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**to be provided/attached in the final draft report*

I. MEMBERS OF THE TASK FORCE

Noah Simon – Chair

Margarita Brose – Representative of the Transportation Commission

Michael Cantwell – Representative of the Yorktown Civic Association

Alisa Cowen – At large member

Susan Cunningham – Representative of the Joint Facilities Advisory Commission

Al Diaz – Representative of Marymount University

Elizabeth Gearin – Representative of the Planning Commission

Mike Hogan – Representative of the Old Dominion Citizens Association

David Howell – Representative of the Park and Recreation Commission

Kathleen McSweeney – Representative of the Public Facilities Review Commission

Sarah Meservey – Representative of the Environment and Energy Conservation Commission

Kit Norland – Representative of the Urban Forestry Commission

David Palmer – Representative of St. Mary's Episcopal Church

Rob Topp – Representative of the Rock Spring Civic Association

Anne Wilson – Representative of the Donaldson Run Civic Association

II. ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

A sincere thank you from the chair is offered to each Task Force member for their dedication, effort and service during the five months of existence of this group. Their open-mindedness, willingness to learn and listen, collegiality and thoughtfulness are truly appreciated.

We wish to express our appreciation to Arlington County staff for their responsiveness, hard work, insight, patience and collaborative approach to our collective work. Specifically, we thank June Locker, Matt Mattauszek, Michelle Congdon, Mike Collins, Kris Krider, Bethany Heim, Greg Emanuel, Shani Kruljac, Jessica Baxter, Michelle Cowan, Jeremy Hassan, Zach Larnard of Arlington Public Schools and consultants Ed Foley and Brian Stephenson. A special thanks to Marymount University for hosting our meetings.

Finally, we want to recognize the staff involved in leaf collection and snow operations for their dedication and professionalism in the work you do on behalf of local government and residents. Our deliberations were meant to enhance and support your outstanding work.

III. BACKGROUND ON THE FORMATION OF THE TASK FORCE

In October 2018 the County Board created a fifteen-member Task Force. The Task Force was created because of an unsatisfactory public process during the summer of 2018. The County's 1950's era salt storage facility deteriorated to a condition that was no longer suitable or safe for operational use, resulting in the County's action in July 2018 to propose demolition and replacement with an interim storage structure. The actions were a surprise to the community and undertaken with several breakdowns of typical Arlington planning processes associated with such a major change. The Board approved construction of a temporary salt facility in the Fall of 2018. The Task Force was established as a result of this breakdown and charged with examining and master planning the site's various public works functions including leaf storage, mulch pick-up, and salt storage distribution for winter storm response.

The Charge outlines the requirement for "park/open space, preferably with street frontage." The genesis of this, as the Task Force and community understand it (and presented by the County at the January 10, 2019 Task Force meeting), was from remarks made by former County Board Chair Mary Hynes in July 2015. In response to community concerns following initial consideration of re-locating Fire Station 8 to the 26/OD site, it was specified that Arlington County is committed to a master planning effort for the seven-acre site which includes at minimum, a one-acre park designed with community input to include a mix of natural areas and active park space.

It should be noted that there was confusion among Task Force members and the public about what was contained in certain parts of the Charge. Specifically, the introduction of brine tanks and a chain shop came as surprises as did the extraordinarily high number of parking spaces required for expanded winter response operations (~100). Staff believed that these elements were part of "support facilities to dispatch crews from this location [26/Old Dominion]" as stated in the Charge; members and the community did not. As such, the Task Force strongly suggests all future community process charges specifically lists elements that are required rather than assume members of the community will know what is included. The Task Force's Charge can be found under Appendix 1. The Task Force held its first meeting on November 1, 2018 and submitted its recommendation to the Board on April ____.

IV. METHODOLOGY

Meeting Structure and Content

To execute on the County Board's Charge, the Task Force met twice monthly, in open session, beginning November 1, 2018 and concluding April 11, 2019. The only exceptions included the November 14 meeting was cancelled due to snow and the group met three times in March. Each meeting began with opening comments and announcements of relevant community meetings the chair had attended or was scheduled to attend and relevant comments and summaries of local meetings each representative wished to share; and each meeting ended with a period of public comment. During public comment community members who had come to observe the Task Force's proceedings, addressed the Task Force by asking questions and/or stating their positions. Public comment was held at the start of the last two meetings.

Meeting Presentations

Each regular meeting was held in the evening at Marymount University. The meetings consisted of several staff presentations which topics areas included existing conditions and planning context, County operational requirement and open space considerations, site history and a lead and tree survey. Meeting also consisted of a combination of consultant presentations, group presentations, community presentations and group discussions. Following each presentation Task Force members engaged in a facilitated question and answer session. Questions that could not be readily answered were taken for the record and provided to the best of the County's ability at a later point. All meeting materials were posted on the Task Force's website for public consumption. All meetings were appropriately advertised, and all work was done in accordance with "sunshine laws." No more than two Task Force members conducted business together unless at a publicly advertised meeting.

Guiding Principles

The Task Force recognized early in the process that a vote by the County Board to create the group was not enough to bind the group together. Therefore, the Task Force created, discussed, heard public comment and ultimately adopted a set of Guiding Principles. The Principles were developed over four weeks and were publicly presented, examined and discussed over the course of two meetings. With each iteration, time for public comment was dedicated, time that was in addition to the standard end-of meeting-period. The adopted Guiding Principles are below. The Principles were used to guide discussion during subcommittee work and during the consideration of the various scenario sets.

