



4MRV Working Group Meeting

April 19, 2017

7 – 10 PM

Comments and discussion by the working group are summarized below.

General Business

- May 2 will be agenda specifically for the dog park; working group members encouraged by chair to visit the dog park before next meeting
- Key takeaways from business meeting were summarized by a working group member:
 - The County will always need industrial areas/businesses in order to operate; need economic opportunity at every level; the valley provides opportunities for skilled labor not requiring a college degree; business turnover in the valley is lower than in other areas of the County;
 - Established support from Arlington Chamber of Commerce, and expect advocacy from the Chamber around success of businesses in the valley with respect to impacts of this planning process on business;
 - Some concern was expressed about a road diet for Four Mile Run;
 - Some examples were shared at the meeting of leases being affected by planning process, e.g. a catering company not ready to invest until future is better defined for the area; a son taking over his father's business is reluctant to renegotiate a lease while the planning process is underway;
 - Why is there a discrepancy between number of employees in briefing book and from what business association reports? Staff responded that the briefing book data are based on census data.
- May 30 anticipated for County Board work session. Working group will prep for that meeting at May 17 working group meeting.
- Staff distributed a hard copy of the working group charge, correcting a clerical error in the previous version where some content was inadvertently deleted. The only change to the charge since it was established, is to the membership.
- Guiding principles should be thought of as an ongoing discussion.

Land Swap Proposal and JFAC presentation

- JFAC had a meeting with chairs of all the County commissions, but what about the working group, which is studying the same piece of property one JFAC's subcommittees is studying; seems this committee's chair should have been invited
 - Staff responded that the Area plan does not actually get into specific uses on any site, but does look at urban design, access, transportation, etc.; whereas JFAC's

role is to look specifically at uses for the site as opposed to what will the site look like, what happens along the frontage, etc. Expect collocation to be echoed by JFAC.

- Might the County be looking for a formal recommendation or suggestion from the working group? Anticipate that the County Board would welcome input from any commission or committee. A working group member confirmed that the County Board is looking for recommendations from this group.
- One member indicated, when he was exploring opening a brewery, he looked at old bowling alley on the Buck site, but because of sewer line, was told it could not support the activity. Has this issue come up in the County's investigation?
 - Staff responded that there is nothing that cannot be moved, but there is a cost. Also, there are some configurations that would not require any storm or sanitary relocations. These are all considerations for the County to explore.
- Seems Buck site is getting the analysis it should but the Shirlington Rd property is not: we do not know what you can do in the RPA; if/how to rescue Nauck branch; what can be done along with bus storage. Please provide DES presentation related to bus storage options
 - DES staff responded that they have not explored options for collocation of bus storage thoroughly, but will pass along the request for more thoughts on this issue
- Buck site is rare opportunity for County to acquire a site it does not currently own because a private business has made a proposal; but not clear what the County gets in this trade. Seems the County would get a property heavily covered by RPA, with little usable land, and opportunity to continue renting space from Arcland up north – not sure if that is a good trade monetarily and if there enough value at Shirlington Rd, or if this trade would just be advantageous for Arcland
- The fact that Arcland is proposing this trade should be an illustration of how difficult it is to work within the constraints of the Shirlington Rd. site
- Would be nice if we had a bigger piece of property on Shirlington road; Opportunity to resubdivide the Shirlington Road property to build a field house. Would dramatically increase usability of property from County perspective plus give Arcland a less oddly shaped parcel.
- Has Arcland proposed to rezone the existing Shirlington road property? Staff responded that no rezoning request has been made; however, there is a proposed development plan.
- Proposal is land for land, not a cash proposal. But County would get ownership of Shirlington road property in perpetuity.
- In response to an inquiry, staff explained the 2.3 acre number:
 - 2.3 acres is needed in order to support the facility Arcland wants to build, however they would not physically need the entire 2.3 acres; the County could

lease back and use the remainder of the site (approx. 1.1 acres), but could not rezone or add any density.

