

**LRPC Report on
Public Land for Public Good and the draft Public Land Site Evaluation Guidelines
Submitted by Inta Malis, Chair**

BOARD CHARGE

At its July 24 hearing, the County Board tasked the Long Range Planning Committee (LRPC) of the Planning Commission to receive and review public comments on the draft Public Land Site Evaluation Guidelines and to make a report to the Planning Commission and to the County Board at their December 2014 hearings. The report may include recommendations on how to improve the Guidelines as well as suggestions for guiding principles that may clarify the County's Public Land for Public Good initiative.

PROCESS

The LRPC held two meetings to consider the questions outlined in the County Board charge. In addition to the LRPC members who are planning commissioners, the Committee invited five additional commissions to participate: E2C2, Housing, Parks, Transportation, and Urban Forestry. Each commission was represented by its chair or the chair's designee. Both meetings included audience observers who were interested members of the public or represented other groups.

The first meeting was held October 28 and began with a presentation by planning staff on the background of the Public Land for Public Good (PL4PG) initiative and a summary of public comments received as of October 24. In the second part of the meeting, committee members posed questions and offered suggestions for possible recommendations. Much of the discussion focused on the need for a broad planning effort to understand the County's current public facility needs. The staff presentation, including analysis of initial comments, is attached to this report in Appendix A.

The second meeting, held on November 20, began with a presentation by planning staff that included an analysis of all public comments that were received in the comment period. In the second part of the meeting, the committee worked from a discussion outline prepared by the LRPC Chair. This outline was derived from the public comments and committee discussion at the 28 October LRPC meeting. Committee members were invited to add items to the discussion outline. One additional item was suggested. It was discussed by the committee and appears in this report as Item 6. The staff presentation at the November 20 LRPC meeting including the analysis of public comments is attached to this report in Appendix B.

DISCUSSION

The staff presentation on the PL4PG initiative and the analysis of community comments were well received. While the request for public comment was directed at getting feedback on the Site Evaluation Guidelines, the analysis showed that few comments addressed that specific question. By far, the vast majority of comments dealt with questions of policy and process. The key take-aways were the perceived lack of and need for 1) transparency in decision making, 2) consultation with the community, and 3) clear principles and policies on important community values. The policy concerns addressed the need for firm statements (principles or policies) on the use of parks and open space and how other public needs are prioritized. While commenters voiced overwhelming support for preserving parks and open space, both generally and specifically, there was also support for a wide range of community needs (e.g., schools, affordable housing, etc.). The comments on policy and practice included concerns with decision making by both the County and Arlington Public Schools.

CONCLUSIONS

This report provides guidance in six areas. For most items the committee offered specific language that is captured in this report. The exception is Item 1, where the committee did not reach a consensus. The discussion of Item 1 was not particularly contentious. The lack of consensus was due more to the fact that the various considerations were complex and the committee faced a time constraint.

What follows is a report on the results of the LRPC review.

1) The committee discussed the following statement that was presented in the discussion outline but did not reach consensus on recommended language.

The community desires firm statements regarding the circumstances under which open space and parkland can be used for any public facilities, including affordable housing.

This statement was included in the discussion outline to acknowledge the numerous public comments that suggested a great deal of anxiety and concern over the possible loss of parks and open space that might occur in order to satisfy other public facility needs. Some of the responses raised concerns about the loss of open space at specific sites, especially Lubber Run and Jenny Dean Park, which are targeted for planning studies that are scheduled to begin soon. Other responses raised general concerns about how parks and open space might be used.

There was no disagreement that a response to the community was necessary. The lack of consensus was around exactly what statement the County Board should make now versus after further study. As it was the consensus of the LRPC to suggest that there be a broader process to examine public facility needs (see Item 2 below) and there are two studies that will address at least one dimension of land use policy (the Affordable Housing Study and the soon-to-begin Public Spaces Master Plan update), discussion revolved around the degree to which a board statement at this time would pre-empt recommendations for policy guidelines that could emerge from in-depth discussions during the planning processes.

One option could be that County Board Chair Jay Fiset's October 28 letter, which states that stands alone affordable housing cannot be located on officially designated parks, is reiterated by the entire board. Another option could be that the board goes further in stating policy goals with respect to the use of parks and open space.

As noted earlier for the remaining guidance that follows, there was consensus by the committee, including the representatives from the invited commissions.

