DATE: September 2, 2020

SUBJECT: Metropolitan Park, Park Master Plan and Design Guidelines

C. M. RECOMMENDATION:

Adopt the Metropolitan Park, Park Master Plan and Design Guidelines.

ISSUES: The Metropolitan Park (Met Park), Park Master Plan (PMP) and Design Guidelines (DG) has received significant community support throughout the public engagement process. County advisory groups and commissions (Park and Recreation Commission (PRC), Urban Forestry Commission (UFC) and Public Art Committee (PAC)) reviewed the Met Park PMP and DG and provided letters of support for the project. As of the date of this report, there are no other outstanding issues.

SUMMARY: The Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR) in partnership with the developer, JBG Smith (JBGs), their tenant, Amazon and their contracted landscape design firm, James Corner Field Operations (JCFO), have developed the Met Park PMP/DG for the approximately 2.47 acre park located at the center of the Met Park, Phases 1-8 site plan development areas. As part of the community benefit negotiation for the Met Park 6, 7/8 site plan project approved by the County Board in December 2019, the tenant will provide $14 Million in park funding and was required to participate in a park master planning process for improvements to the existing and planned Met Park public space areas. The tenant agreed to design, construct and maintain (in perpetuity) the public park area and shall operate the public park pursuant to the current Arlington County DPR Park Rules & Regulations and that park rules and regulations signage will be posted within the public park. The PMP/DG will contain several changes to the public space and transportation network in Met Park, including, for example, an expansion of public park areas and a reduction of street areas. Concurrently with the consideration of this plan, a site plan amendment will be considered by the County Board in September addressing the changes to the transportation network and other approved items. Comprised of both the park PMP and DG, the Met Park PMP provides a vision for the comprehensive realignment and
addition of new park amenities to meet the growing demand for and casual use recreation, cultural resources and natural resource preservation.

As a Biophilic City Network Partner, Arlington will apply biophilic principles to its current and future policies and practices. The Met Park PMP and DG will provide for expanded biophilic planning and design principles, including but not limited to expanded natural elements within the built environment, as well as conservation and expansion of natural resources. The redesigned Met Park will provide for equitable access to green spaces, park amenities and other natural elements for nearby residents, office workers, and other park visitors. Between February and June 2020, extensive community engagement was provided for the Met Park PMP and DG which included one (1) in-person engagement opportunity and three (3) online feedback opportunities. Due to the Commonwealth’s stay-at-home orders associated with the COVID-19 pandemic, all engagement opportunities provided after April 2020 were produced exclusively online. The Park and Recreation Commission (PRC), Urban Forestry Commission (UFC), and the Public Art Committee reviewed the draft Met Park PMP and DG and have provided letters of support.

BACKGROUND: The existing Met Park public space is in Pentagon City and is bound by 12th Road South to the north, 14th Road South to the south, the Met Park 6, 7/8 development area and South Eads Street to the east and South Fair Street to the west. The surrounding area is composed of dense residential, office, and commercial development and contains various modes of transportation (Metrorail, Metrobus, Arlington Rapid Transit, dedicated bicycle lanes, among others).

Figure 1: Aerial View of the Existing Met Park Area

Source: Google Maps
On December 14, 2019, the County Board approved an amendment to Met Park Phases 6, 7/8 of Final Site Plan #105-9 to permit the construction of two (2) twenty-two story office buildings with approximately 2 million square feet of gross floor area including retail uses. Additionally, the Metropolitan Park Design Guidelines were also updated to capture the changes associated with the development of Met Park 6, 7/8. This includes various land use, transportation, and public space considerations (including an updated layout of what the expanded Met Park may look like). The Metropolitan Park Design Guidelines specified various public space amenities which included but were not limited to:

- Approximately 2 acres of public space designed to accommodate casual use and active park amenities, including an area for a tot-lot and dog-friendly features/facilities.
- A Central Green for community gathering, casual use activity, and other park activities.
- Smaller park spaces to the north, south and east sides of the Central Green providing for additional park amenities.
- Prominent North/South pedestrian connections through the park which will help organize the public space.
- Landscaped courtyards, public plaza and public art to be accommodated as appropriate.

As part of the community benefit negotiation for the site plan project, the tenant (Amazon) agreed to provide $14 Million in funding and participate in a park master planning process for improvements to the existing and planned Met Park public space areas.