 Guiding Principles	
GUIDING PRINCIPLE	WHY IT'S IMPORTANT
Determine efficient and compatible land uses (e.g. colocation and seasonal uses) on the site given the County has limited land dedicated to public facilities and recreational activities.	Just over two square miles of Arlington's 26 square miles are publicly owned (by the County or APS). Of the two square miles, 62% are used for park land and 12% are used for essential operations and support services.
Consider and understand current and future capabilities and requirements for County-wide winter storm response services, mulch distribution, leaf collection/storage, and other potential uses to meet needs and maximize efficiency in service delivery.	Need to understand what services and requirements/needs exist and what additional services are needed for the Task Force to make fully informed decisions.
Determine potential community uses for recreational and casual activities .	Will help ensure that the County's open space/park commitment is included in the Master Plan.
Evaluate the environmental design and conservation opportunities , prioritizing sustainable and creative solutions.	Need to balance environmental sensitivity with potential uses by considering topography, water quality vegetation/trees, site constraints, design features, accessibility, character of the surrounding neighborhood, usefulness and aesthetics.

	
Balance stakeholder needs and preferences including County, neighborhood and other entities for each operational and park/open space element.	County requirements and other organizations' needs are important, as are neighborhood desires and considerations, each of which should be fully understood and considered to make decisions.
Assess capital, operating and lost opportunity costs associated with each operational and open space/park element.	Recommendations must have an associated cost to be reasonably considered by policy makers.
Consider opportunities for phasing as potential implementation of the long-term vision, with built-in flexibility to adapt to other master plans that may occur following this process (e.g. Lee Highway, JFAC).	The site is near several other large land parcels with institutional uses, adjacent to transportation corridors and a close to the Lee Highway corridor – each with interrelated master plan opportunities.
Model civility and respect by actively and constructively communicating, listening and working with one another, County government and the general public in a civil, respectful and reasonable manner.	The Task Force will be more effective when its business is conducted in an open, civil, transparent and consensus-building manner. The Task Force will build on the successes of previous public processes and should be used as a model for future public processes.

Community Forum

To ensure maximum transparency, a public forum was held January 12 at the Arlington Central Library. Approximately 45 people attended, including Task Force members, to share views of appropriate uses of the site and to ask questions about the Task Force's process and methodology. Question boards and feedback forms were made available to attendees. The consolidated information was presented to the Task

Force at a subsequent meeting to inform decision-making. All information was posted to the Task Force’s website. The Forum’s recorded minutes can be found under appendix_____.

Site Visits

Two site visits were conducted for Task Force members and the public to more fully understand the scope of County operations and to familiarize themselves with the functions of the site. The first site visit was to the 26/OD site and occurred in December. Several Task Force members and residents were provided a guided tour beginning at the trail head and ending at the temporary salt facility. The group received a demonstration of leaf collection services and salt loading. Resource Protection Areas (RPAs) were identified, and the group walked the open space. In January, members and the public participated in a tour of the Trades Center leaf/mulch operation, brine tanks and chain shop. Both meetings were publicly advertised.

Public Outreach

To ensure a truly transparent process, the Task Force chair proactively reached out to the organizations and entities below to discuss the process and receive feedback about desires for the site. Some activities were to regularly update leadership on the status of our work. Specific outreach activities included individual meetings, presentations and phone calls:

- | |
|--|
| Arlington County Board • Arlington Partnership for Affordable Housing • Arlington School Board • Arlington County Manager’s Office • Donaldson Run Civic Association • John M. Langston Citizens Association • Joint Facilities Advisory Commission • Lee Highway Alliance • Marymount University Athletic Department • Missionhurst Congregation of the Immaculate Heart of Mary • Rock Spring Civic Association • Arlington Tree Action Group • Yorktown Civic Association |
|--|

Subcommittees

To further execute on the Charge and build consensus, two subcommittees—Operations and Parks/Open Space—were created and convened during January and February as part of the regular meetings. Special thanks to Mike Hogan and Elizabeth Gearin for each chairing a subcommittee. The subcommittees were comprised of Task Force members and each had assigned Country staff and a consultant. Each subcommittee gave a public summary of their work at the conclusion of their meetings to the entire Task Force and public. Two Task Force members served on both subcommittees to maximize information sharing, create overlap and eliminate stove-piping.

As the names indicate, one group focused on the operational elements drawn from the JFAC list (as directed by the Charge) which contained both County and Arlington Public Schools uses, and the County’s expanded winter response operation requirements. Operational efficiency, fidelity to the Charge, topography, maximizing green space, ingress/egress and limiting expansion of impervious surfaces were each

considered. The group also focused on eliminating or reducing operational facilities by moving requirements off-site or to the right-of-way, particularly driver and truck parking, to reduce the loss of green space. A decision justification matrix outlining why elements were or were not moved forward for consideration in a “what fits” exercise can be found under Appendix __. The elements with which to move forward were determined by the Charge, JFAC use considerations and community feedback.

The Parks Subcommittee members considered a list of nearly thirty elements that reflected items raised in their discussions as well as public comment. It is important to note the list was so expansive because the subcommittee began its work by assessing an original list of nearly 20 elements developed from prior community surveys, civic association input and comments at the January 12 public forum. The list was regularly expanded and informed by public comment during and after the Subcommittee’s meetings. Their work focused on fidelity to the Charge, active and passive open space use, park amenities characteristics, topography, limiting expansion of impervious surfaces, maximizing green space and other environmental considerations. The subcommittee’s process included identifying and prioritizing the amenities the community desired – primarily a neighborhood-like park like what other neighborhoods have and which does not exist on or around the site. Desirability included a park where kids can play without crossing a busy street, natural space and an area which isn’t overly programmed.

It is important to note that the subcommittee’s deliberations included extensive consideration of a proposed NCAA field. In fact, it was the Parks Subcommittee that proposed the idea of decking a field with operations on the ground level to see if operations and a field could reasonable coexist. Ultimately the siting of an NCAA regulation field does not fit in the current land assemblage without altering the Donaldson Run Trailhead, a violation of the Charge. The decking option is discussed in depth later in the report as Design Concept A. Throughout their deliberations most subcommittee members remained concerned about the field dominating the limited space of the 26/OD site. Their concerns were based, in large part, on feedback from their constituencies. However, the subcommittee believed a field might be viable elsewhere on an expanded site assuming it was unlit. Said another way, the vast majority of the subcommittee believed the site at its current size is too small to accommodate an intercollegiate size soccer field.