2) There is a need for a broader process, which involves the community, to communicate and discuss public facility needs.

a) County demographic data and projections are being presented to the public in multiple ongoing studies (e.g. APS planning, Affordable Housing Study) and need to be reconciled with respect to the various conclusions being drawn, which conclusions are supported by the data, and what future needs the data suggest.

b) This conversation should examine what resources are available to meet public facility needs, consider more efficient ways to use existing assets, and examine how County needs could be met on privately owned land or in commercial buildings.

c) This process should result in an understanding of how site selection is conducted and how the public participates in the decision.

d) This process should clarify the role of the CIP process in scoping capital projects and prioritizing their implementation.

e) This process should incorporate needs identified by Arlington Public Schools.

f) This process should be reconciled with the work on two Comprehensive Plan elements, the ongoing Affordable Housing Study and the soon to begin update of the Public Spaces Master Plan.

g) The array of public facilities included in this review should be defined. So far interest has been expressed in including schools, fire stations, community centers, affordable housing, and parks. Other uses could be added.

h) This process should result in an approach to planning that permits periodic re-evaluation of priorities.

i) This process should commence immediately and be concluded in a short period of time.

3) Studies for capital projects currently identified in the 2015-2025 CIP that begin in 2015 should proceed while the broader review is developed and conducted. The "Site Evaluation Guidelines" should be set aside for now and reconsidered as part of the broader process. The draft guidelines:

a) confuse process and criteria.

b) are not broadly applicable beyond some specific sites in Tier 1 and Tier 2.

c) express criteria that are applicable to all county land use studies and are not unique to the target sites.

d) can be used to second guess site selection.

4) The criteria used to identify sites for locating affordable housing in *the County Manager's Report: Public Land for Public Good* should be withdrawn and reassessed in a process that would include consultation with the public. The term Public Land for Public Good does not capture the importance and benefits of other public facilities and uses and should be reconsidered.

5) The criteria used to identify potential County sites for building new schools, outlined in the Manager/Superintendent's memo Public Land for Schools dated May 13, 2014, need to be reassessed in a process that would include consultation with the public and review by the respective boards. The County Manager should be directed to re-open the issue with Arlington Public Schools.

6) Ensure that an aggressive land acquisition policy is developed as part of the Public Spaces Master Plan update.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

In closing the LRPC wishes to thank the chairs and representatives of the five commissions who joined in this review. Their comments were excellent. The Committee also appreciates the efforts of the planning staff that supported the committee. As usual, their work was thorough, professional, and timely.

ARLINGTON

Long Range Planning Committee

Public Land Site Evaluation

October 28, 2014

ARLINGTON

County Board Charge

At its July 24 hearing, the County Board tasked the Long Range Planning Committee (LRPC) of the Planning Commission to receive and review public comments on the draft Public Land Site Evaluation Guidelines and to make a report to the Planning Commission and to the County Board at their December 2014 hearings.

The report may include recommendations on how to improve the Guidelines as well as suggestions for guiding principles that may clarify the County's Public Land for Public Good initiative.

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Presentation Outline

1. Background: Public Land for Public Good
2. Planning Context
3. Draft Public Land Site Evaluation Guidelines and Public Input Received to Date

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ARLINGTON

Public Land for Public Good

- County Board directed County Manager to identify 3-5 publicly-owned sites with the greatest potential for redevelopment that could include **affordable housing** within the next 10 years
- Staff also asked to evaluate sites for possible **new school construction**, using APS' location criteria
- County Manager delivered PL4PG report to County Board – May 2013

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Public Land for Public Good - Housing

8 sites recommended for further consideration for **affordable housing** – Divided into 2 tiers

- Tier 1 - "In Process" - under consideration for redevelopment as part of an ongoing planning process or redevelopment proposal.
- Tier 2 - recommended for future consideration for affordable housing pending special planning studies to be conducted with the community (all Tier 2 sites included in adopted CIP)

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Public Land for Public Good - Housing

Tier 1

- Fire Station #10 / Rosslyn Highlands Park
- Gables – North Rolfe Street SP#432 (pending)
- Land Adjacent to Lee Gardens North (Woodbury Park)
- Courthouse Square

Tier 2

- Fire Station #8
- Edison Complex
- Lubber Run Community Center
- Land Adjacent to Jennie Dean Park

These sites are "In Process" - under consideration for redevelopment as part of an ongoing planning process or redevelopment proposal.

These sites are recommended for future consideration for affordable housing pending special planning studies to be conducted with the community.

