to the draft plan, information on the project timeline, photos, and frequently asked questions. The five stations included:

1. **Introduction** - Overview of the planning area and process.
2. **Vision and Design Principles** to help guide future decision-making.
3. **Subarea 1** - Recommendations for Cary Lake at Rotary Park, Hoffman Park, Damisch Farm, and land along Route 31.
4. **Subarea 2** - Recommendations for the mining area south of Klasen Road, Fox Bluff Conservation Area, and Cary-Algonquin Road.
5. **Subarea 3 and Transportation Improvements** - Recommendations for the mining areas west of Route 31 and transportation throughout the planning area.

The virtual open house was accessed by over 1,500 people, receiving between 90 and 245 video views and 22 individuals participating in the discussion forums. Overall, comments received demonstrated support for new recreation amenities, path and trail improvements, open space protection, and ideas for new commercial businesses. A detailed summary of the virtual event is included at the end of this appendix.



Online Survey

CMAP developed an online survey to engage a broader audience on their ideas for the mining areas and surrounding area. The survey encouraged residents to provide feedback on themes, strategies, and their vision for the subarea. In total, 871 residents completed the survey, which was open for comment from April 22, 2019 to June 3, 2019.

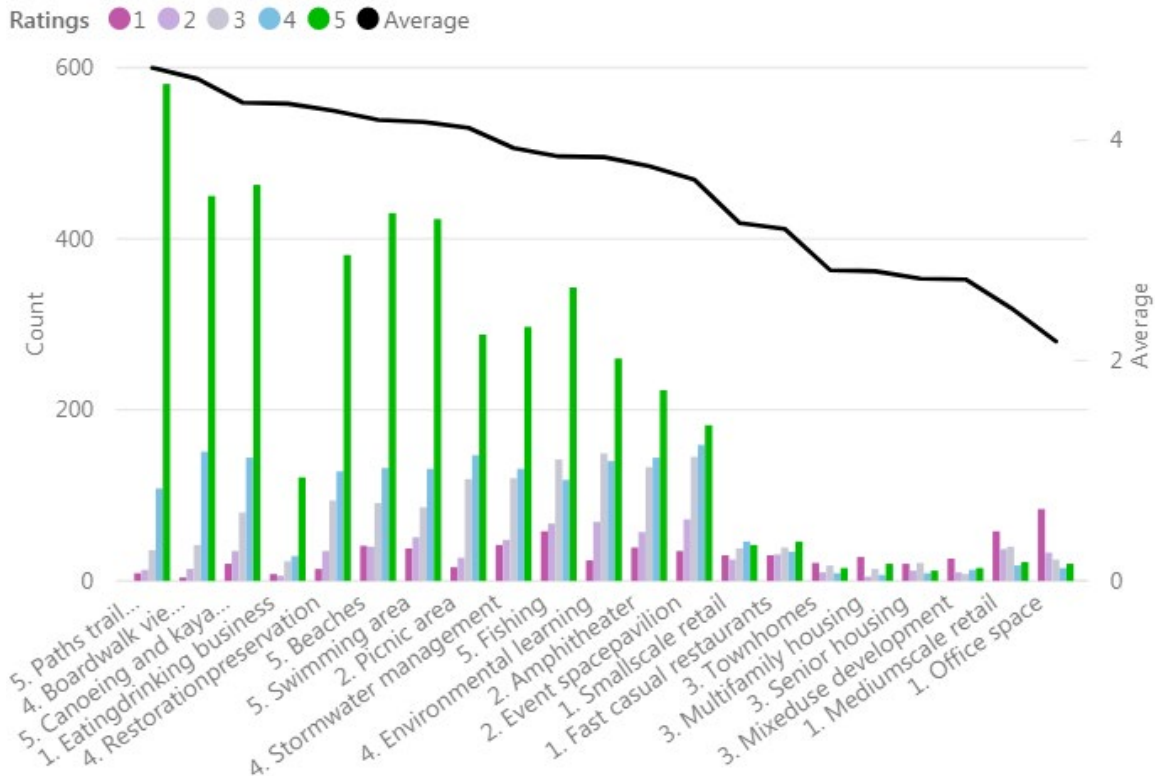
Participants began the survey by identifying their top three themes for the subarea. 'Parks and Recreation' along with 'Nature and Open Space' were ranked overwhelmingly as the top two choices, while 'Entertainment,' 'Economy,' and 'Housing' were third, fourth, and fifth, respectively.

