



**ARLINGTON COUNTY  
PARK AND RECREATION COMMISSION**

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



November 6, 2018

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

RE: Four Mile Run Valley Area Plan

Dear Chair Cristol:

Members of the Park and Recreation Commission (PRC) have participated in the Four Mile Run Valley (4MRV) Working Group since its inception and we received a presentation on the 4MRV Area Plan at our October 23, 2018 meeting. The PRC supports adoption of the plan and offers the following views on some key issues:

Allie Freed Park

The commission supports the recommendations in the plan to maintain the natural character of Allie Freed Park, while identifying opportunities in the park for overlooks and other access points to Four Mile Run as well as interpretive signage about the natural features in the park. The park provides an important linkage as it encompasses a section of the multi-purpose trail, Four Mile Run, and is adjacent to both the recreation areas of Barcroft Park, as well as the sensitive natural resource conservation area in the park. The commission supports the continuation of invasive plant removal in the park to support native vegetation and further enhance the overall ecology of the riparian area for both humans and other wildlife.

Improvement of Pedestrian Access and Wayfinding

With the lack of publicly available sidewalks, the pedestrian access along the south side of Four Mile Run Drive is currently unpleasant and dangerous. The commission supports recommendations in the plan to develop the creation of sidewalks along Four Mile Run Drive that are welcoming and pedestrian friendly. Sidewalks can be an important element of public spaces, and are especially needed in this area to encourage residents and visitors to walk, rather than drive. We also support integrating the signage and wayfinding in the area plan with those used in the park areas.

Shirlington Bridge

The commission shares the serious concerns raised throughout the process about the dangerous bicycle and pedestrian crossing on Shirlington Road between South Four Mile Run Drive and

Arlington Mill Drive. We urge that the staff continue to pursue creative solutions to this difficult and dangerous crossing.

### Parking

The commission supports recommendations to take interim steps to accommodate additional on-street parking, especially for Jennie Dean Park and the Shirlington Dog Park. It is appropriate that these changes are implemented on a trial basis, before investing in permanent infrastructure. Members look forward to perfecting their back-in angle parking skills by the time of completion of Jennie Dean Park.

### Integrated Casual Use Space

The commission continues to support the use of some of the county-owned parcels in the two-block area west of Nelson Street to be transformed into flexible, casual use, landscaped space to connect the park, dog park and the developing arts and industries uses.

### Additional Recreation/Public Space in Planning Area

The PRC strongly supports the recommendation to allow additional height above a bus parking facility that in the future might accommodate a multi-activity facility.

### Increase in Tree Canopy

Additional tree planting, both in Allie Freed Park and along Four Mile Run drive will serve to improve air and water quality, reduce the urban heat island effect and enhance the overall experience in the planning area. Another reason to plant more trees is to mitigate erosion and stabilize soil. The inclusion of casual use areas in the two-block area west of Nelson Street would provide additional opportunities for more trees (preferably native).

### Stream Restoration and Stabilization

The PRC supports efforts to improve the heavily degraded riparian area and enhance the associated water quality by removing invasive plant species, planting native species, and developing incentives to help address stormwater run-off from adjacent buildings. This is especially important around the dog park to minimize waste going into the stream. As flooding events become more frequent, stream restoration and stabilization will become more urgent.

The commission commends the dedication of staff and the members of the Four Mile Run Working Group for bringing this long and difficult process to a successful conclusion.

Sincerely,



William Ross  
Chair, Park and Recreation Commission

cc: Members, Arlington County Board  
Members, Arlington County Planning Commission  
Charles Monfort, Chair, 4MRV Working Group  
Mark Schwartz, Arlington County Manager  
Jane Rudolph, Director, Department of Parks and Recreation