



ARLINGTON COUNTY, VIRGINIA
THE ARLINGTON COMMISSION FOR THE ARTS
1100 NORTH GLEBE ROAD, # 1500
ARLINGTON, VIRGINIA 22201
(703) 228-0808 • FAX (703) 228-0805



April 9, 2018

The Honorable Katie Cristol, Chair
Arlington County Board
2100 Clarendon Boulevard
Arlington, VA 22201

RE: 4MRV Draft Policy Framework

Dear Chair Cristol:

I am writing on behalf of the Arlington Commission for the Arts to express our support for an "arts and industrial quarter" or "arts hub" as a component of the Four Mile Run Valley (4MRV) development plan.

The Commission greatly appreciated the recent County staff presentation of the Four Mile Run Valley (4MRV) Draft Policy Framework on February 28. In addition, Commission members (former chair) Jeff Zeeman and (current vice-chair) Tina Worden also attended the February 20 County Board working session on this subject, and many of us watched the video of the discussion.

At our February Commission meeting, County staff members Richard Tucker and Marco Rivero presented the Four Mile Run Valley Draft Policy Framework and facilitated a Commission discussion. The Commission thanks the Working Group for recognizing the value of the arts as it is expressed in the 4MRV Vision: "to enhance the area's unique strengths over time, addressing natural areas while guiding public realm improvements and encouraging new development that contributes to the Valley's future arts-oriented, industrial character." In addition, we greatly appreciate the County Board's decision to retain flexibility within the land use designation for the three county-owned properties in order to have a more robust conversation around the future role of arts and culture in the area.

As you know, Enriching Lives: Arlington Arts and Culture Strategy, the strategic framework unanimously adopted by the Arlington Commission for the Arts in March 2017, prioritizes the importance of investing in a "vibrant, equitable, sustainable, and evolving arts and culture

ecosystem,” with an emphasis on the need for available and affordable cultural spaces and venues. This priority was echoed vigorously by representatives of many of Arlington’s arts and cultural organizations at two March 26 “listening sessions” convened by the Commission that focused on the Enriching Lives framework.

Since the Four Mile Run Valley is already the site of considerable arts and culture activity, its role as a community venue has been established. Given the needs of our arts organizations and audiences, the Commission believes there are compelling reasons to preserve and enhance the current cultural facilities and give serious attention to arts-related uses for the nearby existing County-owned buildings.

The Commission looks forward to working with staff, County Board, and others to explore options to advance the arts district (arts hub) concept in the near future.

Sincerely,



Marsha Semmel
Chair

Cc: The Honorable Christian Dorsey, Vice Chair, Arlington County Board Member
The Honorable Libby Garvey, Arlington County Board Member
The Honorable Erik Gutshall, Arlington County Board
The Honorable John Vihstadt, Arlington County Board Member



ARLINGTON COUNTY, VIRGINIA
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION
1100 NORTH GLEBE ROAD, #1500
ARLINGTON, VIRGINIA 22201
(703) 228-0606 • FAX (703) 228-0605



April 17, 2018

The Honorable Katie Cristol, Chair
Arlington County Board
2100 Clarendon Boulevard, Suite 300
Arlington, Virginia 22201

RE: RTA for 4MRV Draft Policy Framework

Dear Chair Cristol,

On behalf of the Economic Development Commission (EDC), I want to express the EDC's support for the Request to Advertise (RTA) related to the proposed Four Mile Run Valley (4MRV) Draft Policy Framework (Policy Framework). The 4MRV area is of interest to the EDC because of its importance as one of the few areas in Arlington where light industrial uses are permitted by-right. The EDC strongly believes that the maintenance of the M-1 zoning that regulates this area is critical to Arlington's diverse economy, and that the County Board should communicate clearly and forcefully its intention to maintain this M-1 zoning as the Policy Framework is implemented. The EDC urges the County Board to move forward expeditiously with this long-awaited implementation.

The EDC evaluated the proposed Policy Framework in accordance with its Guiding Principles. As articulated below, the EDC believes the Policy Framework and its vision, is supportive of the EDC's economic development strategy – *Framework for Prosperity 2.0* -- and, specifically, the EDC's Guiding Principles of competitiveness, economic impact, and placemaking making and public realm.

Competitiveness: The tenets of Competitiveness are reflected in the 4MRV Policy Framework vision: "encouraging new investment that contribute to the Valley's arts-oriented, industrial character" and "preserving existing land uses while providing flexibility for new arts or cultural uses". Retaining the underlying M-1 industrial zoning supports existing businesses and encourages industrial, production and facility-centric arts-based uses. This broader economic base will enable businesses to grow and prosper in 4MRV. This vision supports Arlington's economic strategy of being more resilient, recognizable, competitive and innovative.

Economic Impact: The Policy Framework fosters and encourages diversified employment opportunities found in light industrial businesses as well as makers and producers involved with artisan manufacturing. Ranging from highly specialized jobs that support automotive and other industrial businesses to entry-level jobs with on-the-job training that allow workers to develop and hone their skills, these jobs are critically important to a diverse employment base. Further, the revitalization of the 4MRV area is likely to enhance the economic opportunity for residents in adjacent neighborhoods.

Placemaking and Public Realm: Continued County investment in public infrastructure is necessary to create an environment conducive to businesses operating effectively and inviting for customers to visit. The implementation of the Policy Framework will expand transportation options, increase pedestrian and bike safety, address parking needs, and integrate aesthetic improvements to streetscapes. The EDC applauds these improvement investments that will enhance the 4MRV corridor. However, care needs to be taken to ensure that business operations are not wholly disrupted and the needs of all users are taking into consideration, particularly with respect to parking and truck access to businesses for deliveries.

In summary, the EDC supports the proposed 4MRV Policy Framework as it retains the existing M-I zoning and envisions “enhancing the area’s unique strengths over time... and encouraging new investment that contribute to the Valley’s arts-oriented, industrial character”. The EDC looks forward to the County Board’s discussion as it considers the 4MRV Policy Framework and will continue to provide guidance as appropriate.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions.

