



4MRV Working Group Meeting
November 2, 2017
7 – 9:30 PM

Working Group Discussion of Proposed County Acquisition of Arcland Properties

There was a discussion that the idea of having public uses on the back of the Arcland site with other uses on the front of the site should be expressed both in the plan and in the working group's letter, given the timing.

One Working Group member suggested that transit and quasi-industrial uses be discussed and that working group members should look at the last paragraph of the press release related to the potential acquisition of the Arcland site.

Another Working Group member said that he is concerned that this acquisition is being approved with the potential for eminent domain action. Staff has always said that eminent domain would not be used. This undermines our process. The parcels behind the Weenie Beanie should be removed from the plan.

One member said that the community spoke against eminent domain. The Nauck Town Square acquisition had the same eminent domain language, but the owners settled and there was no need to use eminent domain.

Another member said that AFAC has been looking for land for three years and there are few parcels to be had. The County needs more land. This is essential for the future of the County and its future operations. The County should purchase any land under any rubric- eminent domain is boilerplate language.

Staff gave a presentation on "Stream Access and Connectivity".

A Working Group member said that stream access and open space connectivity are important. Are there any preliminary cost numbers for a promenade? This may be in the "nice to have" as opposed to "must have" category.

One member said that it seems unlikely that the Smith property will redevelop.

Another member noted that the promenade would have environmental impact issues on the stream and its banks. Maybe a "lite" version, such as the path along the WO&D which has a little patio for viewing could be implemented. We need to be more creative about how we get close to the water.

One member thought the path was supposed to go through the industrial area, not just along the stream. It was supposed to be connected to the industrial area.

Another member suggested using and adding to existing paths, instead of creating an all new promenade.

One member said that it was nearly impossible to see any of the stream from the existing path.

A member suggested that a better trail, not a promenade, might be the best solution. Small scale bargaining to get the trail connections may be in order. For instance, the County could add provisions to the Zoning Ordinance to modify parking requirements in exchange for getting land for the trail on certain parcels.

Another member noted that it is not necessary to start from scratch on the DMV side. Existing path areas, partially along the stream and partially at the street, should be used.

One member said that if the purpose is to provide a path along the stream, the County could bridge over to the other side if space was unavailable on the north side.

Another member said that the land near Walter Reed Drive is leased to AAA for parking for trucks, snow plows, etc..

One member said that there is a desire for connectivity with a promenade through the study area. A straight promenade is not the only option.

Another member said there are really two ideas under discussion. One is access to the stream, which is a great long-term goal, and the other is general connectivity and enhanced pedestrian safety.

One member said that it is alright to have this trail even if it has to go past the power station. The trail could snake through the SNAIQ.

One members asked if an at-grade platform would trigger other improvements if it was installed in the dog park.

Another member recalled the hurricane that damaged areas along Four Mile Run. People were swept away and the trail should not go under the bridge.

Another member added that under the bridge, the stream banks are very steep.

Staff gave a presentation on “Considerations for Subarea C & D”.

One member asked what can be taken off the roads especially if the County is proposing to build the “Port Authority of Arlington” here. Can there be access to 395?

Another member said that the stretch of Four Mile Run Drive from South Walter Reed Drive to the Weenie Beanie is characterized by light industrial and automotive uses. Are we talking about keeping industrial buildings or industrial uses?

One member asked if the County would need to meet Chesapeake Bay regulations in the RPA area on the Arcland property.

Another member asked if the County purchases the Arcland property, would it have to make substantial improvements to the site.

One member said that the County is saying that it might have to use eminent domain because there is not enough M-1 zoned land for County operations, yet the plan is suggesting that residential or office uses should be incorporated along the Crescent to increase property values for the owners.

Another member said the more connectivity is being provided in sub-area D, but for whom?

Another member noted that more connectivity is a good thing. It lets trucks go on other roads and permits people to move through the big blocks, instead of around them.

One member asked what the other options are for this area, other than residential or office development.

One member said that it would be better to maintain more light industrial. If residential development was allowed, M-1 uses should be required on the ground floor.

One member said that the idea of needing to have like uses facing like uses is unnecessary. This member prefers more light industrial uses on block 4.

Another member said that there has been a 28.5% loss of industrial land between 2005-2015 and here is a community that likes industrial uses. The community does not want residential uses and Arlington does not need more residential development. There is already too much residential development in the County. What are the economics behind this? Why is the Chester's property shown in area D in some maps and C in others? There is a real need for industrial uses and this area should retain its industrial tone and nature.

One member asked why the County is looking at more residential development here if there are already circulation issues. We only want artist space residential. The plans show a Clarendon or one of those walkable areas, but we do not want that.

One member asked how we got from M1 to residential uses.

Another member asked what is driving the mixed-use requirement.

One member wanted to know what staff's thoughts are for green and open space in this area.

Another member said that the drawings are very conventional and not in keeping with the direction given by the working group, which was to improve the existing. This is boring to look at and not different than what you see in rest of County. These plans do not address different housing types, such as the missing middle (flats, etc.). They only show rectangles and no reuse of existing buildings. There is no creativity here. We were supposed to receive an industrial study of new industrial uses. Only one idea is shown here.

One member said that everyone is saying that industrial property is scarce, but here we are trying to eliminate it. Higher density development would create more parking issues and more traffic.

Another member said that light industrial uses are low cost uses. Land prices are going up in Arlington. Where are AFAC clients going to go as Columbia Pike redevelops? AFAC and gas stations are light industrial, but an AFAC-type facility or a gas station could not be put under a residential building.

One member said that there is already a continuous path on the south side of Four Mile Run. There is a lot of garbage under the dirt on the north side and it would be hard to remediate this area. Why should we worry about a north side pathway when we already have a south side one? A north side pathway would cost so much money and headache. Better connections from the south side path to the dog park could be added.

This member added that we are talking about things that economically will not happen. As rents are raised, industrial uses are inevitably pushed out.

Another member said that many of the north side parcels are so narrow and already difficult to park that it would be hard to get land there for a pathway.

One member noted that developers will put residential development anywhere. If you open the door a crack, they will put residential here. We are not seeing all of area C and there is a concrete plant there. Do you want modern light industrial or an old concrete plant that pollutes the air and stream? This might be the one good area for the use of eminent domain for environmental reasons and to reduce the cement truck traffic. Why are we not discussing the cement plant? Light industrial and open casual green space should be explored.

Another member said that it is important to think about uses versus users.

One member said that we do not want just heavy industrial here. We want new development.

Another member said that the neighbors are hopeful for a new look here. This is disappointing. I would have preferred a Walmart or convention center or baseball stadium. We should explore these things from an economic standpoint and look at residents' needs. We need something that will generate tax revenue so that residents' taxes can go down. We need to create incubator spaces, etc.

One member suggested that everyone sit on 24th Street at rush hour to see the traffic. A new street here will not help.

Another member said that he is painfully aware of what is underground here. There is six feet of garbage under AFAC and marine clay. The stream ran through that area at one point and then it became a garbage dump.

Public comment

One member of the public said that there was an expectation for more tonight. From the Chester's property to the bridge there is an opportunity to connect Nauck to Shirlington. This is a dangerous bridge and we need to address it, not gloss over it.

Another member of the public said that access to the stream is interpreted as being able to go play in the water, not just to look at it. The stream is polluted and it could be damaged by people accessing it. It should just be viewed.

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