The timeline for each study will be determined as part of the annual review of the County's work plan.

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Public Land for Public Good - Schools

County Manager and APS Superintendent issued joint memo on 3 potential **public school** sites – May 2013

Site/School Name	Adjacent County Property (if applicable)
Wilson School	Fire Station #10 / Rosslyn Highlands Park
Thomas Jefferson Middle School	Thomas Jefferson Park
Career Center/Fenwick	

Note: Each potential school site would need additional levels of analysis and community engagement prior to proceeding further.

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Public Land for Public Good

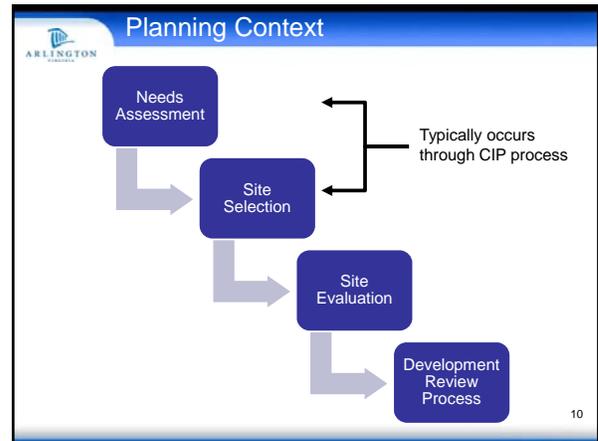
Questions on Public Land for Public Good

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Planning Context

How has the County typically planned, sited, and developed public uses in the past?

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Planning Context

- Needs Assessment - Definition
 - Establishes capital improvements needed to maintain or enhance service levels and accommodate future changes in population and employment
 - Can include maintenance/replacement of existing facilities or new facilities

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Planning Context

- Needs Assessment - Process
 - Typically performed by County agencies in advance of Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) process – builds on previous CIP
 - Some projects guided by Comp Plan Elements (e.g. transportation, storm water)
 - Needs can also be identified by County Board-appointed commissions and advisory groups, or neighborhood and business groups

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Planning Context

- Needs Assessment - Process
 - CIP staff team prioritizes needs to develop draft CIP
 - Criteria: immediate safety, legislative/judicial requirements, timing, linkages to other projects, County master plans
 - Considers debt capacity and debt management policies – what can we afford?
 - Public forum prior to draft CIP
 - County Board adopts CIP after public work sessions and hearing

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Planning Context

- Site Selection - Definition
 - Determines the location of a new or relocated public use
 - Location could be County-held site or site to be acquired

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Planning Context

- Site Selection - Process
 - Has typically been performed either by staff or through community process
 - Siting decision typically formalized through adopted CIP
 - Prior efforts: County developed principles and procedures for siting facilities in 1990s
 - Example: Fire Station #3 (Cherrydale)
 - Site selected through community task force process

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Planning Context

- Site Evaluation - Definition
 - Community process to evaluate or verify site selection for a public use
 - Draft Public Land Site Evaluation Guidelines address this step

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Planning Context

- Site Evaluation - Process
 - Typically only performed when additional community input is needed after a staff-led site selection process
 - Potential outcomes
 - Validation of the selected site with guiding principles for development
 - Recommendation to identify an alternate site
 - Examples
 - Thomas Jefferson Working Group (current)
 - Westover Library/Reed School Task Force (past)

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Planning Context

- Development Review Process - Definition
 - Process(es) through which the County considers and acts on development applications

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    graph TD
      A([Application Submitted]) --> B([Efficiency Review])
      B --> C([Schedule Hearings])
      C --> D([Staff Review])
      D --> E{ }
      E --> F[Planning Commission Public Hearing]
      F --> G{Recommendation}
      G --> H[County Board Public Hearing]
      H --> I{Final Action}
    
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Planning Context

- Development Review Process – Process
 - Specific circumstances of development application guided by regulations and policies
 - Could require County Board action: e.g., site plan approval, use permit, zoning change, and/or GLUP amendment
 - Could be approved administratively: e.g., building permit for by-right development

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Planning Context

- Development Review Process – Process
 - Public Facilities Review Committee reviews significant County and APS projects
 - May include review by advisory commissions and public hearings before Planning Commission and County Board

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Planning Context

Questions on Planning Context

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Public Land Site Evaluation Guidelines

