



4MRV Working Group Meeting
September 5, 2017
7 – 9:30 PM

Staff began the meeting with a debriefing of the open house presented by staff and then moved on to other matters including:

Process timeline – The discussion of the process timeline included the following comments and questions:

- What is the endgame and the final product?
- There is so much to accomplish in a short period of time.
- How will this tie into current CIP projections?
- As money has been allocated in FY 2019 for construction, when will there be some physical improvements, such as a new playground?
- It is disappointing to see process dragging out. We should look for efficiencies and move things forward as expediently as possible.

Discussion and decision-making process – There were no issues raised about the decision-making process outline.

Arts District Committee report – Robin Stompler, Working Group Vice Chair and Chair of the Arts District Committee, presented the committee’s report. Committee members Mac McCreary, David Peete, Tom Prewitt and Jeff Zeeman also participated. Questions and comments followed the presentation, which is available online.

- Several members noted that the committee provided some great information.
- What did the warehouses previously contain?
- Could creative parking solutions be addressed in the examples?
- There is space near warehouse for 3-4 story hidden/artistic parking structure off the main street.
- Are all of the incentives outlined in the committee report allowed under Virginia law?
- It may not be worth the cost to renovate the warehouses given the state of the roofs, etc..
- The committee loved the warehouses as they can provide wonderful art spaces and some previously housed a woodworking cooperative.
- Arlington has torn down so much of its historic fabric. The warehouses here could be like a mini Torpedo Factory.
- Because there is a desire for a funky, different vibe, repurposing buildings is best when possible.

- The Atlanta arts district example is great because it is connected to the Central Park of Atlanta, just as this area would be connected to Jennie Dean Park.
- The report needs to focus more on the green spaces.
- What happened to the County's facade improvement program? Why did it end 25 years ago?
- What do we do about circulation especially if this area becomes more successful?
- It is helpful to have this information on the arts district.
- The Torpedo Factory is a 501c3 and has had financial issues.
- It could be fun to get your car fixed here if there was more to do here or a better connection to Shirlington.
- Arts and industries can and should go together.
- What are the implications for renovations on stormwater?
- Did the County Board truly express a preference to have this be an arts district at the work session, as stated in the committee report? Keeping buildings is not same as moving the park boundary.
- Do credits have to be offset with money from somewhere else?
- Would park bond money be used to repair the warehouses?
- It is disappointing not to see more green space incorporated in the arts area. It would be more successful if there was more of a mix of buildings and green spaces.
- Would there still need to be an architectural and engineering study for 3700?
- Would the County float an arts bond? There is a concern about park money being used for non-park purposes.
- We will recommend next week that the warehouses be used for open space and stormwater remediation
- One member did not hear County Board support for a parking garage.
- Could a foundation be created for fundraising? How would a 501c3 be funded?
- It is good to see arts as part of the discussion.
- It is important to remember that 3700 represents lots of small arts organizations. It is not a monolithic space and lots of people could be impacted based on changes here.
- A flexible performing space at 3700 is a good idea.
- It was good to linked Shirlington and the brewery at the brewery's summer event. This was done through sidewalk chalk, etc..
- It is important to improve connectivity with Shirlington through arts festivals, programming, etc..
- There should be arts in existing green spaces - arts themed benches, arts themed playgrounds, sculpture, public art, dog park murals, etc.. Integrate and contemplate.
- There should be a sign on the Shirlington side to show people that there are things on the other side of the Run.
- Lights are needed on the bridge.
- This meeting had a good and different energy.
- On November 5th, Oakland Street will be shut down for a business and arts day.

- The brewery would like to marry art and stormwater together to grow hops with artistic rainwater runoff systems.
- Automotive uses are not necessarily incompatible with art. Some artworks are made wholly of tires or other auto parts.

Shirlington Park – Staff presented a PPT presentation on Shirlington Park. Questions and comments followed the presentation, which is available online.

- The unnamed pedestrian bridge should be named.
- More signage is needed.
- There is a paucity of trash containers – need a map of the existing containers.
- There is dangerous, unsightly trash down the side of the banks that is not picked up.
- This is the least attractive side of Shirlington.
- There are many cars moving through this area and no pedestrian safety.
- What happens when the invasive plant removal money runs out?
- There is a need for need for stream overlooks.
- There are too many people and dogs using the space for bikers to safely use this trail.
- This plan should look at bike network connectivity and eliminate bike-ped conflicts.
- What are we being asked to do here? Does staff think this area needs major redevelopment or just minor tweaks? There is no need to start from scratch here, as this is one of the nicest facilities in the County.
- More bicycle safety is needed.
- Shirlington should be better linked with the other side of Four Mile Run.
- Wayfinding signage is needed and the bridge should be named.
- Some view this not as a park, but as a way station,
- This is a comfortable area to walk, but it needs more lighting.
- The area going around the bridge is too narrow.
- The path is narrow and, particularly on weekends, people have to walk single-file.
- Pets and bikers should be separate, more lights should be provided, overlooks should be added and there should be more connections to the stream.
- This is more of a walk-through space than a park. Create a destination there, maybe with an overlook.
- There is a need for separation between runners/bikers and pedestrians.
- More benches should be added and it needs to be easy for people to pick up dog waste.
- This is a successful area that needs tweaking, not reinventing. There should be an overlook and information to engage children and teach them about the natural assets of the area.
- There could be an Oxford Street bridge and overlook combination.
- Is there a way to increase stormwater work on this side of the stream to offset the needs of other side near the dog park?
- What about an aerial park?
- Better signage could let bikers know they can use the WO&D Trail.
- The bridge should be redesigned to let people visually connect with Jennie Dean Park

- Rotating art could enhance this area.
- Some signage is necessary but there is not a need for unattractive County signs.
- Hilton Head has a uniform color palette for its signs which are low and surrounded by greenery.
- Lots of people use this as a park so it is important not to take green space away. There is no easy way to keep the dogs, strollers and bikers in check.
- Every blade of grass will be counted.

Public comment

- All of these parks and art district ideas cost money.
 - There is a 501c3 for the Spectrum Theatre, but everyone thought it was a County-owned building, not a nonprofit.
 - An arts district would be very expensive but it can be done with tremendous County and citizen commitment.
 - This has been an energizing meeting.
 - The bridge does not align with the roadway to Shirlington and should be realigned.
 - This area should be connected to Nauck proper through the arts and in other ways.
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- There are concerns about Shirlington Circle and Nauck should be listed on Shirlington signage.
 - This is one of the area's oldest historical areas and was here before Arlington itself was established.
 - Nauck should be honored and respected here and through the highway system.
 - Are we thinking about artists as entrepreneurs?
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- People enjoy watching the dogs in the stream.
 - The fences should be extended so the dogs do not run up the embankment.

For more details on these presentations and the meeting in general, please visit the 4MRV.com webpage.