Respectfully,



Sally J. Duran
Chair, Economic Development Commission

cc: Arlington County Board Members
M. Schwartz
C. Mitten
V. Hoskins

ENVIRONMENT AND ENERGY CONSERVATION COMMISSION
c/o Department of Environmental Services
2100 Clarendon Blvd., Suite 705
Arlington, VA 22201

April 24, 2018

The Honorable Katie Cristol, Chair
Arlington County Board
2100 Clarendon Blvd.
Arlington, VA 22201

RE: Four Mile Run Valley Policy Framework

Dear Chair Cristol:

The Environment and Energy Conservation Commission (E2C2) encourages the County Board to adopt the Policy Framework for Four Mile Run Valley (4MRV). Representatives of E2C2 attended meetings of the 4MRV Working Group and E2C2 hosted a staff presentation on the Policy Framework on March 26, 2018. Overall, we support Area Plan Concept 1 and the Jennie Dean Park Concept 1 discussed in the Framework. Outlined below, we have listed components of the Policy Framework that we specifically endorse, and we have also discussed areas of concern and recommendations.

E2C2 supports the following components of the 4MRV Policy Framework:

- The Guiding Principles adopted by the 4MRV Working Group, particularly
 - Preserve, protect, and rehabilitate the natural environment and biodiversity of the study area to the greatest extent possible;
 - Maximize green, casual-use space in Jennie Dean Park and in other parks along Four Mile Run; and
 - Improve water quality by implementing best stormwater management practices;
 - Enhance the area's accessibility, with particular attention to safety and pedestrian and bicycle connections.
- **Area Plan Concept 1: Retention & Adaptive Reuse**
 - This reflects the majority of the Working Group and community's desire to preserve the industrial and service commercial uses in the area. Area Plan Concept 1 minimizes further disturbance to the already environmentally challenged study area, much of which is located within the Resource Protection Area (RPA).
- **Jennie Dean Park Concept 1**
 - Concept 1 prioritizes contiguous casual-use open space while Concept 2 (in both Phases 1 and 2) breaks up the casual-use open space due to the layout of the programmed space.
 - In Concept 1, no new development occurs in the RPA. However, in Phase 1 of Concept 2, the outfield of the small diamond sits directly within the RPA. Additionally, further disturbance to the RPA would occur when the diamond is moved and the large shelter is constructed for Phase 2.
 - Concept 1 preserves more trees than Concept 2.
 - **Recommendation:** Once WETA has vacated the northwest parcel of Jennie Dean Park, we support the removal of the small parking lot adjacent to Shirlington Road, as it sits within the RPA.
 - **Recommendation:** Remove Jennie Dean Park Concept 2 from the Framework.

- **Environment / Sustainability / Open Space Policy Guidance**
 - o **Recommendation:** - Enhancing natural resources of the study area should be a priority. Much environmental degradation of this area has already occurred, and we should not wait for property redevelopment to implement green infrastructure practices.
 - o Because of the past and current industrial use of properties along Four Mile Run and the threat such uses present to the stream and to the RPA, active efforts should be made to provide outreach and technical assistance to existing businesses to maintain and improve storm water management.

The 4MRV Policy Framework is well drafted, and E2C2 supports its adoption. We appreciate your consideration for our concerns discussed above. We thank you for your attention.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'M. Mesmer', written in a cursive style.

Michael Mesmer, Chair
Environment and Energy Conservation Commission



URBAN FORESTRY COMMISSION

2700 South Taylor Street, Arlington, VA 22206
TEL 703-228-6525 FAX 703-228-6507 www.arlingtonva.us

May 2, 2018

The Honorable Katie Cristol, Chair
Arlington County Board
2100 Clarendon Blvd., Suite 300
Arlington, VA 22201

Subject: Four Mile Run Valley Policy Framework Plan

Dear Chair Cristol:

The Urban Forestry Commission (UFC) has been participating in the Four Mile Run Valley Working Group throughout the past two years. Staff from DPR presented this project at the March 22, 2018 UFC meeting and following discussion we submit the following observations and comments to the Board.

UFC is gratified that natural areas bordering the Four Mile Run and casual use open space has been considered as high a priority as recreational fields throughout the planning process. The significant increase in tree plantings throughout Jennie Dean Park and creation of spaces for street trees along Four Mile Run Drive will certainly increase the existing tree canopy and enjoyment for all.

UFC urges the County Board to adopt Jennie Dean Park Concept 1 as recommended by the majority of the working group. Concept 1 will remove the impermeable surface of the diamond fields from their current intrusion into the Resource Protection Area (RPA) during phase one, thereby allowing for additional tree planting and restoration of the riparian area. UFC strongly objects to Concept 2, which would keep a ballfield in the RPA for an indefinite period, until WETA has moved and construction ends for phase two. The county requires that private property owners adhere to RPA restrictions and the county should not seek ways around these same requirements. It should be noted that a packed earth ballfield has the same negative impact as pavement or concrete in the Resource Protection Area.

We are also concerned that no substantial action will be taken at this time concerning the negative environmental impact of the Shirlington Dog Park, which is also in the RPA. It is a complicated issue given that it is extremely popular with residents and several dog related businesses depend on it as well. However, as heavy rain events

increase, the erosion of the Four Mile Run stream bank will also likely increase. The County Board last summer rejected the Department of Environmental Services staff proposed forested buffer zone that would absorb much of the stormwater run off, as well as trapping bacterial pollutants from the stream. The UFC supports adoption of the short-term and medium-term recommendations included in the 4MRVWG Dog Park Committee report, which will help address some of these issues. We recognize that a more permanent solution may be required, especially as the effects of climate change and more extreme weather events become more pronounced.

As regards the county owned areas west of Nelson Street, which has been sought by proponents for an arts area, for sporting courts, and for casual use open space, the UFC's primary wish is for increased tree planting along streets and building perimeters regardless of use. In particular, we support the recommendation in the Dog Park Committee report that the county-owned warehouse properties on S. Oakland Street be turned into additional green, flexible, casual use space where additional trees could be planted to help ameliorate the impact of the storm run-off from the adjacent buildings. The UFC also believes part of the county's property should be considered for any future dog park reconfiguration necessitated by the erosion or forested buffer solutions.

