

On behalf of the County Board, I want to thank you for sharing your thoughts on the Public Land for Public Good concept and/or providing comments on the draft Public Land Site Evaluation Guidelines. I would like to take the opportunity to provide some background and insights into this issue and process.

My colleagues and I recognize that we must use our limited land wisely and efficiently to meet a number of pressing community needs – schools, parks, recreational opportunities, public facilities and affordable housing.

We understand the confusion created with the release of the County Manager's report on [Public Land for Public Good: A Preliminary Review of County-Owned Parcels to Identify Sites Where the Potential for Development of Affordable Housing Should be Studied Further](#). This report was done as a *staff-only* assessment of County-held land, to ascertain whether any of these public lands might be considered for affordable housing in the future. We asked for 3-5 potential sites to be identified. The County Manager and County Board have now removed from further consideration the additional sites ("Tier III").

It was never the intention, nor is it now of interest, to place stand-alone affordable housing in an officially designated park, nor was it the intent to disturb existing natural or park areas. The success of Arlington Mill Community Center was in the mind of those proposing this effort and of the County Board – where parking was moved underground to allow for a joint use project incorporating affordable housing above.

For years, our practice has been that when an existing public facility is scheduled for renovation or replacement, like Arlington Mill, we consider whether it is feasible and appropriate to assess opportunities to meet other community needs in a joint facility or integrated development.

As we have reviewed the summary of comments received to date on the draft Public Land Site Evaluation Guidelines, we recognize that many commenters agree with these goals and practices – which will surely inform the final guidelines.

If you have not yet submitted comments on the [DRAFT Guidelines](#) that would be used to evaluate sites in the future, they are available for [public comment online](#) through this Friday **October 31**. Our citizen Planning Commission is leading this review effort, which will provide members of the public multiple additional opportunities to weigh in before the County Board adopts guidelines in 2015.

We are all working hard to meet the generational needs of our community in the most respectful, open, efficient, and fair way possible. Thank you for your thoughtfulness as we move ahead in balancing our community's many needs among many important stakeholders.

We encourage you to stay engaged in the process.



Jay Fisette
Chair, Arlington County Board

P.S. – Please know that the County Board is committed to our environment and to the preservation, enhancement and expansion of open space, as demonstrated by the addition of 76 acres of open space over the last twenty years!