



Britt Salen, *Co-Chair*
Neighborhood Planning Manager
West Side Grows Together

William Swiatek, *Co-Chair*
Principal Planner
Wilmington Area Planning Council

Ella Edwards,
Health Promotion Advocate
Henrietta Johnson Medical Center

Michelle Harlee,
4th District Councilwoman
City of Wilmington

John Harrod
Director
DuPont Envir. Education Center

Victor Perez,
Associate Professor
University of Delaware

Kate Dupont Phillips
Executive Director
Healthy Communities Delaware

Marie Reed,
Past President
Southbridge Civic Association

Hanifa Shabazz,
Executive Director
*Southbridge Community
Development Corporation*

Travis Smith, Sr.,
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Russ Zerbo
Advocate
Clean Air Council

Jen Adkins
Executive Director
Delaware Nature Society

South Wilmington PLANNING NETWORK

April 21, 2023

Mr. Paul W. Will
Program Manager, Remediation
DNREC
391 Lukens Drive,
New Castle, DE 19720

RE: Hicks Park Soil Remediation

Dear Mr. Will,

The Delaware Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Control (DNREC) is now requiring land remediation at Barbara Hicks Park in the Southbridge neighborhood of Wilmington because the “human health risk potentially posed by exposure to soils was determined to be unacceptable under residential and recreator exposure scenarios.”

This public park was built on top of industrial fill that was left at the site between 1940 and 1965.

There is no specific remedial action in the Proposed Plan of Remedial Action. DNREC has considered possible remedial actions for the site, including “Placement of a one-foot soil, stone, or impervious cap/cover over impacted areas to restrict access to underlying soil, or excavation of soil with elevated concentrations of polyaromatic hydrocarbons (PAHs) or metals and disposal off-site.”

Southbridge residents, as well as DNREC and the City of Wilmington, have voiced a clear preference for the specific remedial action of soil removal and the placement of soil and sod at the site. This measure would improve the use of the park by expanding greenspace and reduce the chance that children and adults are exposed to any remaining contaminants in soil at the park. This measure would also save the City of Wilmington time and money by not requiring the city to regularly inspect a potential cap at the site.

Additionally, because of the site’s status as a public park in need of several structural upgrades beyond land remediation, it must be considered how proposed remedial actions will complement additional, upcoming park upgrades. Currently, the City of Wilmington is both considering additional park amenities to replace the recently removed tennis court while also attempting to address the significant drainage issues at the park that create an overwhelming mosquito presence in warm weather. In order to make the park’s contamination remediation and overall upgrade as efficient as possible, these various construction activities must work in tandem to protect public health, encourage dynamic use of the park by all local residents, and create an innovative green space for the broader community.



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Thank you for your attention to this matter. Please keep Councilmember Harlee abreast of your efforts, so she can follow-up with the community. Should you have any questions, please contact us at SouthWilmingtonPlanningNetwork@gmail.com.

Sincerely,

Britt Salen
Co-Chair, South Wilmington Planning Network