The Parks Subcommittee’s decision justification matrix can be found under Appendix __. The justification matrices are summaries of discussions and show the results of each group’s thinking. The matrices also help to prioritize desired park amenities, pragmatically reflecting the constraints of limited useable space on the site. The Task Force would welcome the opportunity to verbally expand on the decisions shown in the matrices should Board members be interested.

Next, the subcommittees undertook a “what fits” exercise which served as a design tool based largely on a similar tool used in JFAC’s Use Determination Process. In short, the exercise aided in developing Task Force recommendations for appropriate

uses on the 26/OD site. The exercise allowed for the exploration of as many varied layout schemes and combinations of uses which were later used to develop a series of use scenarios. The exercises relied on scaled “puzzle pieces” that represented the variety of primary land and built-form uses from the decision justification matrices.

Throughout the “what fits” exercise interactive discussions occurred between Task Force members and staff, with community members looking on. From these discussions, several “schemes” were produced which served as the foundation to develop initial concept option sets for future consideration. The common themes from the discussions included:

1. Consolidation of operational facilities
 - a. At center of site (26th Street); or
 - b. Along Old Dominion Drive
2. Open Space/Park area adjacent to the existing trail
3. Creative solutions for additional open space
 - a. Mixture of casual and recreational uses
 - b. Limited structured activity space
 - c. Connectivity between open spaces

A consolidated list of schemes can be found under Appendix____: [Slides 5-27 of 3/7 presentation]

Development of Concepts for Site Layout

At the end of February, work began to develop the initial concepts, interchangeably called scenarios. The concepts were illustrative representations of agreed-upon use considerations for this site, their general location, orientation, and associated mitigation strategies (i.e. buffering, screening). The scenarios represented “conceptual designs” for the site. The initial concepts focused largely on siting the operations rather than specifically delineating park/open space elements. However, the drawings did generally depict where parks/open space areas could exist in each scenario. Neither cost, nor phasing were considered in the initial scenarios. The following were determined as minimum criteria for all concepts:

- Meets the adopted Charge
- Can clearly be associated with previous (“what fits”) schemes
- Only contains site uses identified by subcommittees as appropriate
- Accommodates operations of both leaf and winter storm response in the winter months

Considerations for concept development also included the site area to allow for:

- Fire lanes, where required
- Ingress/egress to/from the site
- Large vehicle turning radii
- Site security/personnel safety
- Zoning setbacks

- Stormwater management facilities
- Buffering and screening

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V. FINDINGS

Throughout the process, the Task Force remained committed to deliberating about issues, and crafting a report that fell within the parameters of the County Board's Charge. Our work was focused on executing on the Charge "to develop a master plan for the development of the 7.6 acres of County-owned land at this location." The Task Force trusts its recommendations will be strongly considered in the final planning, financing and design of the 26th/Old Dominion site should the County proceed expanding winter storm operations. The entire five months of the group's existence served as a powerful learning tool for the members, staff and community. In summary, we learned:

- Credible data justifying a need to enhance winter storm response operations does not exist.
- More data is required for the County Board to move forward with significant enhancements to winter storm operations on the site.
- The underlying cause of the revised operational requirements – the problem – remains unconvincing to the Task Force and the public. This is especially so given the costs associated with both the loss of open space and of adding to storm operations at the site.
- Complaints about winter storm response seemed to come mostly from addresses on narrow streets which require smaller (often contracted) trucks for plowing.
- Change is hard. The County should explore how they provide service, not just winter storm operations, but the collection of leaves and the distribution of mulch.
- Having seen the leaf operation demonstration at the height of the collection season, it is understood why it takes up so much space.
- Using walls can considerably shrink both the salt storage and leaf storage footprints.
- Snow operations in Arlington are largely performed by County employees who hold other positions in DES, CHPD, or other departments of the County government.
- The brining operation that has been underway and growing in Arlington isn't widely known. It is one of those steps taken toward more environmentally-friendly solutions to winter road treatment.
- Significant activity occurs at the Trades Center in so little space.
- Operations voice is often louder than parks.