The UFC is very pleased that tree canopy has been of paramount importance on every design plan considered by the Four Mile Run Working Group. The planting of canopy trees will help to create a delightful shady area for all. We appreciate the opportunity to share our views with you.

Sincerely,



Nora Palmatier, Chair
Urban Forestry Commission

cc: Mark Schwartz, Arlington County Manager
Jane Rudolph, Director, Department of Parks and Recreation
Members, Planning Commission



ARLINGTON COUNTY
SPORTS
COMMISSION
2100 Clarendon Blvd., Suite 414
Arlington, Virginia 22201



May 8, 2018

Ms. Jane Siegel, Chair
Arlington County Planning Commission
2100 Clarendon Blvd., Suite 700
Arlington, VA 22201

Re: Four Mile Run Valley Policy Framework

Dear Ms. Siegel,

The Arlington County Sports Commission would like to provide input on the Four Mile Run Valley (4MRV) Policy Framework. Our Commission is represented on the 4MRV Working Group (WG). Our primary interest in the project is the renovation of Jennie Dean Park and the possible addition of future sports and recreational amenities in the study area. For the reasons outlined below, the Sports Commission supports design Concept 1 for Jennie Dean Park and also supports further expansion of recreation space near Jennie Dean Park and in the study area.

Jennie Dean Park is an important location for sports in Arlington. At one time the sole park for Arlington's African American residents, Jennie Dean Park's connection to sports dates back over a century. (See Attachment 1 for some history about the park.) Today, sports amenities in the park include a lighted adult softball field, a lighted youth baseball diamond, two lighted tennis courts, and a lighted basketball court. Lighted playing areas are particularly valuable and important parts of our community's total field and court inventory. All of these amenities serve thousands of Arlington residents.¹

¹ The Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR) registers about 1,600 adult softball players in the Spring and about 1,450 in the Fall, 90% of which meet Arlington residency requirements. In addition to DPR programs, there are several leagues that run private softball programs for Arlington adult residents that do not participate in DPR's program. These leagues rent softball fields from DPR and are subject to DPR's residency requirements. Arlington Babe Ruth and Arlington Little League register a combined 3,000 players in the Spring and 1,500 players the Fall. The Arlington Girls Softball Association registers about 500 players in its Spring season. Registration data is not available for tennis and basketball players. However, anecdotal information indicates that Arlington's public tennis courts are heavily used on weekday afternoons and

As noted in the Policy Framework, the Park Master Plan will “provide a vision for the comprehensive replacement and realignment (exclusively for park purposes) of existing park features and the addition of new park amenities to meet the growing demand for active recreation, cultural resources and natural resource preservation.”

The Guiding Principles developed by the WG speak to the need to balance countywide and neighborhood needs, accommodating current and anticipated future demand; maintain the capacity of existing County facilities to the greatest extent possible; promote new arts and recreational opportunities for users of all ages and abilities; and maximize green, casual-use space in Jennie Dean Park and in other parks along Four Mile Run.

To the Sports Commission, this language indicates two important and linked goals: (1) maintain and improve all current sports and park amenities, and (2) increase opportunities for programmed and unprogrammed recreational activities. Given the increasing demand for Arlington’s field and court inventory, the Commission regards the first goal as a minimum, mandatory outcome and the second goal as something to be achieved to the greatest extent possible.

Over the past 20 years, the county strategically acquired five properties in and near Jennie Dean Park to facilitate replacing, improving, and expanding park amenities. Two of these parcels are being used to expand the boundaries of Jennie Dean Park. Three are in the two-block area west of Nelson Street, and the use of these parcels is still uncertain, per the direction from the February 20 County Board work session. There remain several private properties within Jennie Dean Park that, if acquired, would provide for further expansion opportunities.

However, despite these acquisitions, we observed in the WG that there are more needs and desires for Jennie Dean Park and the acquired properties than can reasonably be accommodated. As a result, there still isn’t currently enough land in the right places to make the redesign of Jennie Dean Park a simple, straightforward process. In particular, the uncertain future of the WETA property in the center of the park is a significant constraint. Instead, choices and compromises are necessary. Recognizing the growing tension over use of public spaces, the Sports Commission issued a position statement in 2016 on County planning processes to emphasize that Arlington County facilities need to represent the interests of all County residents (see Attachment 2).

Sports Commission Supports Concept 1 for Jennie Dean Park

evenings and all day on the weekends. There is also a growing pickleball community, serving adults and senior citizens, that uses some of Arlington’s public tennis courts.

As stated above, we believe the first goal for the park design is to replace existing sports and park amenities, preferably in Phase 1. But, neither of the Policy Framework's two concept designs achieves this. Concept 1 entails the loss of one tennis court in Phase 1, while Concept 2 delays the improvement of the small baseball diamond (as well as installation of the large picnic shelter) until Phase 2. Neither outcome is easy for the Sports Commission to accept; we are mindful that Phase 1 may be the full extent of the redesign, or at least for some unknown period of time. Commissioners weighed the respective size and costs of installing a court versus a field and were uncomfortable with failing to secure the larger and costlier amenities (the diamond field and the large picnic shelter) during Phase 1.

The Sports Commission voted unanimously on April 26, 2018, to support Concept 1. The reasons for our support include:

- An aesthetically attractive design with good circulation and orientation of park amenities;
- Near-term improvement of the softball field, baseball field, one tennis court, one basketball court, and the large picnic shelter in Phase 1 and full replacement of all sports and park amenities in Phase 2;
- Near-term replacement of all outdated lights with the newest technology;
- Appropriate orientation of the diamond fields for safety purposes;
- Full near-term removal of all built structures from the riparian protection area, allowing new trees to be planted as quickly as possible and opening up access to Four Mile Run; and
- Significant new contiguous casual use space, grass, trees, and landscaping along Four Mile Run Drive with the possibility of increasing casual use space along this street and in the interior of the park if and when additional properties are acquired.

