



4MRV Working Group Meeting
February 15, 2017
7 – 10:00 PM

Administrative issues

- First principles are being revised; Staff will post to the web site; staff are welcome to comment as well. Carrie Johnson will circulate the comments next week.
- Anticipated Schedule
 - Next iteration of park concepts - March 7; Area planning concepts - March 15
 - Continued review of concepts through April
 - May – Community Open House. Publicized to all addresses in study area and to civic associations
 - June - County Board work session; at which point there will be consensus on some but not all issues. Goal is to seek guidance and direction from County Board
 - Then staff to develop a Policy Framework, with periodic review by Working Group
 - September - Policy Framework considered by the County Board
 - February 2018 - Consideration of final Park Master Plan and Area Plan. Working group will review at periodic intervals (meeting less often than current schedule)
- Chair confirmed that a business forum is still planned; would also like to get feedback from other groups, such as arts and sports groups

Area plan concepts presentation – Richard Tucker, staff; Amy Groves, Dover Kohl

- Everything is interchangeable in all three concepts. Focus on use and character with various levels of change. Also includes list of public improvements that could go into any of the concepts – none are funded/committed to by the County; staff seeks Working Group feedback on those that are the most critical
- Depending on what we hear from Working Group, will look at parking, feasibility, transportation at a later step.
- Review of working themes that came out of visioning workshop discussion and written comments

Working Group discussion of area plan concepts

- The consultant clarified in response to questions:
 - “Reinforce the pedestrian realm” means adding windows, awnings and other elements that create a better pedestrian environment.
 - Existing service commercial uses include auto repair
 - Preserving existing uses does not preclude incorporating sustainability; could be reinforced through design standards

- Even though in all three concepts the arts area is shown in subarea B, which includes private businesses, including two storage facilities used by people in the area, this does not preclude existing businesses from staying; Zoning or other tools could incentivize owners who want to redevelop, incorporate maker spaces, etc. Could result in gradual change over time.
- Hard to see how retail businesses could continue to work given what is described for the area shown for arts (subarea B)
- Glad to see examples (density, character) of flex, industrial and maker spaces (slide 16)

Concepts/Subareas

- Need better sense of what additional height would look like on west side of Shirlington Road adjacent to existing residential sections – seems like it would create a lot of shade. Staff clarified that this concept integrates heights similar to those in adopted Nauck Revitalization Plan, and indicated there is drastic change in elevation along those properties, so examples, moving forward, can show development similar in scale to better illustrate what could happen.
- Would be helpful when discussing certain areas, to indicate what is currently there by description and by photographs to provide better context.
- Concept 3 shows significant change everywhere *except* area C, which is the area the County actually owns, and due to County ownership and because there is nothing there now, seems to be the a most apt for significant change. The County could create an industrial park there that would move car repairs and other industrial uses to that area, and frees up subareas A and B for more arts and other desired uses.
 - The consultant clarified that keeping existing uses does not mean the exact uses that are there now would remain – uses could still evolve and change under existing zoning.
- A working group member indicated he owns ~90% of subarea A (aside from Dominion Power site), which is the entry point to the area; he has no interest in turning it into mixed use (like the rest of Arlington). From an owners’ perspective, this is not the best for that site or for Arlington, since it has a significant amount of infrastructure potential.
 - Another member agreed that in subarea A, he had not heard any sentiment from the community that we want significant height/density there; rather, a desire for retaining service uses there - this is the last industrial area in the county
- Gravitate toward less is more, know that a lot of people like the area the way it is and like the industrial uses. Concepts 2 and 3 that increase height of buildings and mixed use may not be appropriate for the area, and would have a lot of environmental impacts. Like the idea of thinking of area as a spectrum, with transition zones rather than discrete subareas as in A, B, C, D
- The arts district concept has been around a long time, probably since last iteration of this plan but what we need is more out-of-the-box thinking about a business district; Concerned also about the pedestrian vehicle impacts to the neighborhood – focus on creating more walkways and pathways, and leave existing businesses with incentive for them to improve their properties

