



ARLINGTON COUNTY, VIRGINIA

County Board Agenda Item Meeting of September 26, 2009

DATE: September 16, 2009

SUBJECT: Adoption of the Four Mile Run Restoration Project Design Guidelines

C.M. RECOMMENDATION:

Adopt the document entitled, "Four Mile Run Design Guidelines."

ISSUES: The Four Mile Run Design Guidelines have been developed as the next step to the Four Mile Run Restoration Master Plan adopted by the County Board in 2006. The Design Guidelines are a conceptual guidance document for future park and development projects in the Four Mile Run project area. They were approved by the City of Alexandria Planning Commission on September 1, 2009 and recommended for Adoption by the Arlington County Planning Commission on September 14, 2009. Response to Planning Commission comments are addressed later in this report. No issues have been identified.

SUMMARY: The Four Mile Run Design Guidelines (the "Guidelines") provide a specific design language for the ecological and design elements recommended in the Four Mile Run Restoration Master Plan (the Plan), adopted by the County Board in March, 2006. Like the Master Plan, these Guidelines are the result of significant collaboration between Arlington and Alexandria, the United States Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), the Northern Virginia Regional Commission (NVRC), and the citizen Joint Task Force (JTF), which consists of citizen representatives from Arlington and Alexandria.

Adopted in 2006, the Master Plan established a vision to fulfill the potential of the Four Mile Run Corridor from Shirlington to its confluence with the Potomac River. The Four Mile Run Design Guidelines are next step to the Master Plan to provide more clarity and specificity pertaining to the Plan's vision.

The Four Mile Run Guidelines focus on the lower 2.5 miles of Four Mile Run (the 'levee corridor,') which extends from Shirlington to the Potomac River and provide a specific design language that enhances the environmental, recreational, and open space resources and urban vitality of both jurisdictions. The document supplements the Plan, which provides a blueprint for the long-term (20 to 30 years) transformation of lower Four Mile Run from a utility and flood control corridor to a restored and vibrant waterfront for both communities. The Design

County Manager: _____

County Attorney: _____

Staff: David Goodman, DES, Division of Transportation; Welmoed Lannstra, DPRCR, Cultural Affairs Division; Scott McPartlin, DPRCR, Park Development Division; Leon Vignes, DCPHD, Planning Division; Aileen Winquist, DES, Utilities and Environmental Policy Division

Guidelines do not impact land use policy but will guide public and private redevelopment located near the Four Mile Run restoration project area.

BACKGROUND: During the summer of 2000, Arlington County and City of Alexandria citizens participating in the Potomac Yard Phased Development Site Plan process began to discuss potential improvements in flood control management, as well as environmental, recreational, and aesthetic enhancements to lower Four Mile Run. Residents of both jurisdictions worked with County and City staff to request funding from Congress to study possible improvements to the channel that were not considered in the original, single-purpose flood control project.

Since its completion more than twenty years ago, the channel has safely conveyed high storm flows through the two jurisdictions. Although successful in flood control, the single-purpose Four Mile Run levee corridor suffers from severely diminished habitat and environmental features, as well as limited recreational opportunities, and compromised aesthetics and urban form.

With the stimulus of Congress' \$1 million appropriation in 2000, the Agency Coordination Group (ACG), consisting of staff and citizens from the County and City, came together in 2002 to oversee the master planning effort. In addition, an 18-member citizen taskforce was formed in early summer 2003, comprised of citizens from both jurisdictions, including key commission representation. Members of this Joint Task Force (JTF) were appointed by the chief administrative officers of the County and the City. The task force met regularly during the development of the Plan to examine project alternatives, gather public input, and make recommendations to the ACG (two members of the JTF serve on the ACG).

In early 2004, the Arlington County Manager and Alexandria City Manager executed a cost-sharing agreement with Corps of Engineers for a watershed-wide Four Mile Run restoration planning effort. This larger planning effort will incorporate the master plan for the restoration of the levee corridor as well as analyses and recommendations for restoration projects throughout the watershed. Projects identified in this study, including implementation of certain components of the Four Mile Run Restoration Master Plan, will be eligible for federal construction cost share funds.