Figure 2: County Board Approved Site Plan Configuration for Met Park (Public Spaces)
In order to develop the PMP and DG, as well as participate in the planning and development of the associated community engagement efforts, the tenant contracted the landscape architecture firm James Corner Field Operations (JCFO). JCFO has extensive experience developing multifaceted public spaces within highly dense and urban areas. Examples include: The High Line (New York, New York), Beekman Street Plaza (New York, New York), Navy Pier (Chicago, Illinois) and Busan Civic Park (Busan, South Korea), among others. The design team was tasked to work alongside Arlington County DPR, Department of Environmental Services (DES), and other County agencies to devise a community engagement process (both in-person and virtual due to the circumstances arising from COVID-19) which would look at the project’s existing conditions, potential opportunities for public space development, park design options and refined, draft concept plan. The information provided by the community would then inform a PMP and DG for the expanded Met Park.

The PMP and associated DG contain several changes to the public space and transportation network in Met Park from what was adopted in December 2019, including, for example, an expansion of public park areas and a reduction of street areas. Implementation of the PMP requires site plan amendments of the approved civil and landscape plans for the various Met Park phases, as well as changes to specific site plan conditions that define required streetscapes and easement areas. The County Board will consider the site plan amendments concurrently with the PMP and DG in September.

**DISCUSSION:** The design team and County staff developed the PMP and DG based on site analyses and feedback from the various public engagement opportunities provided throughout this process. The draft, Met Park final concept was developed with sensitivity to the environment while balancing park user demand for facilities and ensuring facilities meet the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) standards. Background information is provided below to highlight topics which influenced the proposed PMP presented in this report.

*Figure 3: Draft, Met Park Final Concept Plan*

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1 To clarify, The *Metropolitan Park Design Guidelines* are design guidelines which are applicable to the development of the collective Met Park 1 through 8 site plan areas. The Met Park PMP and DG being considered by the County Board are only related to the development of the Met Park public spaces.
There are several new spaces and amenities associated with the approximately 2.47 acre, expanded Met Park:

- **The Community Table & Edible Garden (approx. 2,300 sq. ft.):** At the northwestern corner of the site, large social tables are situated within an edible garden. This place is
envisioned as a hub of community gathering, for meals and celebrations. Regionally appropriate, adaptive edible species incorporated in the surrounding garden.

- **The Forest Walk Clearings (approx. 29,700 sq. ft.):** Within the larger green space at the center of the park, there are opportunities for casual use recreation and circulation through extensive tree canopy and landscaped areas. This area will feature a Hammock Clearing, Forest Lounge, and Overlook. Changes in topography (notably within the overlook area) will provide for distinct experiences within this space.

- **The Central Green (approx. 8,800 sq. ft.):** East of the Forest Walk Clearings is the Central Green. The Central Green is envisioned as a place for casual use recreation, picnics, movie nights, festivals and is sized to accommodate several hundred people. Located southwest of the Central Green (within the Forest Walk Clearings) and bisected by the Meander is the Overlook that provides elevated vistas and views into the park and over the Central Green. Adjacent to the Central Green and within the Meander is a large bench shaded by a signature trellis.

- **The Play Garden (approx. 5,000 sq. ft.):** In the southwestern corner of the site a large playground, provides a “nature-immersed” play space with two (2) distinct areas for children ages 2-5 and 5-12 (this is expanded from the originally envisioned tot-lot identified in the approved site plan Metropolitan Park Design Guidelines). The Play Garden is envisioned to provide features such as forts, swings, climbing nets, and places for parents and caregivers to sit under the shade of surrounding tree canopy. It is worth noting that on the eastern portion of the site, a separate play area (the Children’s Garden) is provided adjacent to Met Park 6 for the exclusive use of an anticipated ground floor, day care facility facing Met Park. The installation of a private play area conforms with the site plan approval conditions (Condition #61, “Daycare Outdoor Play Area”) for Met Park 6, 7/8.

- **The Meadow Lounge (approx. 1,500 sq. ft.) and Banana Stand:** Adjacent to the private play area is the Meadow Lounge and the future location of the Amazon Banana Stand. This area provides expanded seating and tables surrounded by landscaping and adjacent tree canopy.