- 3 concepts overall, ask one question – how much do you want the area to change. Adaptive reuse concept (1) is most appealing. If we do mixed use, needs to be with enormous caution because only market right now is for residential, thus any mixed use should be adaptation not redevelopment. Need to think about what we can do incrementally
- Love the bump out of trees. Trees and decent walking space in here will improve the area, whether on sites with gas stations, car repairs, arts, theatre.
- AFAC is getting ready for capital campaign to redo building. Opportunity to think about how Nelson St should be like Oxford Street with more trees, etc.
- Need to be more sensitive to what already exists to owners of those properties, whether plan is for baseball field or something else
- Talked a lot at last meeting about how unique dog park is, but did not talk about how unique Four Mile Run is now and how businesses should stay intact; We should take that more into consideration
- Need to pay more attention to County functions and needs, how we deal with buses, and other uses that need to be somewhere. Particularly in subarea C – question County Board needs to decide is whether the County should make the Cube Smart deal and also need to hear more about co-location of buses (details and strategies), in order to understand what we can do with subarea C. Same goes for understanding how to stabilize stream without coupling with dog park or walkway – needs to stand alone
- Concerned in short term about bike, pedestrian safety
- Culinary training school in the area could create relationship between restaurants and staff. Good synergy.
- How do we get from what we have now to the make spaces in the photos and how much environmental remediation required? The consultant explained that two were old auto shops; one was vacant; two are new buildings built in industrial character; one is gap between buildings
- SEEK executive director, thanked County and community for support – wants to be good neighbors. As growth continues, site for day laborers will gradually disappear. Trying to be proactive.
- Notion of moderate change is a worthy goal to pursue. Hope we can find a way for businesses to stay and achieve other goals as well
- Need to understand feasibility of all concepts
- Red area in subarea D might be a good place for County to buy for parkland amenity
- Clarendon light is what you get when you do mixed use, which guarantees not having local ownership
- As a Working Group we should think about, if the County owns/can acquire enough land in subarea C, a multi-use bus parking, public parking, sports recreation center co-location
- No matter what we do, we will improve environmental quality of Four Mile Run; improve pedestrian and bicycle experiences focusing on areas where there is now nothing; Oxford Street crossing going all the way across, cuts the park in half
- Arlington always allows for transition from high to low density, but Concept 3 has no transition next to historic Lomax church

Oxford Street, Promenade, Walkway comments

- Oxford street images look rather bland, especially compared to the flex/maker spaces examples. Talked last week of straight path to dog park, then meandering through neighborhood - more interesting - may be industrial looking until dog park, then out to Shirlington road, still industrial but with more of a green flavor to it
- Seems like consultant and staff are pushing promenade/walkway along Four Mile Run/ Shirlington Road disproportionately from the level of enthusiasm at the visioning workshop – once we have a better environment for walking along Four Mile Run Drive, we do not need a promenade
- Promenade – need to think how we could advance these ideas in next few years – first circumference around Jennie Dean with phase I funding, then build and expand as time goes on. Why do we want promenade on one side of stream when we have the Four Mile Run trail?
- Walking promenade south of Four Mile Run – in the visioning workshops heard great enthusiasm for that concept and hope it continues
- Four Mile Run Drive – everything shown is linear. What about concept of contouring a walkway/sidewalk along Four Mile Run to soften the effect

Four Mile Run Drive Re-stripping

- Make sure there is a traffic study before we consider reducing Four Mile Run down to one lane. Staff confirmed that there will be a study, but want some more consensus around what might scenarios should be tested first
- Necessity for more parking on Four Mile Run, but the road is widely used, as is Shirlington road. Even if you do a traffic study, if you are not there every day, you do not know how changes to road configuration will impact the businesses there
- Common problem along the run is truck delivery, often by stopping on the road. Two lanes allow you to go around the truck – would lose that ability with just one lane. Also, truck parking along the run for people who live and work there who cannot park those trucks where they live. If diagonal parking extended all the way down the run, many auto businesses use the parking for customer parking during business hours. Would need some mitigating strategy for where those folks go.
- Concerned about pedestrian/vehicle conflicts. A lot of vehicle traffic on Four Mile Run, so not a great place for pedestrians. Promenade area for pedestrians is a good way to avoid those conflicts
- Twenty years ago when County wanted to make Four Mile Run drive into three lanes, and people protested that it was too busy to drop out a lane. Already problematic to get out of a business on that road. To think about moving the arts into that area where it is already busy, is a nightmare.
- Comments about trucks on Four Mile Run drive extremely important because cement plant not moving and because of access to 395. Already need to sort out issue with food truck parking on Four Mile Run drive – if we create more parking, need to know if it will be cars or trucks – community needs to understand well in advance