In March 2006, the Arlington County Board and Alexandria City Council adopted the Four Mile Run Restoration Master Plan. Although the Master Plan provides an outstanding vision for this currently blighted waterway, a need for more specific design guidelines became apparent after Plan adoption in 2006. With project initiatives including a pedestrian/cyclist bridge, Water Pollution Control Plant perimeter treatment and near stream improvements on the horizon, the Team needed further definition of the principles articulated in the Plan. Therefore, in 2007, the ACG developed a scope for design guidelines for Four Mile Run. Rhodeside and Harwell was retained in fall of 2007 to develop the design guidelines.

In March 2008 the ACG hosted a kick-off meeting to discuss the design guidelines effort, including staff from various departments from Arlington, Alexandria, NVRC, and the USACE. Attendees represented various interests including engineering, art, planning, parks & recreation, transportation, and landscape architecture.

The JTF-led public process for this effort included several JTF meetings, along with two open houses to review, comment, and provide ideas and input for the draft Guidelines. In addition, key commissions in both jurisdictions were briefed in early 2009. The details of this extensive public process, including the JTF membership and endorsement letter, list of public events, and commission briefing schedule are provided in Attachment 1.

DISCUSSION: The Four Mile Run Design Guidelines provide a clear design framework for future collaborative teams of planners, landscape architects, architects, engineers, and artists as they transform the lower portion of this stream corridor. This framework reflects the vision statement articulated in the Master Plan:

Four Mile Run will become a model of urban ecological restoration. Through the sensitive and sustainable integration of natural areas with active urban nodes, the Four Mile Run corridor will be a place along which the communities of Arlington County and the City of Alexandria can gather, recreate, and celebrate a shared waterfront legacy.

Project Themes

Project themes are the reasoning behind the development of the design language. These overarching principles (labeled Design Themes in the document) are used as global ideas that can be applied to the Corridor's design, regardless of the materials or design details. In order for these concepts to be given form they may be expressed through the design language or public art. The three themes steering our design language are: Master Plan as a baseline, movement of water as a formgiver, and unifying elements.

Master Plan Baseline

The Master Plan establishes an initial design theme that is the baseline for these Guidelines. The Master Plan recommends, among other things, the use of modern technology and materials, elements that compliment each other and existing built elements, materials of a similar family, integration of sustainable elements, and ease of maintenance.

Movement of Water as Formgiver

The Guidelines build upon the Master Plan's philosophy to integrate water and water processes into public spaces using the following principles: water can be a great source of inspiration; design should reflect our close relationship with water; design should enhance our experience of water; the force of moving water shapes the landscape; and the movement of water across the surface of land should be expressed rather than hidden.

Unifying Elements

The Guidelines expand on the Plan's theme of creating consistent design elements by establishing the following components: continuous, linear elements that link the diverse open spaces; repeating, recognizable features that visually connect along the length of the corridor, strong architectural components of a complimentary character, planting design that establishes a strong sense of place, and lighting that unifies the corridor at night.

Design Language

The ACG and JTF selected a design language that “borrows form, material, and an overall aesthetic from the existing utilitarian structures...and seeks to elevate these ordinary elements from mundane visual clutter to a central design theme.” The design language also promotes a modern design aesthetic but uses “materials with less refined or rustic qualities” such as recycled and natural materials. The intent of this design language is to encourage the use of existing infrastructure as the “bones” upon which to build environmentally-sensitive and visually stimulating design. The design language created for the Guidelines was developed by merging two compatible design aesthetics, “Infrastructure Re-Use” and “Modern-Rustic”.

Infrastructure Re-Use

The Infrastructure Re-Use design language celebrates, rather than ignores, the existing utilitarian infrastructure that exists along the Four Mile Run stream corridor, such as the transmission towers and lines, Water Pollution Control Plant, and the electrical power substation.

Modern-Rustic

The Modern-Rustic design language promotes contemporary design in combination with the use of unrefined materials, such as weathered steel, copper, bronze, natural field stone, cast-in-place concrete, or recycled materials.

Specific Design Principles

The Design Guidelines are general enough as to not restrict creativity and flexibility but directive enough to maintain the spirit of the Master Plan vision. The document is organized in three design principles (Green Design Principles, Public Spaces, and Built Features) and addresses design elements. The following chart illustrates the organization.