- A Working Group member who is a representative of Arcland indicated in response to an inquiry that self-storage has low traffic on weekdays (average 40 cars/day), with rare use by an 18-wheeler, more frequent box trucks; busy Saturdays. They do not typically collocate with other businesses, but no reason they could not. As a shared site, storage can easily stack (to utilize smaller footprint), so other uses have low impact on the storage use. Staff indicated that the 1.1 acre leaseback would be based on Arcland maxing out the height in order to use less space.
- The Arcland representative clarified that building in an RPA is possible with a lot of mitigation, e.g. pervious paving, plantings, etc.; preference is the closer you get to the channel, the more pervious, less building and more green you should have.
- Staff indicated in response to an inquiry that the potential land swap has no bearing on the County's likelihood of buying the Buck property. The County's option to buy would need to go forward by 11/30/17, and there may not be further info on the swap available by that time.
- Is there a timeframe on the decision to go into the swap?
 - Staff indicated there is no timeframe from County perspective but Arcland may have a timeline
 - Chair indicated that the working group may need to make a recommendation this Fall
- There are many questions about the best long term uses, including rehabbing the RPA, and much discussions we can have regardless of who owns the property; now we have a 7 year solution for getting buses off the park but as part of this process, need to come up with a 20 year plan

Revised concept alternatives

- Chair reminded the working group that the mission is to come up with three good options to share with the County Board and community; not to come up with just one option at this stage
- Staff clarified that in Alt. 2, parking under the courts is possible
- Staff clarified that Area D includes the Chester's property

Parking and transportation

- Is there a required amount of parking for certain park facilities?
 - Staff responded, yes. Parking requirements depends on number of courts and bleachers. Would probably also be County goal to accommodate as much parking on street as possible first before structured parking. Also key goal for DPR is to

have as much green and recreation space as possible, over surface parking options.

- Need to be careful about putting parking next to a ball field because windows get broken. Also, problem with combo field - it is losing capacity because you cannot have two games at the same time – this is efficient use of space, but not good for sports community. At Bluemont, a lot of time was spent figuring out how to expand access to fields when games are not being played, by opening up fencing; baseball community has been receptive to that. Smaller diamond needs to be fenced otherwise it fundamentally changes the games that can be played there.
- It does not look like anything is being moved out of Jennie Dean park. Parking for the park will be necessary when we expand and enhance the park, and it is already a problem.
 - Staff responded that along Oakland and Nelson, parking is gained in all alternatives shown tonight, even if no structured parking is built
- Staff indicated they had heard general support for the road diet; however, the Working Group, collectively, did not make that comment. Business meeting also expressed concern about the road diet
- Keep two lanes interior to businesses for commerce.
- Already planning first street festival on south Oakland – that will happen whether we get pervious pavers or not. Would be great if Signature would be able to participate. Disturbing to show that missing.
- On Oakland and Nelson, those are mostly existing businesses. Like idea of one-way street but majority are driveway openings to businesses on left so you could not put parking there if you wanted to, as it would remove parking and driveways from businesses. They are occupied 24 hours per day by businesses there.
 - The consultant responded that the intention is to impact water quality and make it nicer. On parts where people are not supposed to park, there could be design changes. Agreed that there is a need to ensure that businesses retain access to their properties.

Existing businesses, buildings and existing and future arts use

- Planning should help better envision options for west of Nelson rather than just showing County buildings to be maintained/private buildings that would remain: please show how park uses would filter in between those existing uses
 - The consultant responded that in previous concepts, staff showed a general idea about what could fit in these areas; would like working group to help spell out criteria for why the County might acquire these lands, such as to create connection through park, expand recreation facilities, etc. – what are priorities of the group?
- But, please show what can be done *without* acquiring additional properties – how bits of park space can infiltrate those areas *without* acquisition.

- The consultant responded Alt. 3 shows more of that. Looked at utilizing the I-shaped parcel owned by County (3806 Four Mile Run Drive) for sand volleyball, bike track, game areas next to businesses that are there; Alt. 2 looked at that area to expand or change configuration of the dog park. Alt. 1 shows just existing ownership, keeping buildings that are there.
- Encourage staff to think about how those private properties would be made more attractive while they remain private businesses.
- AFAC building going through substantial renovation is on Nelson street; in the drawing, is AFAC still there doing what it does?
 - The Consultant responded yes, the diagram shows existing parcels owned by the County; if parcels came up for sale from a willing seller, they could be considered for acquisition; otherwise, the purple area shows existing businesses continuing for as long as they want
- The working group should make a recommendation on whether or not to acquire; otherwise there is too much uncertainty for businesses

