

Financial Resources

The Community Facilities Study kicked off with two February committee meetings that organized the group and provided baseline information on County revenues and the state of the region's economy.

Study Process

- The proposed schedule includes bi-monthly meetings on specific topics (see page 4).
- The [Study Committee](#), guided by the [Study Charge](#), will operate as a whole and split into the following subcommittees to discuss challenges:
 - Economic Sustainability
 - Demographics
 - Facility Needs
 - Siting Criteria
- 200 participants have registered for the Resident Forum, a group open to all interested Arlingtonians that is intended to broaden the range of participants, provide expanded input to the committee and serve as a communications link to neighborhoods and organizations.

County Revenues

- Arlington's revenue balance, unique compared to neighboring jurisdictions, is approximately a 50/50 percent split with half of revenues coming from residential uses and half coming from commercial uses. This balance provides revenue stability when the market for certain sectors is weak.
- Arlington's financial management practices help the County provide a high level of services and provide benefits to taxpayers. The County holds triple-AAA bond ratings, strong reserve levels, a fully funded pension, funding plans in place for retiree healthcare and moderate debt limits.
- The County's revenue streams have legal and policy limitations. Find out what tax sources the Commonwealth allows on pages 4-5 of the [revenue overview presentation](#).

Our Region's Economy

- Last year the Washington region under-performed all other regions in job growth. Average wages per job are decreasing.
- Arlington's economy is heavily dependent on two employment sectors: federal government and professional businesses/services. Federal procurement spending has declined for three straight years. Arlington has seen a loss of 4,700 federal jobs since 2010.
- Arlington's office vacancy rate is 10% above its 15-year historical average.
- The County has done well at expanding existing businesses and supporting startups. Arlington has competitive advantages in information services and financial activity business sectors.
- Arlington continues to aggressively pursue new tenants and will be looking at new markets to diversify. New economic development strategies and partnerships with neighboring cities and counties in Virginia will support repositioning in the market.

More Information

Visit the project website to:

- Read complete meeting summary, questions and answers from [Committee Meeting #1](#) on February 11 and [Committee Meeting #2](#) on February 25.
- View presentation slides and videos of key speakers on the [study documents page](#) under "Committee Meeting #1" and "Committee Meeting #2"

Demographics, Forecasts & Projections

March Community Facility Study meetings focused on looking at Arlington's demographics, forecasts and school enrollment projections. Breakout discussions with the Resident Forum discussed key questions, such as how changes in demographics will determine the needs of different neighborhoods, who we want to be as a County and what steps or solutions we should take to get there.

What did we learn about demographics & future trends?

- Nationally, household growth and homeownership rates were in decline in past several years but are picking up.
- First time homebuyers will be a key driver as the housing market picks up.
- There is a growing demand for single-family homes, some predict millennials will choose a similar path as Baby Boomer and Gen X generations.
- It is difficult to "forecast" what any specific age group will do over time, including whether the millennials will remain in the inner-core communities like Arlington.
- Since 2010 in Arlington:
 - Millennials were dominant generation
 - 24-44; over 65; and under 5 cohorts have grown
 - Migration in/out is highest for 18-34 year olds

Do the County and Schools use the same numbers when looking to the future?

- The County forecasts future development based on County plans/policies; meets [Metropolitan Washington County of Governments](#) requirement under Clean Air Act
- APS projects future student enrollment

These two distinct purposes for forecasts and projections need to be retained. However, opportunities for more collaboration between the County and APS in the future may build more informative data and result in better forecasting methods beyond the near term (3 – 5 years out). Consultants have been hired to assess the methodologies and identify potential improvements. Initial findings will be presented at the April 8 Study Committee meeting.

What did we learn about housing and student enrollment?

- Multi-family housing makes up 64% of the overall housing supply and 94% of the net new housing.
- Student generation rates are generally low for multi-family housing, and most growth in student population comes from single-family homes.
- Student generation rates have been increasing for almost all housing types including single-family homes.
- Single-family neighborhoods are changing; new, larger homes are replacing older homes throughout the County, although, on average, only 28 net new houses per year; and additions are more common and are increasing home sizes.
- The [Affordable Housing Master Plan](#) will establish policies, goals and objectives for the County's future as a new Comprehensive Plan element.

More Information

Visit the project website to:

- Read a complete meeting summary from [Committee Meeting #3](#) on March 11
- Read notes from table discussions at [Committee Meeting #4](#) on March 25.
- View presentation slides and videos of key speakers on the [study documents page](#) under "Committee Meeting #3" and "Committee Meeting #4".