The Sports Commission is aware that the Arlington County Tennis Association (ACTA) is opposed to Concept 1 because it does not replace two tennis courts in Phase 1. The Commission will continue to work with DPR and the County Board to explore all options to restore the second tennis court as quickly as possible. The Commission continues to believe that the site of the police warehouse, one of the three acquired properties west of

Nelson Street, would be an ideal location for either a basketball court or two tennis courts.

The Sports Commission remains cautious about removing wide sections of baseline fencing from the softball and baseball fields. While our Commission fully supports making maximum use of Arlington's public facilities, the open-fencing pilots at Bluemont and Virginia Highlands have not been underway long enough for us to conclude that baseline fencing can be systematically removed from all diamond fields with no ill effects for field condition or safety.

Further Expansion of Recreation Space Near Jennie Dean Park and in the Study Area Should be Considered

As stated above, the second goal for park planning is increasing opportunities for programmed and unprogrammed recreational activities. Multiple sources of input, including the Planning Our Public Spaces (POPS) process as well as community input to the WG, indicate that more space is needed in the Four Mile Run Valley for both indoor and outdoor recreational activities. The redesign of Jennie Dean Park will help address some of this need, particularly by providing new casual use spaces, but we believe the demand will continue to grow.

Therefore, the Commission was disappointed that the WG had a split vote in support of using the three acquired properties west of Nelson Street as a future arts district.² We appreciate the Board maintaining flexibility for how to use these properties in the future, and hope the Board will be open to using these properties, at least in part, to help meet the growing demand for traditional park and recreational purposes. At a future date of park phasing, we believe the county owned building at 3700 S. Four Mile Run should be rebuilt and expanded to include some indoor recreational use. A building of this height is not a good use of the county's increasingly constrained park space:

Further, the Commission believes there are additional opportunities for expanding recreational opportunities elsewhere in the Four Mile Run study area, such as along Shirlington Road. While the Policy Framework does not explore such opportunities, we hope that the Board will continue to examine ways to expand recreational spaces in this area.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide input on this important decision.

Sincerely,

² The Sports Commission and Park and Recreation Commission wrote a joint letter to the Chair of the 4MRVWG on November 28, 2017, to express our concerns about these developments.

Shirley Brothwell

Shirley Brothwell, Chair
Sports Commission

Cc: Planning Commission Members
Mark Schwartz, County Manager
William Ross, Chair, Park and Recreation Commission
Jane Rudolph, Director, Department of Parks and Recreation

Attachment 1 – History of Jennie Dean Park

The current Jennie Dean field was originally called Green Valley Ball Park or Peyton Field. The name "Peyton Field" was used as the land was owned by James and Nettie Peyton. The Peyton family opened the area to the local community for recreational activities, including football and baseball games. There was also a motorcycle track and a dance hall. As early as 1910, Peyton Field was the home of the Black Socks Baseball Team, an amateur African American team that played other African American baseball teams on the East Coast. In addition to the Black Socks, other African American baseball teams that used the field as their home included the Arlington Athletics, Green Valley Quick Steps, Green Valley Black Socks, Jackson All Stars, and the Washington Aztecs.

When Arlington County acquired the field in the early 1940's, the name of the field was changed to Jennie Dean Playground. (Jennie Dean was a former slave and African American education advocate in the late 1800's. Most of her work was done in Washington, D.C., and Manassas, Va.) The Arlington County Department of Recreation was first formed in 1948-1949 and Jennie Dean Playground was part of the first group of parks developed by the Department. While changes were made, the County kept the baseball and softball fields that were there. Jennie Dean Park was the County's "sole recreation area" for African Americans when it was developed.

Ernest Johnson was the Supervisor of the Department of Parks' Negro Recreation Section when Jennie Dean was opened. (While schools in Arlington were desegregated in 1959, Arlington continued to have a segregated County Department of Recreation department until 1961.) African American youth baseball teams played other African American youth teams in the County, as well as, in Maryland and D.C. Adult African American amateur teams who played on the Jennie Dean fields participated in the Tri-State League against other African American teams from Maryland, D.C., and Virginia.

According to long-time Nauck resident, Dr. Taylor, the Jennie Dean fields were the center of the entertainment and recreation for the African American community in Arlington and it played a great role in people's lives. Whenever a baseball game was being played on the Jennie Dean field, it was a community event where everyone gathered for some entertainment and to cheer on their local team.

(Based on information collected by Arlington Little League Safety Officer, Matt Carlson, from Arlington County staff and Dr. Taylor.)

Attachment 2

Arlington Sports Commission Position Statement for Planning Processes

October 2016

"The Sports Commission, as requested by the Arlington County Board, seeks to ensure that Arlington has high quality sports activities, facilities and policies. It serves as a conduit for information about sports and physical fitness programs among community organizations, agencies of the County government and the Board.

The Sports Commission recognizes that any facility development or planning process in Arlington requires input from a variety of stakeholders. Many different parties claim interest in any given process, and typically there are several different outcomes possible in each process. The Sports Commission respectfully recognizes those varying opinions, and it also seeks to reinforce the notion that the entire Arlington community has primary "ownership" of public facilities. It is clear that the inputs of immediate neighbors (those physically close to the facility) need to be considered seriously. Those inputs may suggest the need for specific measures aimed at satisfying those immediately impacted by the facility. However, it is important not to lose sight of the needs and desires of the overall Arlington community, which merit strong consideration. Ideally all parties are in agreement, but when this is not the case, the Sports Commission believes that Arlington County facilities, and the planning processes that produce them, need to represent the interests of all County residents."



**ARLINGTON COUNTY
PARK AND RECREATION COMMISSION**

**2100 Clarendon Boulevard, Suite 414
Arlington, Virginia 22201**



May 8, 2018

Honorable Katie Cristol
Chair, Arlington County Board
2100 Clarendon Blvd., Suite 300
Arlington, VA 22201

RE: 4MRV Policy Framework

Dear Chair Cristol:

I would like to offer some views on aspects of the policy framework plan for Four Mile Run Valley. Members of the Park and Recreation Commission (PRC) have participated in the Four Mile Run Valley Working Group (4MRVWG) since its inception.