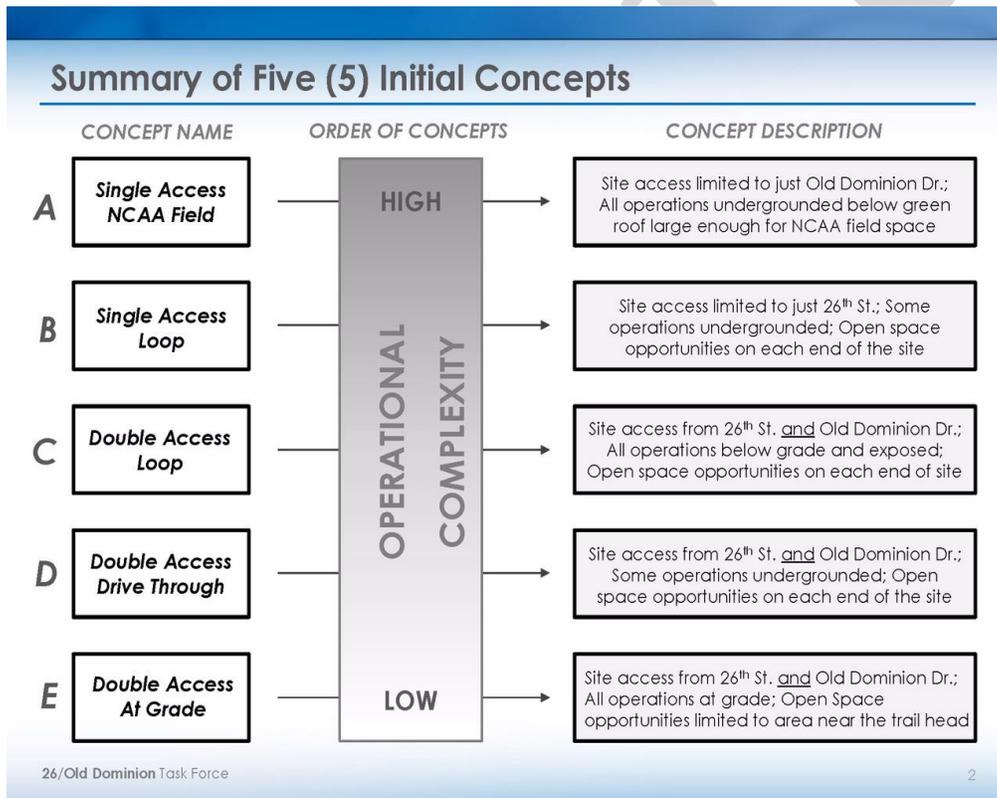
- When planning recreational space, it is preferable to have playgrounds that have activities for specific ages (for example, ages 2-6 and 7-11) in the same general area so that parents can keep an eye on their children from one location.
- Survey data show that more open space was a top priority of residents, across several surveys.
- In Arlington, we cannot afford to assume that what is already public space has no value in the context of project budgeting or location of functional requirements. Regardless of current use or ownership, there is no free land resource in Arlington.
- The importance of trees to our urban community is significant. This process highlighted the residents in our County who take this problem seriously and are vocal about it, for the benefit of our County and its neighborhoods.
- The trailhead and path on site are not outwardly apparent for those who haven't done a site visit or do not live nearby.
- The County staff are professional and well intentioned. They are however somewhat isolated from the trade-offs required by the land use considerations as they pursue improvement in their specific functions and goals.
- A bright, professional, dedicated, and earnest group of people work for the Department of Environmental Services and the Department of Planning Community Planning, Housing & Development.

An Expanded explanation of findings can be found under Appendix ____.

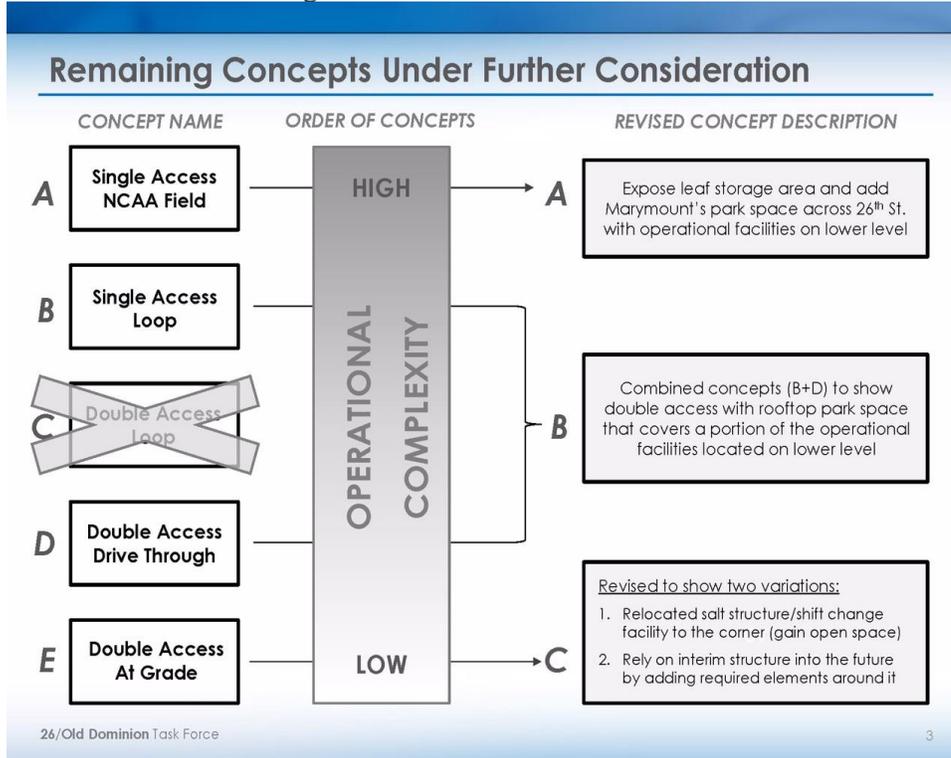
VI. SITE LAYOUT CONCEPTS

Following the work of the subcommittees and with many of the findings in mind, several options for the site were developed for consideration. The *Design Option Concept Sets* combined the operational requirements as defined in the Charge and the additions of a chain shop, brine tanks and material staging, and depicted general open space areas. Initial discussions of the options did not include cost estimates, instead the options focused on operational feasibility, impact on the environment, opportunities to recapture green space and circulation (to include ingress/egress). The second set of *Concepts Sets* combined operational elements with the prioritized park and open space amenities as determined by the Parks Subcommittee. Costs were also included. The *Initial Design Concept Sets* presented at the March 7, 2019 meeting can be found under Appendix _____. The *Revised Concept Sets*, presented at the March 21 meeting can be found under Appendix _____.