Table 1. Four Mile Run Design Guidelines Organization

DESIGN PRINCIPLE	DESIGN ELEMENT
Green Design Principles	Channel Restoration and Stabilization Habitat Restoration Restoration Planting Comprehensive Stormwater Management Environmental Awareness
Public Spaces	Trails Green Open Space Sports Facilities Public Art Motorized Access
Built Features	Architectural Components Lighting Perimeter, Entries, and Wayfinding Planting Building Form, Orientation, and Setbacks

Green Design Principles

Channel Restoration and Stabilization (pg 33)

The U.S. Army Corp of Engineers, Alexandria, and Arlington began design of the alluvial reach of the Run soon after the Master Plan was approved. By summer 2008, they were at the 60% level of design. The Design Guidelines will not influence the designs of the channel as the Corps is designing *specifically* to meet flood protection for the 100-year flood event.

Habitat Restoration (pg 35)

This section provides specifications and details for the design of habitat-related features including wetlands restoration, planting of naturalized areas, invasive species management, soil conditions, wetland and riparian buffers, and habitat connectivity.

Restoration Plantings (pg 37)

Although most of the planting will occur in the channel and habitat restoration areas, additional planting will occur elsewhere. Four Mile Run is an urbanized stream channel so the adjacent sitting areas, buildings, promenades, plazas, and other public areas require appropriate plantings as well. The Design Guidelines make recommendations for those treatments.

Comprehensive Stormwater Management (pg 43)

The Design Guidelines recommend appropriate techniques or best management practices (BMPs) for stormwater management along the Run. Developers and property owners must select the most appropriate of these techniques for developments adjacent to the corridor: bioretention facilities and bioswales, green roofs, permeable pavement, stormwater planters, litter control devices, underground storage/detention facilities, or daylighting.

Environmental Awareness (pg 52)

Both Alexandria and Arlington have sustainable and green design documents that establish goals for development projects. The development community must refer to these documents. However, both jurisdictions should explore educational opportunities to raise community awareness of the evolving environmental condition of the Run and the on-going restoration efforts. Such educational opportunities include: habitat area educational signage, tree and plant identification, flood markers, wildlife informational signage, revolving exhibits.

Public Spaces

Trails (pg 53)

Four types of trails are identified in the Design Guidelines: Commuter Trail (pedestrian/cyclist); Community Trail (pedestrian/cyclist); Informal Trail (pedestrian); and Informal, Fairweather Stream Crossings (pedestrian). Each trail has a specific dimension and treatment based on the proposed usage. All trails, however, will meet or exceed the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

Recreation and Sports Facilities (pg 69)

Sports facilities provide spaces for recreation and allow opportunities for formal and informal community gatherings. However, existing and proposed sports facilities must contribute positively to the health and condition of the stream channel. To do so, the Design Guidelines

recommend specific stormwater management techniques, plantings, and habitat-friendly lighting to be incorporated to minimize potential impacts.

Green Open Space (pg 71)

The Design Guidelines encourage green open spaces to permit active and passive recreational uses. Specific types of grasses, shade trees, seating, and trash receptacles should be installed as part of these spaces.

Public Art (pg 71)

Public art can assist in further the vision of the Master Plan. The City, County, developers, and property owners shall consider the installation and use of public art in the following areas: trails, buildings, bridges, retaining wall and levees, site furnishings, lighting, perimeters and entries, wayfinding, and environmental education and interpretation.

Motorized Access (pg 71)

This section of the document discusses emergency vehicle access, improvements to South Glebe Road, and parking. Among the recommendations are planning emergency vehicle access points during the development planning process, employ traffic-calming techniques to South Glebe Road to improve pedestrian/cyclist safety, and minimize surface parking in the corridor.

Built Features

Architectural Components (pg 73)

The architectural components and channel stabilization efforts will most embody the spirit of the design language. Special care must be given to the development of the proposed buildings, bridges, shade structures, retaining walls and levees, and site furnishes. These elements must reflect the tone of the “composite approach” – linking the industrial past to an eco-sensitive future. Public art installations within these architecture components will help accomplish this.