Jennie Dean Park

The disparate points of view of various members of the commission mirror many of the disparate views represented in the 4MRVWG and the community at large. With respect to parks and park development, the PRC has a series of objectives, which when dealing with a smaller than desirable park footprint, sometimes conflict. In our view, parks should be able to provide among other things,

- Enhanced open space, environmental protection for existing waterways, preservation of trees and wildlife and casual use opportunities in natural settings
- Support of sports activities, including diamond sports, possibly rectangular field sports, existing tennis and basketball facilities, all with adequate fencing for safety
- Improved, safe playgrounds, picnicking for park visitors
- Ease of connections from all surrounding neighborhoods and ease of connections within the park
- Adequate, convenient parking for park users
- Attention to neighborhood needs/concerns while acknowledging parks as public facilities used by residents county-wide.

Given the scheduling of 4MRVWG, County Board, and PRC meetings and agendas it has been difficult to allow for our commission to deliberate and further discuss the evolving Jennie Dean Park concepts. Nevertheless, at our March PRC meeting we did have a discussion on the two park concepts that had been developed up to that point based on a draft report of the Jennie Dean Park Committee. Knowing that the Jennie Dean Park Committee then had not issued a final

report, I nevertheless wanted at that point to get a sense of where the commission was leaning. The vote was in favor of Concept 2 (8-3 including two non-members voting for Concept 2).

After the meeting, I heard from several sources concerned that all views had not been fully presented at our meeting. Concerns also were expressed that our discussions and preference vote were premature given the JDP Committee hadn't completed its work. At this point I offer the following thoughts.

Both JDP park concepts would provide for the amenities called for by the 4MRWG charge, albeit proposed with different configurations in the different Phases. The development of both concepts has been challenged by the lack of enough space to easily fit all the amenities. These challenges are created by the requirements of the 4MRV charge and loss of the use of the county-acquired properties as potential locations for some of the park amenities. One result is that both concepts would keep some features (e.g. parking or baseball fields) in the RPA during one or both phases of park development.

The pros and cons for the two JDP concepts will have been presented to you more thoroughly by various reports and presentations.

Some points in support of Concept 1 are:

- All amenities, at some level, would be installed permanently during Phase 1, while funding is certain.
- Both diamond fields would be installed and usable by the sports communities in Phase 1, although in Concept 1, the facilities and lighting improvements would be permanent compared with Concept 2 which would create a temporary baseball facility with older lighting remaining in the RPA until completion of Phase 2.
- Concept 1 provides a good overall park design, circulation and flow for all park users.
- Concept 1 provides an improved provision of usable, functional and connected casual use space compared with the current Jennie Dean Park.

Some points in support of Concept 2 are:

- The configuration, with the diamond fields, their fencing, and any associated lighting and noise are farther away from Four Mile Run Drive and neighboring houses.
- Concept 2 provides an improved provision of usable, functional and connected casual use space compared with the current Jennie Dean Park.
- In Phase I, both diamond fields would be installed and upgraded relative to the facilities that currently exist, including the baseball field that would be installed in the old softball footprint.
- The Park's current capacity of athletic courts (basketball and tennis) would be retained, and updated courts would be installed during Phase 1 of Concept 2. Under Concept 1, one tennis court would not be built in Phase 1, and the uncertainty of future funding and the purchase of the WETA property renders its installation uncertain, at least in the near future.

We also want to share our views about some associated issues related to open space on which the commission has focused:

Two-block Area West of Nelson: At its February 2018 work session, the County Board directed staff to take the two-block area west of Nelson Street out of the park planning area. The County Board directed staff to indicate flexibility for future use of the three county-owned parcels that might incorporate arts uses and recreation/open space.

The PRC has noted repeatedly that the county-owned parcels in the two-block area west of Nelson Street were specifically purchased as part of the long-term plan to expand Jennie Dean Park. This issue created perhaps the strongest unified degree of passion and concern among our members with the 4MRV process.

The PRC continues to object to the use of the county-owned parcels for non-park uses. Deliberations on the two different concepts for Jennie Dean Park have been made more difficult by the decision to remove county acquired properties for consideration as park space. It is possible that some of the amenities that the Working Group have been trying to fit into the current and anticipated park footprint could have been placed on those properties' footprints.

At the very least, the commission recommends that current county-owned parcels on South Oakland Street (currently warehouse properties) be transformed into flexible, casual use, landscaped space to connect the park, dog park and any arts/business uses that may develop. We urge the County Board to adopt this recommendation, as the County carries out additional planning for the 4MRV.

Additional Recreation/Open Space in Planning Area: The PRC strongly supports the County Board's February 2018 direction to staff to look at other opportunities for recreation and open space in the planning area. The PRC also supports the Policy Framework's recommendation to allow additional height above a bus parking facility that in the future might accommodate a multi-activity facility.

Other Park Improvements in 4MRV: The commission would like to express its strong support for the planned Shirlington Park renovations on the other side of 4 Mile Run and the improvements to the Allie S. Freed Park as proposed in the Policy Framework.

Thank you for letting us share our views.

Sincerely,



William Ross
Chair, Park and Recreation Commission

cc: Members, Arlington County Board

Mark Schwartz, Arlington County Manager
Jane Rudolph, Director, Department of Parks and Recreation
Arlington County Planning Commission



ARLINGTON COUNTY, VIRGINIA

ARLINGTON COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION

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JANE C. SIEGEL
CHAIR

JAMES SCHROLL
VICE-CHAIR

MARY O'CONNELL
ACTING COORDINATOR

GIZELE C. JOHNSON
CLERK

May 16, 2018

Arlington County Board
2100 Clarendon Boulevard
Suite 300
Arlington, Virginia 22201

SUBJECT: 5. Adoption of the Four Mile Run Valley Policy Framework. The Policy Framework establishes the vision for the Four Mile Run Valley study area that encompasses two boundaries for (1) an Area Plan, consisting of mostly industrial properties located along Four Mile Run Dr. and between Shirlington Rd., 24th Road S. and Interstate 395 and (2) a Park Master Plan, consisting of three County parks: Jennie Dean Park, Shirlington Park and Shirlington Dog Park. The Policy Framework also includes conceptual development plans for both the Area Plan and Park Master Plan and major policy recommendations that are necessary to fulfill the vision. Policy recommendations address proposed Land Use/Height/Development Character elements, Transportation improvements, Parks /Recreation/Open Space enhancements, and Environmental goals. The adoption of the Policy Framework is a precursor to the adoption of an Area Plan and a Park Master Plan later in 2018, that will each inform future public and private development decisions.

