

4MRV Working Group: First Principles
(Draft, Feb. 7, 2017)

Additional Comments by Sports Commission

#	Principle	Comment	Discussion
1	Plan for the whole valley the whole time.	For example, if a large recreation-related facility can be built in either of the light industrial zones, this will leave more space for enhancing and protecting the flood zone and park areas. Also, trails and new stream crossings should be planned as part of networks, not isolated features.	This principle seems to advocate for comprehensive planning in which the park and study area are treated as an integrated whole. Unfortunately, the reality is that the only land owned by and under control of the County is in the park planning area. Therefore, the group is understandably focused on what will or will not be in the park master plan. Amenities included in the park master plan are will likely be realized far sooner than amenities situated outside of the park master plan. This is a great sounding concept but it oversimplifies the reality of what we are dealing with.
2	Co-locate and build up, not out, to the greatest extent possible.	Aligns with the Community Facilities report findings for Arlington’s next 20 years.	
3	Preserve, protect, and rehabilitate existing green space and stream corridor.	Extend the principles of the Alexandria-Arlington Four Mile Run Stream Restoration project above Shirlington	Please clarify what is included in “green space.” Depending on how this were to be interpreted, the principle to “rehabilitate” could be

		Road bridge for the first time, especially increasing access to the stream.	used by some as a way to justify removing two baseball fields from the park, which would be inconsistent with the group's charge to "provide a vision for the comprehensive replacement and realignment of existing park features..." The Sports Commission intends to strongly adhere to the concepts of "replacement and realignment" as articulated in the charge.
4	Improve water management through net gains in reduction of impervious surface, more natural space, increased stormwater management.	Remember this is a flood plain area in a time of increased severe weather events and climate change.	
5	Buffer the "necessary" elements such as parking or noise-generating space with trees, green areas and people-friendly space.	Make the area more visually attractive for residents and visitors. Also make back-of-house and service functions less intrusive.	This principle could be overly restrictive as well as ineffective. Trees could work well as buffers, but they are not the only method for buffering against noise. Green areas suggest open areas which might provide no noise buffers at all. The group should strive to strike a balance between aesthetically pleasing and functionally practical.
6	Don't build where we haven't built before.	Undeveloped land is increasingly rare. It should be protected and improved as healthy natural habitat, rather than	This principle removes planning flexibility. What about a "no net loss of green space" principle instead,

	(could fit after #2 above)	building on it and trying to reclaim equivalent space elsewhere. This is currently a gritty industrial area, with one of the lowest percentages of tree canopy in the county, much reduced from 20 years ago.	perhaps coupled with a “look for opportunities to add green space whenever possible.”
7	Focus on affordable, simple, smart solutions that can be implemented over time, recognizing that the taxpaying public will have to pay for most of the 4MRV investment.	Many Arlington plans have authorized redevelopment at higher densities with substantial public improvements and amenities funded by developers.. In this case, there is little likelihood of offering significantly increased density or more residential units in return for private investments in public infrastructure. Improvements to the streets, streetscape, park, cultural affairs facilities, etc. will have to be funded largely by the County.	Staff provided information early in this process about vertical development rights, which could provide additional funding that is not paid for by the County. Perhaps we need a refresher on this concept.
8	Look for shared, not single, uses involving public-private partnerships.	For example, look for parking solutions that are neither completely private nor public, but shared, in order to facilitate commercial use by day and public use by night and weekend. Same thing with sharing of community and recreational activity spaces.	We agree with this concept but we don’t think parking is the best example to illustrate what is meant. Public-private partnerships can bring in additional funds to relieve the taxpayer burden. It is entirely possible that some form of public-private partnership will be the best way to meet some of our design ideas. We would just emphasize that, in order to market such solutions, the County needs maximum flexibility to attract private funding.

9	Respect and support our “home-grown” for-profit businesses and non-profit organizations to the greatest extent possible, and incubate more of these in future.	4MRV is a different kind of community, one where small ideas can grow big – e.g. WETA, Signature, Theater on the Run, Weenie Beanie, brewery, auto shops, and more.	
10	Accommodate County facility needs without letting them dominate; seek co-location opportunities.	For example, can we put a bus depot together with an indoor sports facility?	For the record, we believe it’s important to take County needs seriously. We recognize that perhaps no one wants the County bus fleet parked in their neighborhood, but having a bus fleet is important to the Arlington community and to our efforts to be a more car-free community, so we need to treat these needs with respect and not annoyance.
11	Recognize that all input is equally deserving of respect and serious consideration; strive to come up with a plan or plans that offer something to everyone	A successful outcome will offer something to everyone. We should seek to avoid any outcomes that minimize or dismiss the input of any user group or constituency.	
12	Recognize that this taxpayer-funded initiative must address both County-wide needs as well as neighborhood preferences	The Sports Commission adopted a position statement in October 2016 on planning processes to respectfully recognize varying opinions while reinforcing the notion that the entire Arlington community has primary “ownership” of public facilities. Our position states that while the inputs of immediate neighbors need to be given	

		serious consideration, Arlington County facilities, and the planning processes that produce them, need to represent the interests of all County residents.	
13	Recognize that Arlington is a growing community; plans should accommodate current and anticipated future demand	Incorporate data on future demographic expectations – what will the area and the County look like in 10/20/30 years and are we planning for the long-term?	
14	To the greatest extent possible, seek to build new capacity (in the valley or elsewhere) before shutting down any existing capacity	Whether the affected parties are dog owners or sports groups or businesses or the arts community, the loss of current capacity will have negative implications. The group needs to be mindful of how its decisions will affect the ability of current users to conduct their activities and seek ways to mitigate that affect.	