Lighting (pg 81)

Lighting serves a critical purpose in the stream corridor – enhancement of safety. It fosters a sense of security and encourages people to access the stream corridor. The presence of more people on the corridor creates more “eyes on the street”. More “eyes on the street” can curb crime. Yet lighting must balance this important function with the needs of plant and animal habitats and the environment. Therefore, the Design Guidelines recommends lighting that is energy-efficient and reduces light pollution.

Perimeter, Entries, and Wayfinding (pg 85)

Perimeters, entries, and wayfinding are opportunities to navigate visitors and establish the theme of the corridor. The Design Guidelines recommend that these elements be used to educate the public about the stream, promote public art, provide for sustainable design, and mark entries into the corridor. Arlington County is currently undergoing a public art process for fencing along its Water Pollution Control Plant. Signage along the stream corridor (on the Alexandria side) will comply with the City-wide wayfinding program which is expected to be completed in the fall of 2009.

Building Form (pg 91)

Buildings have a great influence on the character of the Run. However, these guidelines do not recommend building heights, specific materials, setbacks from the stream edge, or architectural style. This section influences building orientation, stormwater management techniques, solar access, viewsheds and sightlines, ground-level uses, parking, service facilities, lighting, connections to the stream, green building, and educational elements. Also, the Design Guidelines strongly recommends the incorporation of *Crime Prevention through Environmental Design* (CPTED) practices.

Four Mile Run can become a community amenity and achieve the goals of the Master Plan through implementing a design language that embraces current channel and habitat restoration efforts, flood protection measures, and future development goals. The Design Guidelines assist in accomplishing these goals.

Response to Planning Commission Comments

The Arlington County Planning Commission voiced their support for the comprehensive nature and long term design vision of the Four Mile Run Design Guidelines. Through the sensitive and sustainable integration of natural areas with active urban nodes, the Four Mile Run corridor will be a place along which the communities of Arlington County and the City of Alexandria can gather, recreate, and celebrate a shared waterfront legacy. The design language for Four Mile Run “borrows form, material, and an overall aesthetic from the existing utilitarian structures...and seeks to elevate these ordinary elements from mundane visual clutter to a central design theme.” The design language also promotes a modern design aesthetic but uses “materials with less refined or rustic qualities” such as recycled and natural materials. The intent of this design language is to encourage the use of existing infrastructure as the “bones” upon which to build environmentally-sensitive and visually stimulating design.

The Arlington Planning Commission highlighted the need to ensure that projects developed under the purview of these guidelines meet Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and Crime Prevention through Environmental Design (CPTED) practices. The Design Guidelines provide a framework for a design language and vision for the Four Mile Run corridor, but do not include any specific design plans. The Guidelines do, however, make specific reference to ADA and CPTED requirements and state that future projects developed in the corridor should be in compliance with them. All future projects developed in the Four Mile Run corridor area will go through normal City and County planning processes, and in so doing will be fully evaluated for compliance with ADA, CPTED and other conditions through the plan review process.

The Arlington County Planning Commission inquired about the fiscal impact and plans for funding the Four Mile Run Restoration Project. The Guidelines do not commit Arlington County or the City of Alexandria to implementation over any given time period. As public facilities and park areas along the corridor are planned, redeveloped, and restored, they will be implemented under the guidance of this document and will have an associated construction and maintenance cost developed at that time. It is intended that associated private redevelopment projects in the area will use this document as a guide and will consider contribution to Four Mile Run Projects as part of their community benefit.

The Arlington County Planning Commission inquired about the impact of levee certification and new Army Corps of Engineers requirements for trees and plants adjacent to flood control levees on the concepts shown in the Design Guidelines. The Design Guidelines provide a framework and a vision for the Four Mile Run corridor, but do not include any specific design or planting plans. As projects are developed, planting plans will be evaluated in light of the Army Corps of Engineers requirements in place at that time.