A summary of the *Initial Concepts* considered at the March 7, 2019 meeting:



A summary comparing the *Initial Concepts* and the *Revised Concepts* considered at the March 21, 2019 meeting:



A comparison of final concepts considered at the March 21, 2019 meeting:

Summary of Requested Criteria for Refined Concepts

Refined Concepts	Total Open Space Area	Disturbed Land (% of site area)	Possible Impact on RPA	Operational Complexity (leaf & snow) ¹	General Cost Estimate ²	Impact on Existing Trees ¹	Level of Difficulty in Phasing ¹	Public Access to Change Facility
Refined Concept A	271,484 SF (6.2 acres)	81%	POSSIBLE	HIGH	\$50-60 m.	HIGHEST	HIGH	NO
Refined Concept D	261,214 SF (6.0 acres)	58%	NO	MEDIUM	\$30-40 m.	HIGH	HIGH	YES (upper level)
Refined Concept E1	218,139 SF (5.0 acres)	58%	NO	LOW	\$15-20 m.	HIGH	MEDIUM	YES
Refined Concept E2	191,139 SF (4.4 acres)	57%	NO	LOW	\$10-15 m.	HIGH	LOW	YES
Existing Site Conditions	229,785 SF (5.3 acres)	30%	NO	LOW	---	---	---	---

1: "Low/Medium/High" terminology is relative to each Refined Concept (only intended for their general comparison).
2: Initial Cost estimates, received on 3/20/19, are under staff review and are provided for comparative purposes only.

TOTAL SITE AREA: 326,700 SF (7.5 Acres) | USABLE SITE AREA: 226,500 SF (5.2 acres)

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Concept A—Marymount Soccer Field

It should be noted that the Task Force understood and appreciated Marymount University's contributions to the Arlington community as an institution of higher learning and a successful athletics program. Further, the Task Force understands and appreciates the need for field space near the main campus.

Design Concept A was unique among the scenarios considered for full Task Force review. Rather than featuring a blended approach that incorporates a variety of park elements that have been identified as high or medium high priorities by the vast number of stakeholders associated with this process, this option prioritized a single element. For space-related purposes and in order to fit the required operational elements, Option A consisted of a “decked” structure where the operations would be below the field. The stacking and associated engineering complexities, as the above slide suggests, made this option the most complex, the highest cost, and highest level of difficulty for phasing.

Concept A was dominated by a NCAA regulation-size soccer field. The field itself must be 115 yards by 70 yards in playing area, which is approximately two acres. Field footprints also require some amount of off-field area for safety, team benches, and bleachers or other spaces for spectators. A minimally sufficient amount of space surrounding the field would add nearly a half-acre to the footprint. The soccer field would occupy well more than half of the net usable 5.22 acres previously referenced, including parts of the existing trailhead. Under this option, no other size field is acceptable, because it would not serve the principle purpose to provide a competition-ready venue for intercollegiate soccer. It should be pointed out that under the University's proposal, the field would also be available for use by entities other than Marymount. In fact, some Task Force members remarked that entities other than Marymount would likely use the field more than the University itself.

In some locations and circumstances, this option might be acceptable and the field a desirable feature. However, the 26th/OD park space has its own unique qualities and circumstances. Of these myriad considerations, four are particularly notable:

- The shape and topography of the site limit the siting locations for where an intercollegiate playing field might be placed. Any location that could accommodate the field would also severely restrict or eliminate the possibility of other park features and amenities that participants have ranked high or medium high among preferences. Smaller, non-permit fields, casual spaces, playgrounds, plazas and gathering spaces would be reduced in size, packed closely together or eliminated. It should be noted that Marymount University did offer a ¾ acre parcel directly north of the study area (across 26th Street) to be used by neighborhood residents as open space.

- Siting locations for a field of this size would require severe alteration of the topography, and the creation of a constructed deck, to have two acres of level playing area. Even with these alterations, the proposal would have the end of the field adjacent to and in places overlapping the existing trailhead with a structured wall at a height of between approximately 20 to 30 feet. With preservation of open spaces and natural habitat (to include trees and the potential for other plantings and habitats) as a top-ranked preference among the vast majority of interested parties, a synthetic field of this size would have a severe impact on the park space.
- Marymount stated in its December 2018 presentation to the Task Force that lights were part of the proposal. The vast majority of Task Force members and the public who participated in the process believe lights would have an adverse impact on the neighborhood primarily through increased hours of use for the site and increased traffic.
- The Task Force's overwhelming consensus is to support a consolidation operations concept. This location is at the center of the proposed location for the soccer field. If the two functions are to be placed in the same area by digging a lower level for the operations functions and an upper deck for the field as depicted in Option A, all of the negatives are maximized to include environmental disruption (with replacement of turf rather than natural surfaces) and the visibility of a large and built structure. However, this approach would have at least allowed the strip of land along Old Dominion to be used for other purposes. If the soccer field and operation functions were not co-located, there would be room for little else on the entire site, and the park would not appear to be a park by any definition that would be recognized by residents.

Taken together, the Task Force, by an overwhelming consensus determined construction of a fully-lit NCAA sized soccer field is an undesired, and unwise option for County consideration and thus eliminated Design Concept A. The decision was not based on any animosity toward the University and as previously stated, Marymount's desire for a field near campus is absolutely valid.

Options E1 and E2 – Double Access At-Grade

Design Options E1 and E2 had no undergrounding elements and relied on operations around the current salt facility (E2) or moving it to the edge of 26th Street near the intersection of Old Dominion Drive (E1). Both were at-grade. The options both showed significant addition of impervious services to accommodate the salt truck parking and V box attachments. The options showed double access with ingress/egress on 26th Street and Old Dominion Drive. Green space was recaptured at the southwestern peninsula of the site that is currently blacktopped for salt operations. The leaf storage and mulch distribution site were untouched. The open space on the northwest portion of the site between the leaf space and the trailhead contained a mixture of casual use space and structured amenities such as a gazebo picnic structure

and playground. The option was presented as the lowest cost, least complex operationally and lowest complexity for implementation and phasing

However, the Task Force was very concerned about the significant addition of impervious surfaces contained in both E1 and E2. The inclusion of so many onsite truck parking spaces was largely responsible for the significant increase in proposed blacktop. As such, the Task Force eliminated these options for consideration. It should be noted that if the County eliminated the need for leaf storage operations on the site, as outlined later in the report in a recommendation outside of the charge, an at-grade option would provide flexibility to repurpose the current impervious surface and create additional green space. Additionally, further consideration of adjacent street parking options for storm operations trucks may be warranted.