- **The Dog Run (approx. 4,000 sq. ft.) and Café Terrace:** Across 14th Street South in front of Met Park 7/8 is a consolidated 4,000 square foot dog run with two (2) zones at 2,000 square feet each—one area is designated for small dogs and the other for large dogs. The dog run will be fenced in and provide gated access. Landscaping, changes in topography, and other dog-friendly facilities will be incorporated within this space. East of the Dog Run area and in front of Met Park 7/8 is the Café Terrace which will provide tables and chairs, as well as a built-in seating wall and surrounding landscaping and tree canopy.

Two (2) primary gateway entrance areas are identified for Met Park and may contain opportunities for wayfinding/signage and potential public art throughout the space and into the various park spaces:
The South Eads Street Gateway: this gateway is located on the east end of the site connecting to 14th Street South featuring expanded sidewalks, street planters, tree canopy, and seating areas.

The 12th Street South Gateway: this gateway is located on the north end of the site connecting to South Elm Street featuring expanded sidewalks and bench seating.

Overarching Park Master Plan Improvement Recommendations:

Draft Concept Design Theme and Biophilic Principles

The draft concept plan theme for Met Park evokes the immediate area’s natural context of Virginia’s Piedmont and Coastal Plain physiological regions. By introducing wilderness and other natural features within a highly dense and urban environment, the proposed landscapes help define the place and its history, as well as promotes health and well-being. This health is not only in terms of habitat, for birds, pollinator meadows, and other urban flora and fauna, but also for its relationship to the human environment. The proposed design serves to provide a common landscape where face-to-face communication, exchange, and cultural expression is linked with natural habitats. As a Biophilic City Network Partner, Arlington will apply biophilic principles to its current and future policies and practices. The draft concept plan provides for the following:

- Expanded biophilic planning and design principles throughout existing policies and processes, including those specified within the Met Park PMP and DG
- Expanded natural elements within the built environment, as well as conservation and expansion of natural resources (i.e. inclusion of a Community Table/Edible Garden, increased tree canopy and landscaping, stormwater management, among other amenities)
- Equitable access to green spaces, parks and other natural elements for nearby residents, office workers, and other park visitors
- An edible garden with the potential for interactive and educational programs
- Meandering paths and organically shaped planting beds and lawns
- Spaces that support wellness—both for physical activity as well as mental restoration
- New topography and highlighted views and vistas
- Significant new planting including trees and plants that reflect surrounding native and adaptive plant communities
- Lush streetscapes that make the presence of “nature” emphatic; Meadow and forest habitats that encourage urban wildlife—birds, pollinators, etc.
- Consideration of sun and shadow to maximize human comfort within the park in all seasons

Environment

Met Park is located mostly on (and will be expanded on top of) five (5) separate underground garages. Soil depth over existing garages will be carefully considered to assure a healthy park landscape and tree canopy. Soil depth at tree planting locations will be at least three (3) feet with a five (5) foot maximum. Furthermore, the proposed design for Met Park maximizes sustainability by considering human health impacts, the use of regional, recycled and reclaimed materials, as well as energy efficient lighting. Met Park will include but not be limited to expanded green infrastructure, bio infiltration systems, and non-potable water sources for irrigation. The increased biomass at the site with the inclusion of new pollinator meadows, urban
forest, as well as native and adaptive plant species will expand upon the environmental benefits that the park will provide for the surrounding urban area.

**Park Circulation and Accessibility**
The PMP area will incorporate new gateway entrances along South Elm Street and 14th Street South, improved internal and street facing pedestrian connections within Met Park, ADA accessible connections and wayfinding opportunities that will promote safe and clear travel to and from the PMP area and the surrounding neighborhoods. Connections will establish a smooth and continuous grade for all primary pathways (including The Meander) to provide universal access to all features associated with the PMP. Additional secondary paths connect other park entrances and destinations throughout the site, including access to casual use spaces and other park amenities.

As part of this process, the design team has worked with the County to maximize park space and modified elements of the transportation network to function harmoniously with the park space.