FISCAL IMPACT: Implementation of the 2006 Master Plan is envisioned as a long-term process (20-30 years) that will necessitate extensive partnerships and major sources of funding (federal, state, local and private). Future funding and resource allocations for projects related to the Master Plan will require approval by the County Board. The Guidelines do not commit Arlington County to implementation over any given time period. However as public facilities and park areas along the corridor are planned, redeveloped, and restored, they will be implemented under the guidance of this document and have an associated cost. It is intended that associated private redevelopment projects in the area will use this document as a guide and will consider contribution to Four Mile Run Projects as part of their community benefit.

Attachment 1 - Four Mile Run Join Task Force Membership

- Neal Sigmon, Arlington Park & Recreation Commission, Co-Chair
- Judy Guse-Noritake, Alexandria Park & Recreation Commission, Co-Chair
- Carrie Johnson, Arlington Citizen Representative
- Jesse Jennings, Alexandria Planning Commission
- Amy Flatten, Arlington Park and Recreation Commission
- Ripley Forbes, Alexandria Park and Recreation Commission
- Liz Birnbaum, Arlington Environment and Energy Conservation Commission
- Bill Gearhart, Arlington Transportation Commission
- Matt Gilman, Alexandria Bicycle/Pedestrian Representative
- Leo Sarli, Arlington Citizen Representative
- Kurt Moser, Alexandria Environmental Policy Commission
- Joe McCoy, Alexandria Citizen Representative
- Kevin Beekman, Alexandria Citizen Representative
- Ted Saks, Aurora Highlands Civic Association (Arlington)
- Lavern Warlick, Lynhaven Civic Association (Alexandria)
- Whitney Long, Arlington Ridge Civic Association (Arlington)
- Betty King, Hume Springs Civic Association (Alexandria)
- Luis Baez, Long Branch Creek Civic Association (Arlington)

Public Process Schedule

March, 2008	Information presented on design guidelines at the ACG meeting
May, 2008	First draft of design guidelines released for review to ACG/JTF
June, 2008	Public open house/Comments to the first draft addressed
September, 2008	Second draft of design guidelines released for review to ACG
October, 2008	Staff submitted changes on green design principles
December, 2008	Comments addressed on second draft and revised images
December, 2008	Revised building forms section was provided
February, 2009	First final draft delivered
April, 2009	JTF/ACG hosted open house for final round of comments
April, 2009	County Commissions briefed on the Design Guidelines

Attachment 2 – Letters of Support

FOUR MILE RUN RESTORATION PROJECT JOINT TASK FORCE

August 24, 2009

Peter Fallon, Chair
Arlington Planning Commission

Re: Four Mile Run Design Guidelines

Dear Chairman Fallon and Planning Commissioners:

On behalf of the citizen's Joint Task Force (JTF) we are pleased to write to offer endorsement of the Draft Design Guidelines for the on-going re-design and restoration of Four Mile Run. Members of the JTF were appointed by the Alexandria City Manager and the Arlington County Manager to guide and advise staff from the two jurisdictions in planning and executing the efforts necessary to restore this important waterway that forms the boundary between our two municipalities. At its meeting on August 19th, the JTF unanimously and enthusiastically gave its support and approval to these guidelines. We urge you to approve and adopt them as written.

A companion document to the Four Mile Run Master Plan adopted in March of 2006, these Design Guidelines are an important next-step in the planning process necessary to realize the vision contained in the Master Plan. As the timeframe for completing the work of the Master Plan is expected to span several decades, this document, meant to guide the design of the various projects and components, was seen as necessary from the start of implementation. These guidelines provide the specific design language to shape the physical manifestation of the urban design elements, the updated flood control measures and the ecological restoration components in this important corridor. While design guidelines are most often tools of urban planning, in this case they have been extended to include all the layered complexities of the restoration of this green corridor.

As the thinking and details of this document were developed by the consultant, Rhodeside and Harwell, Inc., a dramatic change in design direction emerged that served as an epiphany for the JTF and the staff team guiding the work. In the Master Plan this broad team of citizens, staff and professional designers struggled to create a vision that would overcome the existing nature of the corridor, that of a place where the infrastructure necessary for urban life was concentrated. These design guidelines instead respond to the infrastructure elements and from them draw a creative design language. In doing so, they ground the restoration in the context of what exists in this place and is unlikely to change.