Figure 2. Theme ranking



Participants then ranked corresponding strategies to implement the themes they identified in the prior step. Strategies such as trail connections, boardwalk viewpoints, canoeing/kayaking, restoration and preservation, beaches, and a swimming area all ranked very highly. Additionally, eating/drinking businesses was the highest rated strategy outside of the 'Parks and Recreation' and 'Nature and Open Space' categories.

Figure 3. Strategy ranking based on top three selected themes

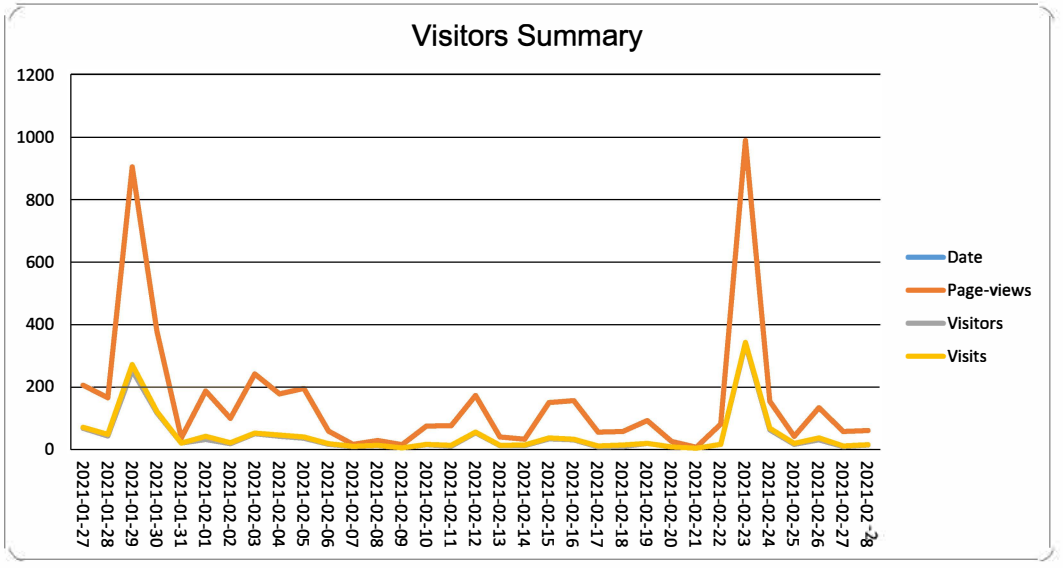


The final question of the survey was open-ended and asked participants for their personal vision for the subarea. 510 participants left comments. There were frequent mentions of Three Oaks Recreation Area in Crystal Lake – many respondents view it positively and would like to see something similar in Algonquin or Cary without the fees they pay in Crystal Lake. Alternatively, others favor quieter, more passive recreation opportunities and restored open space. The comments received are represented visually in Figure 4.

Figure 4. Common words used to describe vision for subarea



Project Report:	Algonquin-Cary Subarea Plan Virtual Open House	1/27/2021	to	2/28/2021
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Project Highlights

Total Visits	1.53 k
Photo Views	214
Document Downloads	55

ENGAGED PARTICIPANTS	22		
Engaged Actions Performed	Registered	Unverified	Anonymous

Contributed on Forums	3	19	0
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INFORMED PARTICIPANTS	265
Informed Actions Performed	Participants

Visited Multiple Project Pages	197
Viewed a photo	40
Downloaded a document	43
Contributed to a tool (engaged)	22
Visited an FAQ list Page	24

AWARE PARTICIPANTS	1,261
Aware Actions Performed	Participants

Visited at least one Page	1,261
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Tool Type	Engagement Tool Name	Video Views	Visitors	Contributors		
				Registered	Unverified	No. of comments
Forum Topics	Station 1: Introduction	137	75	1	9	12
Forum Topics	Station 2: Vision	245	48	0	4	5
Forum Topics	Station 3: Subarea 1 - Cary Lake at Rotary Park, Hoffman Park, Damisch Farm, and land along Route 31	164	58	1	4	5
Forum Topics	Station 4: Subarea 2 – Mining area south of Klasen Road and Fox Bluff Conservation Area	90	36	2	2	4
Forum Topics	Station 5: Subarea 3 and Transportation Improvements – Mining areas west of Route 31	90	43	1	4	5

