



**4MRV Working Group Meeting**  
**November 16, 2016**  
**7 – 10:30 PM**

The first major agenda item was the Historic Preservation Analysis. Following the consultant's presentation, the Working Group asked several questions. One question was whether or not this area was surveyed as part of the County's Historic Resources Inventory, which it was not as the Inventory has yet to be completed in all areas of the County. Another question was about what can and cannot be done to a building if it is designated as a Local Historic District. The consultant responded that he was charged with determining eligibility, as opposed to making recommendations about nominations. A building that is so designated could only have exterior modifications or be torn down with Historical Affairs and Landmark Review Board approval. One member asked if any residences were surveyed and the consultant indicated that there is only one residence in the study area. More than one Working Group member indicated that it is important to interpret the general history of this area, for instance as a transportation corridor, as well as the unique history of Jennie Dean Park.

The historic preservation discussion was followed by an arts update by County staff. One member asked if there really is a need for a flexible theatre space and how would it be funded. Staff indicated that there is usually philanthropic funding for such amenities. Another member indicated that it is good to have arts facilities in areas with amenities around them, instead of having theatres, for instance, in isolation. Another member asked how much revenue is generated by the Signature Theatre and how much support it receives. There was a question about the precise locations of the "Lower Reach" and "Upper Reach" of Four Mile Run. There were several questions about the demand for arts space. Another question was whether or not there is a County land acquisition policy. More than one member noted that people want to be near creative communities. One question was how the County can take a longer view to retain the arts. One member noted that Metro access is important but that more and more patrons are using Uber and the Atlas Theatre is as far from Union Station as Gunston is from the Crystal City Metro Station. A representative from the Signature Theatre was recognized to speak and she noted that the County built and owns the building, but that the theatre is responsible for maintaining the 62,000 sf facility. Even though it is the biggest theatre in Virginia, it is a delicate balancing act to generate enough revenue to keep it going. She said that the theatre no longer gets County assistance and this is a challenge. One member asked if there is a real need for a 500-seat theatre in the County if the Signature Theatre only has 370 seats. Staff noted that a multipurpose, flexible space, such as the Perlman Theatre at the Kimmel Center in Philadelphia, would be well used.

The next topics of discussion were clarifications about the process and study goals and an overview of the upcoming Visioning Workshop. One question was how is recreation defined –

is an amphitheater in a park an arts or a recreation amenity? There were several questions about the economic analysis and whether or not it will be available prior to the visioning session and whether or not aggregate data will be provided. One member asked when the park bonds used to acquire the 3700 Four Mile Run Drive property were issued and how the new bonds approved during the recent election will be used. Some members questioned the assumptions that would be used at the Visioning Workshop and why they had not previously been shared with the Working Group. One member requested a map for the workshop that would include building heights in Shirlington along with the building heights called for in the Nauck Village Center Action Plan. There was some disagreement about whether or not traffic and parking studies should include Shirlington. One member said that he would like a Latino group to be convened to provide input. One suggestion was to shorten the amount of time devoted to transportation and lengthen the time allotted to land use at the Visioning Workshop. One member liked the idea of having three park concepts and three land use alternatives. There was some concern about the potential concentration of industrial uses, as one member noted there was interest in an industrial “feel” but not an industrial park. One member said that it seems as though the parks and land use exercises will be too separate and another added that the parks advocates need to hear from the arts advocates and vice-versa. One member stressed the need to build in 25% more parking, as there is already over-demand. A concern was expressed by one member that the community’s input may be different than the Working Group’s, but that the Working Group has a lot of experience. Another member expressed concern about the dot exercises.

Members of the public then had an opportunity to provide their comments. One citizen said that Alexandria is engaged in intelligent suburban renewal, as opposed to Arlington’s massive smart growth planning that results in luxury in-fill, bars, restaurants, upscale retail and plazas as parks. There is a need for services such as hardware stores, computer repair stores, funeral homes, medical offices, etc.. Several citizens said that many groups use the 3700 Four Mile Run Drive building and that it should not be torn down. Rather, they advocated for more practice spaces and theatres. One member suggested putting the dog park up along Four Mile Run Drive and having an arts/business/brewery node along the stream. One citizen said that multi-use facilities are very important and that ethnic cultural groups bring attention and business to Arlington and that location is important. He noted that many of these groups use cars to access these facilities and that parking is important. Another citizen said that a constantly used facility, such as 3700 Four Mile Run Drive, should not be replaced with a park that will sit empty at night. Another citizen said that if this building is going to be torn down, it should be replaced prior to demolition. She said that the value of arts programs cannot be fully quantified as arts groups go into schools and senior centers and perform for groups that cannot pay. Another member said that community theatre is by and for the community. The last speaker said that the arts can be integrated into any vision for this area and it is important to keep the area affordable and accessible. She also expressed concern that the attendees at the meeting did not represent a diverse group, as not everyone can attend a meeting at 10:15pm on a weeknight. She noted that the arts community is creative and can help to develop creative solutions.

For more details on these presentations and the meeting in general, please visit the [4MRV.com](http://4MRV.com) webpage to see a full recording of this meeting.