- Recent CIP update and PL4PG initiative raised issues about evaluating proposals on public land
- Staff has developed an initial draft of site evaluation guidelines for public input – presented at July 24 County Board meeting
- Draft guidelines suggest **goals, evaluation criteria, and a process** for balancing community priorities on County land

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Public Land Site Evaluation Guidelines

- Draft guidelines intended to apply to 3 categories of sites
 - Sites recommended in PL4PG report
 - Sites identified for study in adopted CIP
 - Public school proposals on County land

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Public Land Site Evaluation Guidelines

- Future planning processes that meet categories in draft guidelines
 - Fire Station #8 (Lee Highway) (PL4PG)
 - Edison Complex (PL4PG/CIP)
 - Lubber Run Community Center (PL4PG/CIP)
 - Land Adjacent to Jennie Dean Park (PL4PG/CIP)
 - North Side Salt Facility (CIP)

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Public Land Site Evaluation Guidelines

- Draft guidelines presented to County Board and posted on County website - July 24
- County Board
 - Directed staff to collect public comments on draft guidelines
 - Directed LRPC and PC to review comments and report back in December

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Public Input on Draft Guidelines

- Public comments solicited through website, mail and Open Arlington (online forum)
 - Initial deadline for comments: Sep. 30
 - Deadline extended to Oct. 31
- 320+ comments received through Oct. 24 have been posted on County website
- All comments received through Oct. 31 will be considered and posted on website

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Public Input on Draft Guidelines

Common Themes from Comments Received

- Parkland should be preserved and not developed with other uses
 - Reducing parkland would reduce quality of life
 - As County urbanizes, population increases, County should acquire more parkland
 - Concern about new uses on land acquired for park and recreation purposes
 - Decisions about parks should consider their total economic value (recreational and environmental)
 - Uses of parkland should be discussed through update to Public Spaces Master Plan

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Public Input on Draft Guidelines

- County land should be considered for affordable housing, if it is already developed
 - Support for including housing on land that is already developed when facilities are built or replaced
 - County is losing affordable rental housing
 - County Manager's list of sites considered for affordable housing should be expanded

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Public Input on Draft Guidelines

- County land should not be considered for affordable housing
 - New affordable housing increases demand for County services (parks, schools, transportation, etc.)
 - Developers should provide affordable housing on their land, not provide cash contributions
 - Concern about allowing private developers to build and manage housing on public land
 - A limited number of residents will live in affordable housing

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Public Input on Draft Guidelines

- Affordable housing locations should be balanced across the County
 - Concern about concentrating affordable housing in a few areas
 - Some sites identified in PL4PG report are in close proximity to other affordable developments

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 **Public Input on Draft Guidelines**

- Schools should be given priority for large County-held sites
 - Schools require larger sites than housing or other public uses
 - County's community centers should be considered as school sites (Lubber Run, Madison, Langston, etc.)
 - New schools can meet community recreation needs with shared facilities
 - County Manager/Superintendent's list of considered school sites should be expanded

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 **Public Input on Draft Guidelines**

- Concern about (and some support for) proposals for new uses on County Land
 - Lubber Run Community Center (CIP/PL4PG)
 - Land adjacent to Jennie Dean Park (CIP/PL4PG)
 - North Side Salt Facility (CIP)
 - Thomas Jefferson Park (Working Group process underway)
 - Cherrydale Library (not proposed for change)
 - Glencarlyn Park (not proposed for change)

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 **Public Input on Draft Guidelines**

- Need more opportunities for community engagement
 - Concern that there was no community input on PL4PG report or schools memo
 - Guidelines should allow for public comment early and often
 - Prior to Sep. 30: requests to extend comment period (subsequently extended to Oct. 31)

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 **Public Input on Draft Guidelines**

- Suggested changes to Draft Guidelines
 - Community should have input on site selection in addition to site evaluation
 - Working groups should include
 - Representatives of groups that may benefit from affordable housing
 - Representatives of surrounding communities
 - Each planning process should have a clear timeline, process, and charge

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Long Range Planning Committee

Public Land Site Evaluation

November 20, 2014



County Board Charge

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The report may include recommendations on how to improve the Guidelines as well as suggestions for guiding principles that may clarify the County's Public Land for Public Good initiative.