The JTF applauds and endorses this direction and hopes you will as well. While this is a different aesthetic than is often seen in either of our communities, we feel it is the right touch for Four Mile Run. All the boards and commissions that reviewed the draft of these design guidelines also concurred with this design language. Across the board, citizen groups, appointed with specific sets of interests, gave their full support to the suite of details in these design guidelines including urban planning, building forms, and the environmental aspects like water quality, habitat for native plants and animals, and improvement of the human habitat in this area. This document represents an integration of all aspects necessary to heal this place and make it whole.

We would also note that the images and ideas represented in the Design Guidelines can and will be applied incrementally over time as opportunities arise and resources becomes available. Quite soon we should begin to see the influence of these design guidelines as the first projects in the corridor move forward. The first set of the projects envisioned in the Master Plan are now underway or about to begin and include a design competition for the pedestrian bridge between South Eads and Commonwealth Avenue as well as the first phase of in-stream restoration work between Mt. Vernon Avenue and Route 1. These guidelines will also influence private development that even now is being planned or is underway adjacent to Four Mile Run.

The JTF believes this document is a very good, comprehensive piece of work. Aside from accomplishing a viable and creative plan for the restoration of Four Mile Run, the JTF has always thought of this project, starting with the Master Plan and carrying through now to these Design Guidelines, as a national model of cooperative leadership reaching across geographic boundaries, levels of government, agencies roles and responsibilities. With this companion document this effort moves a step closer to serving as that national model we had envisioned.

As the vision for a restored Four Mile Run moves forward over the next twenty years, we want to caution that there should always be a group of citizens whose duty will be to assure adherence to the spirit and intent of these design guidelines. Various projects, as they occur, will cross jurisdictions of the Planning Commission, the Environmental Policy Commission and the Park and Recreation Commission in Alexandria and the sister-commissions in Arlington. These design guidelines should stay in force and have applicability over that implementation and it is our recommendation that the current Joint Task Force, as long as it remains in its current configuration, be charged with this task; to serve in an informed advisory capacity for all manner of planning and projects that relate directly or indirectly to the restoration of the Four Mile Run corridor.

We hope that you will offer your support for these design guidelines and the vision they hold for a restored Four Mile Run.

Respectfully,



Judy R. Guse-Noritake
Alexandria Co-chair



Neal Sigmon
Arlington Co-Chair

JTF members:

*Luis Baez, Kevin Beekman, Shannon Cunniff, Ripley Forbes,
Bill Gearhart, Matt Gilman, Jesse Jennings, Carrie Johnson,
Betty King, Whitney Long, Joe McCoy, Kurt Moser, Jim Olivetti,
Ted Saks, Leo Sarli, Laverne Warlick*

COMM: E2C2;
Four Mile
Run

ENVIRONMENT AND ENERGY CONSERVATION COMMISSION
c/o Department of Environmental Services
2100 Clarendon Blvd., Suite 801
Arlington, VA 22201

July 1, 2009

The Honorable Barbara Favola, Chair
Arlington County Board
2100 Clarendon Blvd.
Arlington, VA 22201

Re: Design Guidelines for Four Mile Run Master Plan

Dear Chair Favola:

At the meeting of the Environment and Energy Conservation Commission on April 27, 2009, Aileen Winquist of the Department of Environmental Services gave a presentation on the draft Design Guidelines that have been developed in furtherance of the implementation of the joint Arlington-Alexandria Four Mile Run Master Plan. As we understand that these draft Design Guidelines will be presented to the Board for review, E2C2 would like to provide our perspectives on the Guidelines.

We would like to note that the draft Design Guidelines reflect considerable effort to support environmentally friendly design. They incorporate some of the most current strategies for Low Impact Development and will help to implement the overall Master Plan goal of restoring some ecological function along the flood control channel. Proposals to "daylight" small tributaries that have been hidden in storm sewers, provide bioretention areas and install green roofs are just a few of the measures that will reduce the volatility in water flow resulting from older stormwater management techniques. The draft Guidelines also support restoration of native species, riparian buffers and wetland areas to reestablish a more natural stream channel. Furthermore, constructed public amenities of trails and promenades are designed to use materials that connect with the natural features and draw people into closer contact with the natural environment.