Forum Comments
<p>Station 1: Introduction</p> <p>I still think an outdoor archery range like the one in Blackwell forest preserve would be great. Please consider. Be sure to include restaurant-friendly options that take advantage of the waterfront or other scenic views. Reply: I agree.</p> <p>I would include unique features/structures in the parks or open spaces to be developed that would lend itself to being a photo destination for events. I would also include sculptures which could make it a destination as described above, but could also engage the community of arts to participate and donate sculptures.</p> <p>Rotary park needs more trees and vegetation especially on the west side to help separate the park from route 31. A paved path vs a gravel path would make this park more accessible to more people. Perhaps ice fishing or cross country skiing could also be prompted as year round activities. Reply: A warming house for cross-country skiers and snowshoers would be a nice addition.</p> <p>Uninterrupted bike lanes are needed throughout the entire project, including connecting to downtown Algonquin. Reply: Agree with this comment. Ideally, bike riders could reach the Fox River/MCCD trail from any bike path(s) that are constructed.</p> <p>Disc golf is exploding in the area. It is very easy to play, inexpensive to install, and a great way to showcase open areas! Reply 1: This is what I was going to suggest as well; there are already two new courses, one newly redesigned course at Fel-Pro RRR, and the new course at Hoffman Park (Walnut Hollow). They are both thriving, and the disc golf boom means there is a need for more courses in this area. Reply 2: Excellent idea</p> <p>I am hoping that the western side of rotary park can have restaurants that will allow people to overlook the pond while eating. I agree with the previous poster that trees need to be planted basically throughout the park.</p>
<p>Station 2: Vision</p> <p>More unique (i.e. non-franchise/fast-food chain) restaurants are needed in Cary. Restaurants with outdoor seating facing the park/lake (and possibly a "dog-friendly" eating area) would be a significant plus. There is a significant lack of indoor swimming facilities available to the public in this area. Athletes looking to compete in the sport often have to travel anywhere from 20 to 50mins just to practice with a competitive team. Most swim meets attended by local teams were held out of state at facilities such as the Pleasant Prairie, WI RecPlex, as there are very few Chicago-area pools that can facilitate large gatherings. The Cary-Grove High School doesn't even have a pool. This could be an opportunity to build a facility that would benefit residents and draw athletes from surrounding communities to this area.</p> <p>If you want to connect the communities, it seems as though there should be a bike/walking path actually connecting the two in a meaningful way. Is it possible to identify a local corporate partner to help develop? It seems like an event venue would be an asset. Maybe an outdoor concert area for events? Maybe an indoor venue for events like weddings and celebrations.</p> <p>It would be wonderful to see this space turned back into natural areas for wildlife as a nature/forest preserve with no development or structures. This area has been absolutely destroyed over the past few decades. I agree with orienting new business towards the water, however, lets face it the "Rotary" is really just a glorified pond. It is much too small for boating, but could have a couple of sit down restaurants that overlooked the water. Maybe have a beach for swimming.</p>
<p>Station 3: Subarea 1</p> <p>So far my family and I are really enjoying all of the new additions to Hoffman Park. The disc golf course is great, along with the dog park and bike trail. I'd love to see more trails and family activities added. There appears to be a lot of potential with the Rotary park but at the moment its just a long walking path. The fishing spots are few and require a long hike from the parking lot. And because the path is gravel, its very difficult to ride your bike. I love the idea of a swimming area and mountain bike course, or adding more access areas to the water for fishing or frog catching. And during the summer it is extremely unpleasant because there are no shade, so trees would be awesome.</p>

It's nice that Algonquin is playing along with this soft-pedal vision by CMAP, but their actual behaviors are much different. Two years ago they allowed the 5 acre parcel along the East end of the park to be re-zoned to B-1, which is the highest impact commercial use. The site plan went from showing that land as park to showing it as a strip mall with parking along the border of the Fox Trails subdivision. Two months later LaFarge had Comcast cut through the rear of Fox Trails to lay in large communication trunk lines to this property. A number of residents objected and sought the assistance of the Village of Cary, since all of the proposals for this future land use were recreational when the mining permit was being requested. When this bait-and-switch was highlighted, the Village couldn't care less. To quote the Village Administrator (the Mayor was asked for a meeting and dodged out, sending him instead) "I'd love that land to be in the Village of Cary and if it was I would try to put retail there too." So it's really nice that CMAP is fostering conversation about what could possibly happen with all of this land as a think piece, but in reality CMAP and the Village of Cary have no sway over the commercial land on Klasen Road. They allowed a zoning change which now allows the owner of the land, by right, to put in pretty much anything other than industrial or manufacturing without any further governmental approval. To that end, including these parcels in the planning piece is locking the barn after the horse is already out.

For the Rotary park I would make these suggestions: pave the trail, add a swim/beach area, add a boat house with small boat/kayak rentals. I love the idea of adding some restaurants or ice cream shops along route 31 that back up to the park. Also: please connect all these parks with paved sidewalks/trails to each other and to the nearby subdivisions. Ideally, this park (and the rest of Cary) would be connected all the way to Algonquin with a sidewalk going along route 31 or Cary Algonquin road.