Existing and future arts uses and arts district/arts hub

- The group needs to discuss the concept and definition of an arts center and the decision to purchase properties or not
- Concerned when we talk about acquisition of property with no provision for businesses to continue to operate or expand or be in this area; need to have something in this plan to work with existing businesses that are there today
- If we lose either of existing arts uses, it becomes infeasible to have an arts hub. An arts hub needs to be grounded in the existing uses. 3700 building is one story building in a massive space; if made into 2-3 floors, with dance, studio space, etc., it could become a huge portion of the arts hub – then there would be no need to acquire current businesses
- Signature theatre tenants in process of renegotiating their lease for 3806. Any insight?
 - Staff is exploring this question.
 - Working group member indicated they want lease for the old theatre to be same term as lease for new theatre so they can use the facilities together.
- Decision to be made about old Signature building and while it would be nice to be able to use for park, have been talking about an arts hub for this area; if Signature were to move, we would have an arts district without a center; need to have an existing arts presence to have a arts district
- Disturbing that we still don't have a picture of what an art district would look like.
 - Staff responded that the old Signature Theatre has been evolving. There are now partnerships with GW, Marymount; if they come with a proposal, we can do an LOI, but they have not come forward with anything specific right now. There are a lot of rumors and discussion, but to date, no proposal. Staff can go back and

show a variety of options for those existing buildings so working group can share that with the public.

- Show tearing down all buildings and being parkland and an option showing what an arts district would look like. Options show neither.
- There already is an arts district. If you could expand to 2-3 stories would instantly become great arts district. Would influence businesses that are around there naturally.
- Concur with idea about nucleus of arts, but want to confirm we are *not* talking about the two white buildings which could be added to Signature. The Signature building just got a new roof, so that assumes moving forward with a 15 year lease. If we are not allowed to show that as part of the arts hub (no plans show it) because of the County charge, then please let the working group know so we can stop providing these comments. You've heard from the group that we want change that can be implemented quickly – this would be it – keep Signature and add existing County building to it.

Programmed and unprogrammed spaces and sports facilities

- The consultant clarified how it arrived at the non-programmed open space number: programmed open space is ball field, courts, and other specific facilities not yet determined (this is the grey area). The non-programmed space in Alt. 3 would be in the mathematical count for non-programmed space. Wedges inbetween facilities are not counted. Will provided a clearer break down with explanations.
- The consultant clarified that in Alt 3., sports and activities are shown in green; the purple area shows a scenario maintaining existing buildings and art buildings surrounded by greenery and some old art/industrial buildings, as an example of fun things to complement the uses that are there now.
- Collocation. Remember previous discussion of collocation of soccer with baseball field. Noticed that softball field closed for portion of the year and that there is potential for merging softball field with baseball field? What is appetite for having an option for a combined field
 - Staff indicated that the DPR position is that a combined field is not a long term solution; intention is to retain two distinct fields.
- Can we get a soccer field overlaid with diamond?
 - Staff responded that because of fencing and space, that is not an option. If additional land were acquired, there would be additional opportunities for a rectangle field. Some areas could be combined to create practice areas but the fence becomes an issue.
- Would like to see a removable fence so area can be used differently in the off-season (see Alt.2)

Environment, trees and open space amenities

- Trees planted along Four Mile Run drive seem to show a double row in each alternative in the presentation – is there a sidewalk inbetween? Not consistent with the concept or in the descriptive handout.
 - The consultant responded, the double-row of trees is intended. Staff indicated it will also explore with Urban Forestry staff.
- Pathways along the river on the park side, would prefer a riparian path, with more trees and better contributor to RPA.
- Alt. 2 – useable open space and green area along stream is a favorite.
- Lacking in this presentation, is how Jennie Dean park opens to the Nauck community; what it looks like is a big deal for the community; also green space/buffer space is a big issue for community - consider sound from sports field(s) that will impact community
- Remember there are 1000 residential units adjacent to the park, who have no green space and no yards. Concepts for east of Nelson do not address that issue. Would be nice to see an option where 3700 building is renovated with sports courts on top to free up space elsewhere. We are just pivoting things. It is four acres, but significantly reduced when filled with a bunch of paths.

Public comments

- How much more money could the County give Signature Theatre and how much more could they want. Where is the economic development for this area? Where is the planning to revitalize small business in the valley? Regarding Buck, why not store school buses on the Buck property - no more deals.
- Some of the conceptual layouts in the parks do not create open areas for community engagement. Those areas are too far away from center of activity. As you think about design, please think about where people will be and where natural gathering areas are, such as near the pavilion and bleachers. Many uses are separated.