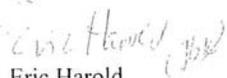
One issue we would like to raise is the failure to quantify the need for bike trail paving. This is an issue that E2C2 raised in our comments on the Bicycle Element of the Master Transportation Plan, where we indicated that bike trail widths should be determined on a case-by-case basis depending on trail usage; the bicycle trails contemplated in the Design Guidelines present an opportunity to conduct such case-by-case analysis. As we have mentioned before, while bike riding contributes tremendously to the environmental as well as the physical health of the community, there is no justification for over-building and over-paving trails. Bike trails represent a significant portion of the impermeable surface contemplated in the Four Mile Run Master Plan, and

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an analysis should be conducted to determine how wide they need to be, and thus how much surface should be paved. The current draft of the Design Guidelines sets the trail on one side of the stream at 12 feet wide and the trail on the other side of the stream at 10 feet wide, without any indication that any analysis has been done to establish a need for these widths. (A reference to AASHTO standards does nothing to determine the actual width required for these trails; AASHTO standards are only guidelines that should be applied depending on trail usage.) Bicycle traffic analysis should be conducted to determine the appropriate width for these trails, just as automotive traffic analysis determines the appropriate width for streets under AASHTO guidelines.

Apart from this detail, E2C2 finds the proposed Design Guidelines for the Four Mile Run Master Plan to be supportive of environmental conservation, and recommends their adoption.

Sincerely,



Eric Harold
Member representing E2C2



ARLINGTON COMMISSION FOR THE ARTS
DEPARTMENT OF PARKS, RECREATION AND CULTURAL RESOURCES
2100 Clarendon Boulevard, Suite 414, Arlington, Virginia 22201

June 10, 2009

The Honorable Barbara Favola, Chairman
Arlington County Board
Courthouse Plaza One, Suite 300
Arlington, VA 22201

Dear Barbara:

At the Arlington Commission for the Arts' April 22, 2009 meeting, the Commission received a briefing on the proposed draft Four Mile Run Design Guidelines. The guidelines briefing was presented by Angela Adams, staff member of the Four Mile Run Agency Coordination Group (ACG.)

The Arlington Commission for the Arts voted unanimously to endorse the proposed draft Four Mile Run Design Guidelines and recommend the County Board adopt the Guidelines. The Commission commends the project's Joint Task Force and ACG and recognizes the critical role that the Design Guidelines will have in shaping the recreation and urban life, flood protection, environment, aesthetics, design, access, connectivity, education and interaction for this significant corridor. The development of the draft Design Guidelines in collaboration with the city of Alexandria, the Northern Virginia Regional Commission, the US Environmental Protection Agency and US Army Corps of Engineers serves as a model for how two jurisdictions and Federal agencies can work together to develop a vision for the lower Four Mile Run corridor.

The Commission thought that the direction outlined in the draft Design Guidelines is a wonderful way to address the area. One comment expressed by one commissioner and supported by others was to be sure not to lose the value of the natural elements in pursuing the built aspects. The Commission supports the demonstration and pedestrian bridge projects - as well as the proposed incorporation of public art and design into these - which represent the first steps toward implementation of this long-term vision.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "John Seal".

John Seal, Chair
Arlington Commission for the Arts

cc: Dinesh Tiwari, PRCR
Norma Kaplan, PRCR, Cultural Affairs Division
Angela Adams, PRCR, Cultural Affairs Division



ARLINGTON COUNTY
URBAN FORESTRY COMMISSION

2700 South Taylor Street
Arlington, VA 22206



September 9, 2009

Honorable Barbara A. Favola
Chairman
Arlington County Board
2100 Clarendon Blvd., Suite 300
Arlington, VA 22201

Re: Four Mile Run Design Guidelines

Dear Chairman Favola,

The Urban Forestry Commission recommends that the County Board adopt the Design Guidelines for implementing the Four Mile Run Master Plan.

UFC interests in the Four Mile Run corridor relate primarily to enhancing the natural environment, including wildlife habitat, and providing new opportunities for visitors to learn about nature. As noted in the Design Guidelines, the Master Plan “dramatically improves and expands the existing habitat area throughout the stream corridor.” In addition, the corridor would provide outstanding learning experiences, with opportunities for visitors to observe the new habitat settings and enjoy nature.