Master Plan Cost and Associated Capital Constraints

The Charge states “the Master Plan results will become the basis for requesting any additional funds in the FY 2020-2030 Capital Improvement Plan, which will be adopted in summer 2020, or through future CIPs.” The Charge does not direct the Task Force to consider costs when developing and determining its consensus recommendation. In fact, no member of the Fiscal Affairs Advisory Commission served on the Task Force. However, in the adopted Guiding Principles, the Task Force agreed that it would assess capital costs and that the “recommendations must have an associated cost to be reasonably considered by policy makers.” As such, each final concept considered by the Task Force contained cost estimates developed and provided by a third party. Further, and consistent with the Charge, the Guiding Principles did not make cost a determining factor in what the group was to ultimately recommend as the Task Force believes budget decisions are the responsibility and obligation of policy makers. Individual discussions with County Board members during the process validated this belief. The estimated cost for implementation of the consensus recommendation Master Plan is \$30,000,000 to \$40,000,000 *[AS OF THE MARCH 21 MEETING. COULD CHANGE BASED ON REVISIONS.]*

Designing an environmentally sustainable area which conserves natural resources (as directed in the Charge), while meeting expanded service delivery requirements in the Charge was a major challenge for our group. The Task Force was repeatedly told that the addition of one new snow-related element at the site – say a rest facility, but not the others – a chain shop or brine tanks – would make the proposed changes in operations impracticable. The Task Force was given the difficult assignment of determining how, on a relatively small usable space, it could design the property to help the County improve service delivery through an expanded winter response operation model, while also meeting the overwhelming goal of residents, County wide, to not reduce open space. The incompatibility of these two visions, increased costs significantly, the results of which are reflected in the Master Plan’s stated prices of the various option sets. The consensus recommendation Master Plan best accomplishes the goal of accommodating expanded winter response operations, while to some degree limiting the net loss of open space.

The Task Force strongly believes the County must be mindful of maintaining its fiscal integrity and responsibility to taxpayers when considering implementation of the recommended Master Plan as there are a variety of capital projects needed throughout Arlington, each of which compete for attention and funding. If the Board determines the consensus recommendation is too costly, the Task Force believes the County must discontinue its efforts to expand winter response operations at 26th/Old Dominion rather than reconfigure the site in a design outside of the Task Force's recommendations.

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VII. RECOMMENDATIONS

At the December 6 meeting the County presented its winter storm operational requirements. The County stated that the primary objective for the 26th/OD site was “to improve effectiveness and efficiency of snow operation services for the North side of the County in the most environmentally and community sensitive manner feasible.” The presentation went on to say the enhanced use of the site “enables faster completion of snow and ice clearing or treatment (gain varies by storm event, but typically results in a 10-15% gain). The presentation also stated that enhanced operations at the site “provides a cost-effective and higher level of service by reducing deadhead time during treatment.” The County should be commended for seeking greater efficiencies and improving service to residents. All effective local governments must continuously identify ways to improve basic services to those they serve. As one member remarked throughout the process, the County must do all it can to protect the life and safety of residents.

During the February 7 meeting the County provided a supplemental information presentation on snow operations at the request of the Task Force. The request was in response to an emerging unease among the members about the County’s requirement to expand winter storm response operations at the 26th/OD site. The County’s presentation stated that expanding winter operations at the north side facility will improve efficiency, response time, safety and reduce the travel time to the Trades Center with the addition of brine tanks and a shift change facility which includes a chain shop. A subsequent slide outlined a January 12-15, 2019 winter storm operation. The presentation showed the four northern operational zones and travel between their operational areas in the north and required trips back to the Trades Center. A subsequent slide, shown below [INSERT SLIDE] shows the service requests associated with that storm and the February 2010 “Snowmageddon/Snowzilla” storm. So while the efficiencies could be inferred – the solution – the underlying cause of the revised operational requirements – the problem – remains unconvincing to the Task Force and the public. This is especially so given the costs associated with both the loss of open space and of adding to storm operations at the site. The staff also responded to dozens of requests for data on a number of topics. The staff conducted two weekend tours for the Task Force as mentioned before to demonstrate how operations function. Staff also hosted a Task Force member during an actual snow clearing operation and shift change.

However, the foundation for any effective public process is the provision of reliable data so the involved group can make sound and reasonable decisions based on all relevant and available information. By nature, task forces and other ad hoc working groups are comprised of volunteer residents who have limited, if any, expertise in the particular subject matter they are examining. For example, everyone expects local government to remove snow during and after a winter storm, but few if any know the intricacies associated with treating the roads in advance of a storm and especially how snow removal operations occur. Our Task Force was fortunate to have had as members a Ph.D. specializing in public policy and city and regional planning, and a professional

design services business owner whose company specializes in master planning and civil engineering. Both members' professional expertise provided tremendous value when envisioning and designing the Master Plan. However, nobody on the Task Force was a professional expert on winter storm response operations.

Therefore, to understand why winter storm operations must be improved it was critical for the Task Force to learn where breakdowns in service delivery occur. Said another way, where and to what degree do complaints originate. It was important for the Task Force to have in depth explanations of the cost/benefits associated with enhanced operational efficiencies on north side service delivery. As importantly, the Task Force needed basic data on the frequency with which specific snow response operations occur. In simple terms, what problems and how would staging 24 trucks, parking 80 cars around the site, significantly disturbing the land and spending large amounts of money at the 26th/OD site solve? The Task Force wasn't charged with determining whether the change in the service delivery model was valid, but access to basic data pertaining to each of these questions was a reasonable request.