The gravel path around Cary Lake should be paved to accommodate those who use wheelchairs or walking aids. A paved path would also benefit families with strollers or wagons who want to picnic in the area. I would also suggest a few small shelters with a picnic table and/or benches around the lake for added protection of sun/rain.

The area is linear, like route 31, and the fox river, and the feature attractions will likewise be linearly arranged. There are lots of things you can do here. In addition to a swimming beach and amphitheatre, you could add a skate park (fairly cheap), a chess pavilion (very cheap), a sculpture park (local artists?), a beer garden, a pier for a small riverboat, and a wishing fountain. But there are two big problems. Accessing all these places and finding parking. You can try to fix this by adding a tramway or trolley that travels north south, following the linear arrangement of its features. The people of Algonquin and Cary can walk to the tramway or trolley and access whatever they want. Or you could add a pier at each end of the fox river to turn the small riverboat into a kind of river bus/water taxi.

Station 4: Subarea 2

Fox Bluff is down the street from my home and my family and I visit there all the time. It's pretty much always empty which I'm not complaining about but is proof that it's not a well known spot (the entry is hidden off Cary-Algonquin Road). The paved trail to the river is great for fishing and the trails through the woods are excellent for exploring. My kids love the streams and waterfalls. But there is still so much space that is not utilized, from the downhill area north of the parking lot (the hill is great to run up) to the shoreline of the Fox, to old Camp Algonquin. Expanding the trails and providing more access to the river would be great along with adding campsites (similar to the campsite at the Hollows).

These ideas are all great. I would just add that a swim beach should be something to consider. I especially love the possibility of restaurants along route 31 that would back up to the park. Other things that our town really needs and could possibly go here or somewhere in this plan would be new baseball fields, and an indoor sports facility that would have soccer/football fields, and an indoor pool.

Can they include a public boat launch to the fox river for local residents as well as restaurants

Would love to see Algonquin have a lake analogous to Crystal Lake's Three Oaks with primarily non-motorized boating (kayaking, canoeing, sailing, paddle boarding, wind or kite surfing) and a much larger area available for swimming. (Three Oaks swim area is way too small. It would be great if people could be allowed to actually swim across the lake and back.). The area should be accessible by safe bike lanes from Algonquin and Cary. Mitigation plans should be in place to keep the lake clean and relatively free of algae. For example, the potential plans for residential and commercial units near the lake needs to carefully manage runoff that could end up in the lake.

Station 5: Subarea 3 and Transportation Improvements

Love all these ideas, especially the idea of a pedestrian bridge going over the Fox River, and connecting Cary to the Prairie Trail! Other things that our town really needs and could possibly go here or somewhere in this plan would be new baseball fields, and an indoor sports facility that would have soccer/football fields, and an indoor pool.

Build the northern Algonquin bypass.

Reply: Great idea

It would be great if this plan included building a modern Park District Recreation Building to attract younger families to move into the area. Building houses and trails is not everything. Algonquin needs a decent Park District for its residents. For now, the closest park district is in Huntley or Crystal Lake, with non-resident rates.

I don't think there is a need for another bridge over the Fox River at that location. It would cause a high density of traffic through a conservation area, and is only 5 minutes from either rt 62 or rt 14.

INFORMATION WIDGET SUMMARY					
DOCUMENTS	2	PHOTOS	16	FAQS	1

Widget Type	Engagement Tool Name	Visitors	Downloads/Views
Document	DRAFT Algonquin-Cary Subarea Plan	31	35
Document	Community Engagement Summary	16	20
Photo	Map of planning area	31	32
Photo	Transportation plan	23	25
Photo	Land Use and Development plan	23	24
Photo	Open Space and Environment plan	21	22
Photo	Cary Lake at Rotary Park design concept	13	15
Photo	Water and Sewer Infrastructure plan	13	14
Photo	Conceptual illustration of possible development along Route 31	11	12
Photo	Conceptual illustration of planned amenities at Cary Lake at Rotary Park	10	10
Photo	Paths and Trails plan	10	11
Photo	Conceptual illustration of Cary Lake at Rotary Park and surrounding area	9	9
Photo	Gravel mining infrastructure	8	8
Photo	Cary Lake at Rotary Park	7	7
Photo	Route 31 and Virginia Road intersection	7	7
Photo	Fox Bluff trail	6	6
Photo	Route 31 frontage near Hoffman Park	6	6
Photo	View of Site # 3 from Cary Lake	6	6
FAQ	faqs	24	24