RECOMMENDATION:

The Planning Commission recommends the County Board:

Adopt the Four Mile Run Valley Policy Framework as set forth in Attachment 1 resolution attached to staff report dated May 1 2018. With the following amendments:

- 1. The Planning Commission recommend that the County Board direct the County Manager to add the following language to page 34 of the Four Mile Run Valley Policy Framework, under section 3.2.a ("Jennie Dean Park"):**
"and preserving at least 75 feet of park space between Four Mile Run Drive and any part of any baseball or softball facility".
- 2. The Planning Commission recommend that the County Board direct the County Manager to add the following language to page 34 of the Four Mile Run Valley Policy Framework, under section 3.2.a ("Jennie Dean Park"):**

"and ensuring that baseball or softball facilities are minimally fenced or not fenced at all within 150 feet of Four Mile Run Drive, consistent with safety needs".

- 3. The Planning Commission advises the County Board direct staff to create a process to involve the community, and in particular the African American community in Nauck and throughout Arlington, in the design of paths, fencing, public art, signage and other design elements for Jennie Dean Park that articulates and underscores the importance of the unique African American history of the Four Mile run area.**
- 4. The Planning Commission recommends the County Board direct the County Manager to direct staff to confirm that public land is being used without County consent by a private business at approximately 2601, 2603, 2606 S. Oxford St. and take immediate steps to return the land to public use to the benefit of park facilities in the Four Mile Run Valley area.**

BACKGROUND

The Planning Commission heard this item at their May 9, 2018 public hearing. Richard Tucker, Department of Community Planning, Housing, and Development (CPHD)- Planning gave a presentation on the background of the project and gave an overview of the recommendations of the Policy Framework. Marco Rivero, Department of Parks & Recreation (DPR), presented on the proposed park concepts for Shirlington Park and Jennie Dean Park. The staff recommendation for Jennie Dean Park is Concept #1. Richard Best, Department of Environmental Services (DES) - Transportation presented on transportation recommendations in the Policy Framework. Additional staff present included Chikwe Njoku, Division Chief, Neighborhood Services, Scott McPartlin (DPR), Jeremy Smith (DPR), and Jennifer Smith, Comprehensive Planning Supervisor, CPHD-Planning.

Charles Monfort, Four Mile Run Valley (4MRV) Working Group Chair, addressed two issues that still do not have complete consensus. There are still disagreements about the design of Jennie Dean Park, but the Working Group did vote 14-9 to support Concept #1 and tried to address many of the issues raised during the process. Concept #1 provides dramatic improvement in green space along 4MRV, provides for replacement of all facilities – minus 1 tennis court – in Phase 1, and ensures there is no construction in the RPA. He also reiterated the extensive public and collaborative process that has taken place for this project – a total of approximately 60 meetings overall – as well as hundreds of comments and recommendations received. The report is ultimately the better for it and he encouraged the Commission to approve the project.

Commission Reports

Transportation Commission (TC)

The TC heard this item at their May 3, 2018 meeting. Commissioner Lantelme reported that TC liked the road diet, angled parking recommendation, and the sidewalk additions. However, they were disappointed that the intersection of Four Mile Run Drive and Shirlington Road had no

solution for safe bicycle crossing between the two trails. Otherwise, the TC voted unanimously to recommend the project to the County Board.

Parks & Recreation Commission

David Howell briefly presented on the Parks & Recreation Commission's discussions, which surrounded the idea of trade-offs to achieve open space which works to serve all needs. The Commission is also very supportive of the Board's direction to look at other opportunities within the planning area for open space and strongly supports the proposals for Shirlington Park and Allie S. Freed Park.

Sports Commission

Shirley Brothwell, Chair, presented for the Sports Commission, noting that Jennie Dean Park was the primary focus of their discussions. While neither option presented allowed for the full replacement of existing sports amenities during Phase 1, the Commission voted unanimously to support Concept 1. The Commission is also supportive of looking at additional opportunities for recreational space in the study area.

Arts Commission

Jeff Zeeman, Chair, represented the Arts Commission, which strongly supports the concept of an Arts District for this area as outlined in the policy framework. A central cultural gathering place is critical for both current arts groups and the future of the arts in the County, and would allow artists the opportunity to grow and thrive.

PUBLIC SPEAKERS

There were 12 public speakers on the item.

Michael Grace, resident, spoke of challenges during the process and expressed concern that Concept 1 removes an existing amenity, which does not respond to the interests of all parties involved. He urged the Planning Commission to adopt Concept #2, which would preserve 2 tennis courts. Or, conversely, adopt Concept #1 and amend it to make sure Jennie Dean Park contained both courts at the end of Phase 1.

Keith Fred, Shirlington Dogs Too and 4MRV member, spoke in support of the dog park recommendations in the policy framework. He also raised concerns about the current encroachment of auto body shop parking onto County land adjacent to the park, which creates safety issues and is cause for environmental concerns. He also requested staff look at Subarea C, which does not have a concept plan, be considered for storage facilities and new industrial-related businesses.

Renee Greenwell, Nauck resident, spoke in support on Concept #2 which recognizes the need to retain tennis courts and have causal open spaces which serves all ages of Arlingtonians. She also spoke in opposition of planned back-in angle parking along Four Mile Run Drive.