The group was asked to execute on a charge that assumed a needed change to the provision of winter storm response services. The Charge directed the Task Force to "Provide advice and input on staff and consultant analyses and proposals, including... implementation strategies." Our group repeatedly sought evidence to support this assumption not necessarily to challenge it but instead to reasonably understand it. Due diligence to comprehend the topic at hand is a core responsibility of any public advisory group. The Task Force was provided incomplete information and, in some cases, provided no information. For example, we were told of a need to improve the efficiency of snow removal in the far northern portion of the County but were provided only the two "heat maps" shown above. While the "Snowmageddon/Snowzilla" storm was indeed a crippling blizzard that had major and widespread impact, it seems that any thoughtful decision about enhancing operations would be based on a collection of storm data and/or resident complaints, not two events, one of which was a once in a generation event.

It should be noted that at times during the process healthy disagreements between staff and Task Force leadership surfaced. This is to be expected in any public process where a volunteer leads a process and is supported by trained professionals in a particular subject matter. Staff correctly contended it was critical that the Task Force "show its work" by thoroughly explaining the justifications for many of its decisions. For example, staff urged the Task Force to detail why it did or did not move forward with consideration of certain operational elements to develop the option sets. As such, meeting agendas were altered, the final set of meetings began earlier (6:30 p.m. rather than 7:00 p.m.) and ended later (after 9:30 p.m. rather than 9:00 p.m.). A supplemental eleventh meeting was also scheduled for April 11, 2019 so the group could be fully transparent in its work and detail justifications for its decisions. The Task Force is not comfortable concluding a comparable thoroughness to justify the decision to expand winter storm operations occurred.

While the staff was a partner, it would have been helpful for staff to be more forthcoming on data gaps identified early on in the process. Instead, the same questions were repeatedly asked. Task Force members and the public requested similar information in different ways, which needlessly cut into meeting and public comment time. The Task Force does recognize staff worked tirelessly often under accelerated deadlines. Staff stayed late at our meetings and were regularly available for impromptu meetings and calls, as needed.

The Task Force believes credible data justifying a need to enhance winter storm response operations does not exist. The underlying data to prove a “need” rather than a “want” was not adequately presented. As Old Dominion Citizens Association resident Christine Davenport remarked during the March 21 public comment period, “The County is looking for a solution to a problem that doesn’t exist.” Importantly, no resident at any point during the public comment periods or during the community forum requested improved snow removal service. *[SUBJECT TO CHANGE]*

It should be noted that regarding the Task Force’s work on the non-operational elements, staff should be commended for consistently providing information related to parks, open space, fields and other recreational activities. Questions regarding specific recreational elements were regularly answered and explained. Access to reliable data in this regard allowed the Task Force to make sound and reasonable decisions about recreational uses and placement on the site. It would have been helpful, however, if greater analysis of the soil, storm water runoff, salinity, and other aspects of this fragile site had been presented. Pertinent connections to the Public Spaces Master Plan (PSMP), a four-plus year process reflecting wide participation across the county, also would have been helpful. The ten PSMP priority actions begin with acquiring public land, and continue with focus on preserving green and open space.

It seems in so many other major continuous improvement processes, the County analyzes and reviews a variety of data which allows staff to establish program priorities and ultimately request funding. Such a responsible approach provides a rational basis for decision making and determining changes in service delivery. The Task Force is not confident that occurred in the evaluation of efficiencies in changing winter storm response operations. As one resident remarked in an informal discussion, “It seems like more justification goes into changing ART bus routes than went into the decision to change snow operations.”

Although the Task Force did not find a compelling reason to justify expanding operations at the 26th/OD site, the Board may choose to find the data which would support such an expansion. The County has competent, committed professionals whose work we all value and who see a need to adjust the operational model. We recommend asking these dedicated public servants specific questions about the frequency of snow-related events involving the north side facility, the cost benefit of the proposed changes in service delivery, and associated, specific information about service requests and/or resident complaints about snow removal. On many occasions, the Task Force and public urged consideration of shared parking and other spaces. It

would be reassuring if, during its deliberation with the Board, staff would show it has considered and applied these ideas.

Therefore, the Task Force's consensus Master Plan is a conditional recommendation. If the Board does eventually validate the need, the County should use the consensus recommendation Master Plan as the foundation for subsequent public processes. The Master Plan is a concept that meets the direction in the Charge to provide for the future needs of the service and functional components of:

- Winter storm response services to north Arlington, including a salt storage capacity of 6,000 tons and support facilities to dispatch crews from the site.
- Support facilities
- Staff parking
- Mulch distribution
- Leaf storage
- Open space and/or a park of at least one acre; and
- The Donaldson Run area at the north-east portion of the property.

[CONTENT SUBJECT TO CHANGE BASED ON MARCH 28 MEETING] The consensus recommended Master Plan is a concept that consolidates the operational requirements and includes a variety of park elements determined as important to the Task Force and surrounding communities. The Master Plan relies on maximizing the use of the sloped topography to provide double access with a rooftop park space that covers a portion of the operational facilities located on a lower level. The Master Plan aims to maximize operational safety and efficiencies while limiting the loss of green space. The Master Plan contains casual use space and structured spaces for outdoor exploration and enjoyment throughout the site. It is important to note that the addition of a break facility, restrooms, truck staging, a chain shop and brine tanks are included as part of the recommended Master Plan and although these were not represented on the JFAC site use consideration list, they are new operational elements introduced onto the site.

