



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

August 25, 2020

RE: Metropolitan Park Master Plan

Dear Chair Garvey:

I am writing to convey the sentiments of the Urban Forestry Commission (UFC) regarding the Metropolitan Park Master Plan (PMP). Because our comments are required no later than August 26, in advance of our August 27 UFC meeting, we could not meet formally to discuss this letter, but I have shared this letter with the Commissioners and incorporated their comments to ensure that it represents the strong consensus of the UFC.

UFC Commissioners participated in the park planning process for this PMP, and the UFC offers the following comments:

We appreciate the expansive nature of the public engagement for the park planning process associated with this project. The February and May 2020 meetings were well-attended and garnered significant community feedback. We commend county staff and the Metropolitan Park master planning team on the seamless transition to the virtual public engagement held in April and June of this year, as a result of the Covid-19 restrictions. Several Commissioners noted that the virtual public engagement was thorough and well designed and allowed for much broader participation than would otherwise be the case for in-person meetings alone. We would encourage the County to consider utilizing this virtual method of public engagement going forward even after the Covid-19 restrictions on public meetings have ceased as way to foster greater inclusivity and feedback.

The UFC notes the strong public support for the Forest Walk design, and the highlighted importance of trees, shade, nature, biodiversity and the use of native plants in this project. The commission supports the management of water on the site and other integrated sustainability measures. Planting canopy trees around the playground will provide much needed shade and sets the more active areas off from the more tranquil part of the park. The final design aptly

reflects the public feedback in support of an urban refuge and calming casual use space, with biophilic design where nature is intentionally incorporated into the built environment.

The UFC also supports the inclusion of a dog exercise area in the PMP. Such an area will help contain the negative impact that dogs can inflict on park trees and wildlife.

The UFC is encouraged by both the process and the product in this master planning process. We are hopeful that this park will provide inspiration to other developers and park planners on how nature can be incorporated into our urban environment.

Thank you for this opportunity to share our views.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Phil Klingelhofer". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Phil Klingelhofer  
Chair, Urban Forestry Commission

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