



Honorable Libby Garvey, Chair
Arlington County Board
2100 Clarendon Blvd, Suite 300
Arlington, VA 22201

July 6, 2020

RE: Comments on Shirlington Special GLUP

Dear Chair Garvey:

The Arlington County Urban Forestry Commission (UFC) has been following the Shirlington Village Study and Concept Plan process and though the commission has not been able to meet, below are comments that have been circulated to the commission members, with individual comments incorporated:

1. Tree Canopy: The preservation of existing mature trees was identified as a high priority during the community engagement process. The study notes that the existing tree canopy in the study area is 13%, which is below the target of 15% for central business districts, and well below the 25% target for urban residential, which is how this area is classified. Retention of the mature trees in the study area, especially those along Campbell Avenue, is critical as they provide the foundation for the existing tree canopy in the study area. While providing important aesthetic appeal, the existing mature trees also provide key ecosystem services such as absorbing storm water, cleaning the air, providing shade and reducing the heat island effect in an area with such extensive impermeable surfaces. The UFC strongly supports the recommendation that existing mature trees in the study area are retained, and that aggressive tree planting accompanies any redevelopment to increase the overall tree canopy in this area.
2. Historic Preservation: Mature trees should be included as an element of the historic preservation discussion. Tree lined streets provide the basis for a pedestrian friendly environment and that should be more clearly identified as a priority in the historic analysis. Likewise, mature trees greatly contribute to a sense of place, and that connection should be more clearly identified.
3. Tree health and sustainability: The study in essence provides a case study of the importance of choosing appropriate tree species, adequate soil volume and tree care: mature trees are thriving in some areas, while trees in other

areas with inadequate soil volume and soil compaction are suffering. Preservation of existing healthy trees should remain a high priority, especially noting the importance of proper care in any repairs of the brick walkway to ensure that tree roots are not damaged.

4. Sustainability and Biophilia: While we support inclusion of recommendations 17, 18 and 19, rather than being a subset of recommendations, we recommend that these concepts are more broadly integrated into all elements of the planning. These principles represent a design opportunity to shape our community in a manner that supports livable and sustainable development. The Covid-19 experience has magnified the need for regular and easy access to natural environments for everyone in our community. We have a unique opportunity to include nature-human connections and the natural environment as this area is redeveloped, and that should be identified as a high priority.

We appreciate this opportunity to share our views.

Sincerely,



Phil Klingelhofer
Chair, Urban Forestry Commission

Cc: Members, Arlington County Board
Members, Arlington County Planning Commission
Mark Schwartz, Arlington County Manager
Claude Williamson, Director, Department of Community Planning,
Housing and Development
Jane Rudolph, Director, Department of Parks and Recreation