Regardless of the Board's decision whether or not to proceed with expanding winter storm operation on the site, the Task Force strongly believes the County should implement the recommendations about the open space adjacent to the Donaldson Run Trailhead contained in the Master Plan. The recommended Master Plan shows the park/open space locations on the site and elements which should be included. The Task Force believes that near-term funding for implementation should be identified so this area can be enhanced and made more useful to the community. Although it appears to be a park and acts as a park, it has never been afforded the planning and facilities of most Arlington parks. This is an opportunity to give this area a name and identity along with amenities such as a playground, that the community has long sought. Although the Master Plan identifies some elements for this area, if funding is approved, the community would ask that there be further collaboration with County staff in planning the specific amenities of the park.

In the event the County does not find a compelling reason to expand winter storm response services on the site, the Task Force believes a subsequent use determination public process for the site should occur. The Task Force believes this would include any interim uses the County might consider. While the Task Force process was fully transparent and involved a solid partnership among members, the community and staff, we are all reminded of the breakdowns of typical Arlington planning processes associated with the construction of the current salt facility.

Recommendations Outside of the Charge

Throughout the process, the Task Force remained committed to both deliberating about issues and crafting a report and Master Plan that fell within the parameters of the County Board's Charge. During the group's work, and not unlike many previous Arlington public processes, there were concerns from the public and among some members that the Charge was too narrow in scope. While there were times that an expanded Charge may have been beneficial, the limited scope of the Charge provided the foundation for focused work to specifically recommend a Master Plan for the 26th/OD site. With the work completed and a consensus recommendation provided consistent with the Charge, the Task Force believes the County should also consider following recommendations outside of the Charge.

➤ Land Acquisition

It is wholly inappropriate and outside of the Charge for the Task Force to recommend residential parcels of land for the County to acquire. However, Priority Action 1.1 of A Plan for Our Places and Spaces (POPS) calls for adding at least 30 acres of new public space over the next ten years in order to meet a range of park and open space demands identified in the County. According to the County, new public space could include a combination of additional land acquired by the County, public space developed by other public entities, privately developed spaces with public easements, and the addition of rooftop, deck parks, or similar spaces. Consistent with POPS, the Task Force strongly encourages the County to evaluate potential acquisition opportunities around the 26th/OD site and proactively engage land owners, where appropriate, to gauge interest in selling land to expand the site.

➤ Relocate the Leaf Storage

The Task Force respectfully asks the Arlington County Board to direct staff to investigate and analyze all options related to the leaf storage site at the 26th/OD site.

Background

The Arlington County government has been collecting and processing leaves since the mid-1980s. The process begins when leaves are collected curbside in the late fall using county owned leaf collection vacuum trucks. The leaves are then transported to one of two leaf collection sites. The leaves collected in South Arlington are taken to the Earth Products Yard located at 4300 29th St South, while the leaves collected in North Arlington are taken to the 26th and OD site. The

trucks offload leaves which are then moved by heavy equipment to large leaf piles at each site. The leaves at the Earth Products Yard are then lifted into a large mulching machine and processed into fine leaf mulch. Mulching does not occur at the 26th/Od site. The process is repeated for the leaves from the 26th/OD site. Throughout the year, this fine leaf mulch is used by the County government and residents, alike. Mulch can be delivered for a fee or pick up at the Earth Products Yard or the 26th/OD. Surplus leaf mulch is sold to local landscaping contractors. The leaf collection and processing program involves approximately 50 staff, 20 of whom are temporary employees. Rear loading trucks are not typically involved in leaf operations.

Issues

Some Task Force members believe the current one acre leaf storage site at the 26th and OD site and accompanying processing activities (offloading leaves, moving leaves to the leaf pile, compacting of the leaves with heavy equipment, etc.) are incompatible with the Department of Parks and Recreation Strategic Plan and the Arlington Public Spaces Master Plan. Some members also believe the use of 19 “single purpose” vehicles which remain idle for 10 months of the year is inefficient and they question the true cost of the program. Free mulch for residents is a popular program, but what is the cost of providing that mulch? The vehicles also require 19 truck parking spaces at the already overcrowded Earth Products Yard. Some members believe that removing the leaf operations from the site would eliminate high nutrient runoff into the lagoon at the top of Donaldson Run.

Options for Consideration as a pilot program to potentially expand county-wide

1. Transform the one acre leaf storage site at 26th/OD into parkland. Outsource the entire leaf collection to leaf mulch operation for North Arlington to a commercial enterprise.
 - Other counties/towns (including, but not limited to University City, MO; Glencoe, IL; Ladue, MO; Clayton, MO; Olivette, MO; Richmond Heights, MO) outsource their leaf collection to leaf mulch programs to commercial enterprises.
 - Several commercial enterprises within 20 miles of Arlington might be capable of collecting and processing the leaves.
2. Transform the one acre leaf storage site at 26th/OD into parkland. Contract with local swim clubs and/or golf courses to store the collected leaves in their parking lots.
 - The average size of a local swim club parking lot is one acre. Most local swim club parking lots are idle between November and February. The arrangement would provide Arlington County with an alternative leaf storage location and provide the local swim clubs with needed income.

3. Transform the one acre leaf storage site at 26th/OD into parkland. Enter into cooperative agreements with Regional Parks (Potomac Overlook), National Parks (GW Parkway, Turkey Run, Fort Marcy, Gravelly Point), and/or Federal Lands (Ft. Myer, Arlington National Cemetery, Pentagon).
 - Regional Parks, National Parks, and Federal Lands also have a need to collect, store, and process leaves. The federal government also has a need for tons of leaf mulch.
4. Transform the one acre leaf storage site at 26th/OD into parkland. Eliminate leaf collection services for North Arlington. Conduct a marketing campaign to encourage on-site leaf mulching and composting.
 - North Arlington residents could also contract with private vendors to collect and dispose of their leaves.
5. Direct County staff to research other, more current techniques in managing leaf removal to see if the County should adjust its operations in this area.
6. Do nothing. Continue to use one acre of the seven acre 26th/OD site for leaf storage.

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