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Public Input on Draft Guidelines

- Public comments on draft *Public Land Site Evaluation Guidelines* solicited through website, mail and Open Arlington (online forum)
- 14 week comment period
- 570+ comments received have been posted on County website

<http://projects.arlingtonva.us/plans-studies/public-land-site-evaluation/>

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Public Input on Draft Guidelines

Common Themes from Comments Received

Theme	Approx. Number of Comments
Concern about new uses on specific sites	~ 340
Lubber Run Community Center	~ 140
Cherrydale Library	~ 90
Land adjacent to Jennie Dean Park	~ 80
North Side Salt Facility	~ 10
Thomas Jefferson Park	~ 10
Glencarlyn Park	~ 10

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Public Input on Draft Guidelines

Common Themes from Comments Received

Theme	Approx. Number of Comments
Parks should be preserved	~ 160
County land should be considered for affordable housing	~ 80
Schools should be given priority for large sites	~ 50
More opportunities for community engagement	~ 30
County land should NOT be considered for affordable housing	~ 30
Affordable housing locations should be balanced	~ 30
County and APS should collaborate more on facilities planning	~ 10

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Public Input on Draft Guidelines

- Concern about proposals for new uses on County Land
 - Lubber Run Community Center (CIP/PL4PG)
 - Land adjacent to Jennie Dean Park (CIP/PL4PG)
 - North Side Salt Facility (CIP)
 - Thomas Jefferson Park (Working Group process underway)
 - Cherrydale Library (not proposed for change)
 - Glencarlyn Park (not proposed for change)

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Public Input on Draft Guidelines

- Parkland should be preserved and not developed with other uses
 - Reducing parkland would reduce quality of life
 - As County urbanizes, population increases, County should acquire more parkland
 - Parkland acquisition is not keeping pace with population growth *
 - Concern about new uses on land acquired for park and recreation purposes

** Signifies a common theme or supporting statement not presented at 10/28 LRPC meeting*

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Public Input on Draft Guidelines

- Parkland should be preserved and not developed with other uses (cont'd)
 - Decisions about parks should consider their total economic value (recreational and environmental)
 - Uses of parkland should be discussed through update to Public Spaces Master Plan
 - Also support for preserving community centers and libraries and not adding new uses *

8

Public Input on Draft Guidelines

- County land should be considered for affordable housing, especially on land that is already developed
 - Support for including housing on land that is already developed when facilities are built or replaced
 - County is losing affordable rental housing
 - County Manager's list of sites considered for affordable housing should be expanded

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Public Input on Draft Guidelines

- County land should not be considered for affordable housing
 - Opposition to committed affordable housing *
 - Support for committed affordable housing, but through other means (inclusionary zoning, vouchers, preserving existing housing, etc.) *
 - New affordable housing increases demand for County services (parks, schools, transportation, etc.)
 - Concern about allowing private developers to build and manage housing on public land
 - A limited number of residents will live in affordable housing

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Public Input on Draft Guidelines

- Affordable housing locations should be balanced across the County
 - Concern about concentrating affordable housing in a few areas
 - Some sites identified in PL4PG report are in close proximity to other affordable developments

11

Public Input on Draft Guidelines

- Schools should be given priority for large County-held sites
 - School capacity issues are more critical than other priorities, particularly affordable housing *
 - Schools require larger sites than housing or other public uses
 - County's community centers should be considered as school sites (Lubber Run, Madison, Langston, etc.)
 - New schools can meet community recreation needs with shared facilities
 - County Manager/Superintendent's list of considered school sites should be expanded *

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 **Public Input on Draft Guidelines**

- Need more opportunities for community engagement on decisions for new uses
 - No community input on PL4PG report or schools memo (selection criteria and identified sites)
 - Guidelines should allow for public comment early and often
 - Community should have input on site selection
 - Working groups should include
 - Representatives of groups that may benefit from affordable housing
 - Representatives of surrounding communities
 - Need predictable, consistent process for new uses – no surprises *

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 **Public Input on Draft Guidelines**

- Comments suggesting specific changes to Draft Guidelines (~ 50)
 - Each planning process should have a clear timeline, process, and charge
 - Goals and criteria are too vague/subjective to be useful for decision-making *
 - Difficult to balance priorities when all priorities are considered equally important *
 - Guidelines should address site selection *
 - How are sites selected?
 - If site has already been selected, why evaluate?

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 **Public Input on Draft Guidelines**

- Comments suggesting specific changes to Draft Guidelines (cont'd)
 - Consider land acquisition, not just current holdings *
 - Concern that Working Group seems to be optional *
 - Need discussion of community outreach process beyond citizen working groups and commissions *
 - List specific County policies and plans to be considered as part of evaluation criteria *

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