Michelle Ver Ploeg, coach of a co-ed adult softball team, spoke in support of Concept #1 which provides both updated adult and youth fields. However, she opposes the proposed gap in fencing which can be a safety issue.

Adam Brick, Executive Director of Arlington Soccer Association, spoke in support of Concept #1, which preserves, maintains and improves what currently exists in the park.

Nancy Sharkey, registrar for Arlington Little League, spoke in support on Concept #1 because it provides for both casual space and modern fields, which is essential for youth baseball in Arlington County.

David Carlson, local visual artist, spoke in support of the Arts District concept for this area and would like to see the County make an investment in the arts.

Portia Clark, President of the Nauck Civic Association, stated that the Framework document does not address parking and safety adequately and called for short term parking solutions before the reconfiguration of Four Mile Run Drive. The Framework document also supports the recommendation for an Arts District but should be amended to reflect the Arts District Committee SNAIQ report, developed by the Arts Committee. Finally, the Civic Association strongly supports Concept #2, which allows better access to amenities the neighborhood enjoys and puts baseball and fencing barriers elsewhere in the park.

Caroline Haynes, member of 4MRV Working Group, urged the Planning Commission to move the project forward.

Edith Wilson, Shirlington Civic Association, spoke in strong support for Concept #1, even though there will be field lights, as they feel it is the best option. She also noted this is a crucial amenity for Shirlington, as it is the nearest park.

Jim Hurysz, resident, spoke in opposition to the project and expressed concern that there are no solidified plans for industrial infrastructure or a multi modal analysis for the 4MRV area.

Brian Plessner, youth soccer coach and resident, spoke in support of Concept #1.

REVIEW PROCESS

The Four Mile Run Valley (4MRV) process was initiated in 2016 as a comprehensive planning effort, led by County staff, which included bi-monthly meetings with the County Board appointed citizen 4MRV Working Group, as well as meetings with the broader community, including: a community forum, a community open house, and check ins/review sessions with the local civic associations. The 4MRV Working Group has met over 30 times, with additional meetings held by the group's subcommittees on the Arts, on Shirlington Dog Park, and on Jennie Dean Park. Additionally, there were two (2) County Board work sessions – in May 2017 and February 2018.

Commissioner McSweeney reported for the Four Mile Run Working Group, and laid out items for discussion, including: Jennie Dean Park options presented by staff, questions from local business owners about how properties are expressed in the plan, and the relocation of the Shirlington Employment Program. She also noted that this has been an extensive community process.

Commissioner Gearin reported for the Jennie Dean Park Working Group Subcommittee and thanked the group members, who were tasked with developing a concept plan which included all current amenities in the park. She thanked staff for their work and especially to Mr. Smith for providing renderings in response to design related questions during the process. She asked that the Commission discussion include the cost and phasing of the project noting that the County is ready to upgrade the park but wants to pay for amenities once. Everything is provided in Phase 2 of both Concepts, however timing and funding for Phase 2, including the potential disposition of WETA property, is uncertain. In response to the concerns from the Nauck community, the committee tried to preserve as much casual open space as possible within the first 150 feet along the frontage of the park at Four Mile Run Drive. She overviewed both Concepts, including phasing and outstanding questions and concerns, for Jennie Dean Park. Outstanding items for Concept #1 include ensuring the distance of the youth diamond third base is no less than 75 feet from Four Mile Run Drive, minimizing fencing, and mitigating light spillover from the third base line. Outstanding items for Concept #2 include the delay of a new, modern youth diamond at the expense of a second tennis court, construction in the RPA, outdated lighting, and the uncertain timing and funding for Phase 2.

She recommended the Commission discussion consider: neighborhood preferences, timing and disposition of WETA, timing and phasing for project funding, next steps for park design, including process and participation, design guidelines and process for Jennie Dean Park, and assurance that staff will be looking at state of the art lighting and fencing during the Park Master Plan process.

PLANNING COMMISSION DISCUSSION

The Planning Commission discussion included the following topics:

- Overall Policy Framework
- Local Business Concerns
- Arts District
- Transportation/Parking
- Shirlington Employment Program
- Dog Park
- Disposition of County properties
- Jennie Dean Park

Throughout the discussion, the Planning Commission encouraged staff to think about flexible and creative ways to plan for this area, including future development of the County-owned parcels west of Nelson Street.

PLANNING COMMISSION MOTION

Commissioner McSweeney made a motion that the Planning Commission recommend the County Board adopt the Four Mile Run Valley Policy Framework as set forth in Attachment 1 resolution attached to staff report dated May 1 2018. Commissioner Gearin seconded the motion.

Commissioner McSweeney made a motion that the Planning Commission amend the main motion to recommend to the County Board that Jennie Dean Park Concept #1 noted in the Framework be replaced with Concept #2 that is outlined in the staff report dated May 1, 2019. Commissioner Weir seconded the motion.

Commissioner Weir spoke in support of the motion because it correctly balances the Nauck neighborhood's concerns and needs with the needs of the County. Concept #2 better accomplished putting neighborhood facilities closer to the neighborhood itself.

Commissioner Iacomini thanked the speakers and said she appreciates the neighborhood's perspective, but emphasized that she is not in support of the motion as she is in support of Concept #1. She feels Concept #1 addresses the very real and practical issues of having park improvements that serve the neighborhood and entire community constructed in a more timely way than Concept #2. Commissioner Iacomini noted the current commitment of funding for the improvements would address the need of youth sports as well as other open space needs in a very timely way that may not be available in the future.

Commissioner Gearin stated she is also not in support of the motion. The park services the wider community, as all County parks do, and throughout the process the working group has done the best they can in trying to address all the issues. Concept #1 represents a compromise from everybody who has participated.

Commissioner Schroll stated he is also in support of Concept #1. He agrees with Commissioner Gearin and Commissioner Iacomini's sentiments, and emphasized the WETA uncertainty in this process. He thinks the Commission should go with a sure thing.

Commissioner Hughes spoke in support of the motion and Concept #2. Before the park is built, the County could receive a decision from WETA and furthermore, there are temporary lighting solutions that could be used to replace old field lights.