Forecast Methodologies, County Vision and Facility Planning

April Community Facility Study committee meetings reviewed forecast methodologies, the County's comprehensive plan and land use vision, past facility processes, the Public Spaces Master Plan and an inventory of land & facilities. County Directors & APS Assistant Superintendents discussed facility planning and future needs with the group.

Review of Forecast and Projection Methodologies

An external consultant team reviewed the methodologies used by the County to forecast population, housing units, households and employment and by APS to project student enrollment.

- Reviewers confirmed that the methodologies used by the County and APS are valid and appropriate, and that two different datasets are necessary to meet different purposes.



- Steps for improving accuracy and transparency in the near term include developing annual reports and improving the website (APS) and comprehensively documenting the forecast methodology (County).
- School enrollment projections could be refined by collecting and analyzing housing data such as unit type, number of bedrooms, and length of homeownership.
- A second phase of the consultant's work could dive deeper into potential methodology improvements..
- View the [complete report](#) and [consultant presentation](#).

The County's Comprehensive Vision

- A community-based vision helped Arlington protect single-family neighborhood character while planning for

growth and redevelopment in the Metro corridors. The Metro corridors account for 11% of the County's land area.

- The result is a successful mix of commercial and residential development, which helps to balance the transportation network, create walkable urban villages and diversify the County's tax base.
- The vision is implemented through policy and guidance documents. The [Comprehensive Plan](#), which has individual elements including the [General Land Use Plan \(GLUP\)](#) and the [Public Spaces Master Plan](#), is a primary decision-making tool for the County Board, Planning Commission and County Departments.

Facility Siting and Review Processes

The planning process for public facilities has three major steps: needs assessment (see next section), site selection and the development review process.

Past facility processes and criteria for site selection:

- 1993: a citizen working group developed siting process principles and procedures that were adopted by County Board
- 1999: another citizen working group reviewed the 1993 process and presented recommendations for improvement. These were not adopted by the County Board.
- 2011: the County and APS signed a Memorandum of Understanding regarding the use of County land to meet APS's school capacity needs.

Facility development review processes:

- The School Board appoints a [Building Level Planning Committee](#) to give stakeholders an opportunity to advise the Board on major school construction projects.
- The County Board appoints the [Public Facilities Review Committee](#) to advise the Board on both APS and County facility projects.

April 2015 Key Takeaways continue →

Continued: Forecast Methodologies, County Vision and Facility Planning

Land & Facility Inventory and Needs Assessment

- The County's planned growth increases demands for public services, open space and recreational options, and schools within limited physical space and available resources.
- Combined, the County and Schools own 2.2 square miles out of 26.2 square miles in the County. Schools, parks and all County facilities share this space.

Arlington County Services and Facilities

- 89% of County residents surveyed are "very satisfied" or "satisfied" with overall quality of services provided by the County.
- Examples of key services provided: drinking water, waste water treatment, street maintenance, snow removal, ART bus, transit facilities, police & fire operations
- The County operates 105 facilities.
 - 87 are County-owned (examples: Courts & Detention Facility, Arlington Trades Center, Glencarlyn Library, fire stations).
 - 18 are leased (examples: Rosslyn Commuter Store, Courthouse Plaza).
- Facility changes planned for in the [Capital Improvement Plan \(CIP\)](#):
 - North Arlington Salt Storage Facility
 - Fire Station #8 and OEM Relocation
 - Lubber Run Community Center
 - ART House Facility
 - Trades Center Garage
- Future County facility needs:
 - Parking & maintenance for transit vehicles
 - Fire station relocations and additions
 - Increased storage for County operations
 - Trades Center services

Arlington Public Spaces

- The County does not have enough indoor & outdoor park and recreation facilities to meet current or future needs.
- Strategic partnerships between APS and the County have helped maximize current park and recreation uses.
- The [Public Spaces Master Plan Update](#) kicked off in February 2015. This ongoing community process will engage stakeholders to understand current and future needs, develop a classification system and include land acquisition strategies and key parcels to be acquired.

Arlington Public Schools Facilities

- Short term: APS must address urgent capacity needs immediately.
- Long term: The Community Facilities Study will help guide APS decision-making to address long-term capacity needs.
- Arlington has limited options for sites to construct new schools.
- School enrollment projections indicate
 - APS needs a new elementary school in South Arlington.
 - Middle school seats are addressed by changes to Stratford.
 - Internal changes at neighborhood high schools will provide additional capacity.
 - The APS CIP includes funds to change the Career Center into a capacity generating high school.
- Enrollment growth also increases the need for buses and other vehicles and parking spaces for APS buses and vehicles.

More Information

Visit the project website to view presentation slides, meeting summaries, videos of key speakers and other resources at the [study documents page](#).