Expanding the habitat area will involve several related measures, including wetlands restoration, planting of naturalized areas, invasive species management, preservation of wetland and riparian buffers, and providing habitat connectivity:

- Wetlands restoration. Restoring wetlands is a key element in improving wildlife habitat in the corridor, and the wetlands will have real potential for education and outreach efforts. Although located on the Alexandria side, the wetlands will be accessible to Arlington residents.
- Planting of naturalized areas. Existing plant communities are to be preserved and enhanced. Native plants will be carefully selected and obtained from reliable sources.

- Invasive species management. Invasive species will have to be controlled for native plants to become established in the naturalized areas. The Commission strongly urges the Board to make this a high priority.
- Wetland and Riparian buffers. Wetland and riparian buffers are to be maintained as protected vegetated areas, with minimal disturbance from development or maintenance activities. Native species will be planted, with a mix of species reflecting the ecological community in nearby parcels.
- Habitat connectivity. There are significant natural areas along the corridor, but they are fragmented. Ecological connectivity between those areas is important for the survival of wildlife there, and providing that connectivity is a key element of the plan.

Since the adoption of the Master Plan, Arlington and Alexandria, in conjunction with the Corps of Engineers, have had to recalculate acceptable water flows. This is due primarily to the effects of the June 2006 storm, which produced record flows in Four Mile Run. The Design Guidelines note that “there have been changes in the design flow and levee certification which will influence the amount and type of vegetation that is acceptable within the limits of the flood control levee. These issues must be evaluated and resolved as part of the final design of the vegetation plan within the corridor.” As a result, the tree canopy along Four Mile Run will be much more limited than envisaged in the Master Plan.

In addition, because of Hurricane Katrina, the Army Corps of Engineers has been reevaluating vegetation guidelines near flood walls and levees. The concern is that tree roots could damage flood walls and falling trees could weaken levees. It had been understood from the beginning that trees would not be permitted in the channel, where they could impede the flow of stormwater, but now it appears that trees will also be excluded from some areas outside flood walls and levees. This restriction, together with planting limitations near the transmission line along the W&OD Trail, leaves fewer planting spaces for canopy trees on the Arlington side of Four Mile Run. Master Plan cost estimates assumed the planting of thousands of trees along the corridor, providing shade and a variety of environmental benefits, but it now appears unlikely that many of those trees can be planted.

There are still a few areas on the Arlington side where trees can be planted. Four Mile Run Park has room for more trees. There is also room for more trees adjacent to the bike trail connector just downstream from I-395, and in fact PRCR has already planted some trees there. However, increasing tree canopy in the area will depend primarily on planting more street trees: significant numbers of additional trees can be planted along Glebe Road and Commonwealth Avenue.

There are also planting opportunities on the Alexandria side, especially between Route 1 and the wetlands area, and between the wetlands and Mt. Vernon Avenue. The City of

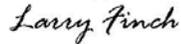
Alexandria owns a strip along the bank of the stream, and a conservation easement further increases the planting space there. Arlington residents will benefit from trees and wildlife habitat on both sides of Four Mile Run.

The Urban Forestry Commission urges continuing discussions with the Corps of Engineers concerning the threat that trees pose to flood walls and levees. We hope that, in the future, ways can be found for planting more trees along the corridor without jeopardizing flood walls and levees. Increasing tree canopy along the corridor, as envisaged in the Master Plan, would provide significant environmental benefits.

We wish to express appreciation to Scott McPartlin of PRCR for keeping Commission members informed as the guidelines took shape. We also want to thank Neal Sigmon, co-chair of the Four Mile Run Task Force, who met with us to share his insights on the project.

In summary, the Urban Forestry Commission endorses the Design Guidelines. We are disappointed by the new limitations on tree canopy along Four Mile Run, but those limitations are outside the control of Arlington and Alexandria. The measures proposed in the guidelines will still provide significant environmental benefits.

Sincerely,



Larry Finch
Chair, Urban Forestry Commission

cc: County Board Members
County Manager
Director, PRCR

Additional Letters of Support that are expected and will be included in final version:

Parks, Recreation and Cultural Resources Commission Letter of Support