Commissioner Lantelme spoke in support of the motion and Concept #2 because if WETA does not leave, then Concept #2 has everything on site, including both tennis courts. Also, the fence on the youth baseball field in Concept #1 is within 75 feet of the Four Mile Run [Dr.]. Additionally, lighting technology improvements could offer new solutions to updating the field lighting.

Commissioner Ricks spoke in opposition to the motion as Concept #2 builds a field in the RPA (Resource Protection Area), which is not a viable solution and sets a bad precedent. It is not

permitted for homeowners and other developers to construct anything in the RPA, so we should not be encouraging the County to do so.

Commissioner McSweeney, speaking to the motion, noted that the new design of the park needs to balance local and holistic needs. Concept #2 provides for more continuous casual space and provides every amenity that is currently in the park during Phase 1.

Commissioner Siegel spoke in opposition to the motion, stating she is supportive of Concept #1 which better provides for all users of the park. Additionally, Concept #1 is supported by the Working Group.

The Planning Commission voted 4-5-0 to deny the motion with Commissioners Hughes, Lantelme, McSweeney, and Weir in support; and Commissioners Siegel, Schroll, Gearin, Iacomini, and Ricks opposed.

Commissioner Weir made a motion that the Planning Commission recommend that the County Board direct the County Manager to add the following language to page 34 of the Four Mile Run Valley Policy Framework, under section 3.2.a ("Jennie Dean Park"): "and preserving at least 75 feet of park space between Four Mile Run Drive and any part of any baseball or softball facility". Commissioner Lantelme seconded the motion. This language follows the words "growing recreation demand."

Commissioner Weir spoke to the motion, stating there have been many comments on the need for open green space along the park frontage at Four Mile Run Drive. This motion is intended to provide assurances to the neighborhood that the line where the left field post is a line in stone not sand. This motion will be a signal to the neighborhood that we intend to preserve the integrity of the plan.

The Planning Commission voted unanimously 9-0-0 to support the motion with Commissioners Siegel, Schroll, Gearin, Hughes, Iacomini, Lantelme, McSweeney, Ricks, and Weir in support.

Commissioner Weir made a motion that the Planning Commission recommend the County Board direct the County Manager to add the following language to page 34 of the Four Mile Run Valley Policy Framework, under section 3.2.a ("Jennie Dean Park"): "and ensuring that baseball or softball facilities are minimally fenced or not fenced at all within 150 feet of Four Mile Run Drive." Commissioner Hughes seconded the motion.

Mr. Smith stated that DPR did not believe the amendment would be feasible, as the fields would need some type of home run fencing and/or netting to ensure safety of those in adjacent areas of the park.

Commissioner Gearin asked if these types of items would be reviewed during the park master planning process. Mr. Rivero responded that these items would be taken into consideration during design development, but that a decision right now would be premature.

Commissioner Weir repeated the motion of the language and clarified that the intent of the motion was to ensure that minimal fencing was utilized – i.e. fencing implemented when absolutely necessary, but no more – especially in areas located closer to the casual open space along Four Mile Run Drive.

Commissioner Siegel expressed concerns about regulating something as specific as 150 feet when there is not enough information to determine if that is a realistic scenario and therefore cannot support the motion.

Commissioner Lantelme asked for unanimous consent for an amendment to the motion, adding the phrase “consistent with safety needs.” There was unanimous consent.

Commissioner Weir restated the motion with the amended text: that the Planning Commission recommend the County Board direct the County Manager to add the following language to page 34 of the Four Mile Run Valley Policy Framework, under section 3.2.a (“Jennie Dean Park”): “and ensuring that baseball or softball facilities are minimally fenced or not fenced at all within 150 feet of Four Mile Run Drive, consistent with safety needs.”

The Planning Commission voted 7-1-1 to approve the motion as amended with Commissioners Schroll, Gearin, Hughes, Iacomini, McSweeney and Weir in support; Commissioner Siegel against; and Commissioner Ricks abstaining.

Commissioner McSweeney made a motion to advise the County Board to direct staff to create a process to involve the community, and in particular the African American community in Nauck and throughout Arlington, in the design of paths, fencing, public art, signage and other design elements for Jennie Dean Park that articulates and underscores the importance of the unique African American history of the Four Mile run area. Commissioner Hughes seconded the motion.

Speaking to the motion, Commission McSweeney noted that a principle of the Framework is to celebrate the area’s history and culture. She underscored how important it is to allow communities to write their own history.

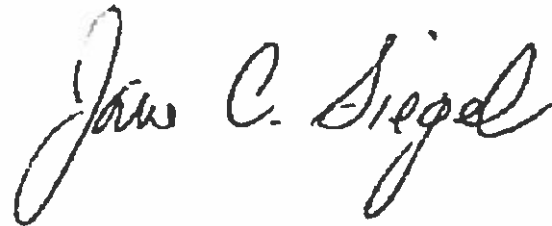
The Planning Commission voted unanimously 9-0-0 to approve the motion, with Commissioners Siegel, Schroll, Gearin, Hughes, Iacomini, Lantelme, McSweeney, Ricks and Weir in support.

Commissioner Hughes made a motion to recommend the County Board direct the County Manager to direct staff to confirm that public land is being used without County consent by a private business at approximately 2601, 2603, 2606 S. Oxford St. and take immediate steps to return the land to public use to the benefit of park facilities in the Four Mile Run Valley area. Commissioner McSweeney seconded the motion.

The Planning Commission voted 8-0-1 to approve the motion, with Commissioners Siegel, Schroll, Gearin, Hughes, Iacomini, Lantelme, McSweeney, and Ricks in support; Commissioner Weir abstained.

The Planning Commission voted 9-0-0 to approve the main motion as amended, with Commissioners Siegel, Schroll, Gearin, Hughes, Iacomini, Lantelme, McSweeney, Ricks and Weir in support.

Respectfully Submitted,
Arlington County Planning Commission
Jane C. Siegel

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jane C. Siegel". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, looping initial "J".