Arts district and park planning area

- Fundamental flaw of all three concepts: none reflect this Working Group comments for an arts district within the park planning area - location is critical due to proximity to Shirlington, Signature Theatre, and organic change already happening there. Central part of arts district should be in the park – then ok if it extends into the Area Planning area.
- The essential nature of the arts is the cluster, proximity, ease of access to/from arts uses on other side of the Run; when we say arts, we mean making things – could mean brewery, coffee maker, metallurgy, painting, etc. Plan should be to make it possible to get across the Run and to the different kinds of maker spaces on both sides, *and* inviting it through way finding, etc.; the flush street design shown for Oxford is a great idea, but on wrong street – should be on Oakland and Nelson street – what they are already starting to become – already adding up to a cluster of uses on the north side connecting organically to what is already happening on the south side in Shirlington.
- Yellow dot in park planning area is our last opportunity to develop a park in Arlington, and we need to be protective of it, even if there are some uses there now that lend themselves to arts – do not necessarily agree that that area should be an arts district. It was purchased for parks and we should think in those terms
- Need to stop worrying about park vs area plan areas – this is supposed to be an integrated process
- Need to have park and area plan consultants in room together to hear all conversation in order to have integrated planning
- Agree that while it is important for Working Group to reflect sentiment of community to support the arts, also important that there is a tremendous need for park in this neighborhood and need to respect the park planning area
- Yellow circle area in park should be discussed for a range of options (park/arts district)
- Agree with previous comment about keeping the park planning area for park master plan. Until the County Board tells us otherwise, the charge directs replacement and realignment of park amenities, even if people would like to see it used for arts district.
- Disagree that we can only do park uses in the park planning area – charge also mentions cultural resources, which include arts
- Like idea of arts in the Nelson/park planning area. If years from now area changes enough for arts to go all the way to Walter reed drive, then could be considered.

Requests for additional information (responses to be added to the comment matrix)

- Repeat of CIP funding question? How much density available for transfer? *Staff confirmed it is working responses to both these questions*
- When County sells development rights, where does the money go?
- Would like to see presentation on potential land swap. Staff indicated a presentation could be arranged, and informed the Working Group that JFAC is now actively meeting and reviewing the land swap site in particular
- If there is not currently an easement to entrance into dog park, how did it get paved and maintained?

Meeting review/next steps

- Staff to send quick survey monkey – not a vote – to make sure staff understands what we think we heard, in the next week. Leadership of Working Group will preview.

Public comments

- More and more land for sports recreation and performing arts
- Co-chair of Arlington parks coalition – want to lend voice to those advocating that park planning area purchased with park bonds is used for park purposes. Hope we do not go down the path we did for the Artishpere where parks money used for another purpose
- Stream stabilization is fundamental and should not be presented as optional; need to get NOVA Parks involved in discussions about W&OD Trail - County has no control over trail; do not see any creativity in these plans about how funding could be allocated to alleviate parking issues; why is County/consultants dismissive of comments about traffic on Four Mile Run and still showing reduced lanes; what are repercussions of building up this area when it is in a floodplain
- Worried about the dog park. Accessibility, size – if reduced, not as good
- Arlington little league mom – separating out art and sports conversation is not good – does not allow the right people to be at the meetings for discussion; visioning workshop was cohesive
- Henderson storage owner. Was in Rosslyn and forced out in early fifties. Feel like we are getting forced out again. That area is not parkland, not arts district – it is private property, and damage is being done to businesses that are in this “park” land.
- Parents and business owners of pet care business in subarea A, which require industrial zoning, as do auto uses. Changes to light industrial impact service businesses like ours. Customers are our neighbors. Appreciate discussion of retention of businesses.
- Owns business in yellow circle. Not a park. Rent to seven auto businesses, many been there 25 years, no turnover in 10 years – this is a testament to need for those businesses in this part for the County. Have no intention to go elsewhere. County already owns the property around our building. Putting us in a park plan reduces our fair market value and opportunity to lease.
- Owner of auto repair business. Neither park plan nor area plan address parking. Parking garage would be useful; agree with others about challenges of being put in a park plan and devaluing property – makes it harder to work with the County. Makes us anxious. Park master plan boundary is not a hard line – multiple alternatives have been shown with this area not included in the park master plan.
- Private property shown in a lot of these areas as parkland, private property should not be shown as park until County has a plan to work with property owners, such as through gross receipts or property tax incentives; why not provide several years in a row and then come talk to us; have a business meeting. Parking was seriously discussed at the workshops as an issue.
- Human factor – there are small business in the yellow circle area within the park planning boundary. Confused - sometimes that area shown as arts, sometimes as park. History of the arts is in that area. Would appreciate not being moved out of there

- Retired architect noted there is always a conflict between personal interest and public value. Dig in your feet. Look out for your interests. But be open to possibility. Some people may have to move. Agree with point about connectivity; trucks on Four Mile Run; concept of three lanes on Four Mile Run and whether that works; skeptical of ability to be both effective traffic corridor and pedestrian access.
- How many walkways do we need? We already have W&OD. No shortage of walkways.