*Figure 4: Circulation through Met Park*

![Circulation through Met Park](source)

The central portion of South Elm Street has shifted west, 15 parking spaces have been removed from the south and central portions of South Elm Street and 13th Street South, sidewalk planters have been expanded, sidewalk widths have been reduced along the park edges, and the north portion of South Elm Street has been reduced in width. Along the northern portion of South Elm Street, one of the park’s main gateways, extensive greenery and streetscape treatment is provided which frame views of the park beyond this location. On 14th Street South, the site’s second gateway at South Eads Street, is rendered as more pedestrian friendly with flush
curbs and a series of parklets along-side providing opportunities for seating, landscaping, and new street tree canopy. Finally, the central portion of South Elm Street within the park in front of the new Met Park 6 building also has flush curbs. Pavers are used rather than asphalt to provide a better transition into the public park.

As illustrated below, typical pedestrian access points will contain various widths which will provide for clear and safe travel throughout Met Park and adjacent areas. It is envisioned that The Meander will be between 12-20 feet wide, typical sidewalks will be between 6-12 feet wide, and The Forest Walk will be 6 feet wide.

*Figure 5: Typical Path Widths*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Width</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>12'-20'</td>
<td>The Meander, Max 20' (14 people across)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6'-12'</td>
<td>Sidewalks 6'-12' (max 8 people across)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6'</td>
<td>Forest Walk 6' (max 4 people across)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: James Corner Field Operations

*Parking*
Throughout the site, there is extensive street parking and parking garage parking for the surrounding residential buildings. One of the opportunities provided as part of the PMP process was identifying potential public space expansion and balancing the need for on-street parking surrounding the park site. As previously described, the plan identifies removing 15 parking spaces from the western portion of the central portion of South Elm Street (along the flush curb street area), the western portion of the south portion of South Elm Street, and south portion of 13th Street South (across from the Central Green) in order to provide additional park space. These parking considerations as well as the street width reductions/design changes are part of a parallel site plan amendment process for the surrounding Met Park development areas.

*Public Art*
Public Art will be incorporated into the project and will move through a separate process. This process will then define the specific form(s) of public art that will be implemented as part of the park’s design development.

*Real Estate*
There are currently public use/park easements recorded for Met Park’s Phases 1, 2, and 3 associated with the existing park area. Public park easements will be provided for the expanded areas of Met Park which extend within the areas of Met Park Phases 6, 7, and 8. The County’s Real Estate Bureau and all applicable parties are currently finalizing this process. As a point of clarity, per Condition #54, “Public Park Easements” of the Met Park 6, 7/8 site plan approval, the tenant agreed to design, construct, and maintain (in perpetuity) the public park area. Additionally, the tenant agreed that it shall operate the public park pursuant to the current Arlington County DPR Park Rules & Regulations and that park rules and regulations signage will be posted within the public park.

**Future Park Improvement Recommendations**

*Tree Canopy Coverage and Landscaping/Planting Palette*

In April 2020, the County Board approved a use permit associated with a site plan (SP105-U-20-1) that allowed for a temporary off-site contractors' storage and staging yard for the construction of Met Park 6, 7/8 located at 1301 S. Fern St. and 1330 S. Fair St (within the Metropolitan Park 2 site). The site is subject to a public access easement for park purposes. The Met Park 6, 7/8 site is almost entirely excavated, and there is no room to accommodate essential uses which must be on-site or immediately adjacent to the subject site. The uses include the General contractors’ headquarters, medic trailer, and dewatering equipment which need to be as close as possible to the site. County staff worked with the developer to minimize the disturbed area, the disturbance to existing users of the park, as well as tree loss. Because the existing Metropolitan Park is being master planned, the developer agreed to a condition to cooperate with County staff to maximize tree planting in the redesigned and rebuilt Metropolitan Park. The condition language specifies the following goals for the Met Park PMP and DG:

A. Park designs shall plan for at least 40% tree canopy, as defined by the 20-year tree canopy coverage worksheet of the Chesapeake Bay Preservation Ordinance, within all park boundaries.

B. Efforts shall be made to conserve existing trees on the site to the maximum extent practicable.

C. Newly planted trees shall be at least 80% native species, and at least 70% large canopy trees, as defined by the 20-year tree canopy coverage worksheet of the Chesapeake Bay Preservation Ordinance, or otherwise approved by the Arlington County Urban Forester.

As part of the Met Park PMP, the following tree canopy considerations are being provided consistent with the language above:

- The park design contains approximately 40,500 square feet of tree canopy coverage (which is approximately 45% of the park development area), consistent with the Chesapeake Bay Preservation Ordinance.

- Existing trees within the site will be conserved to the extent possible, which includes street trees along adjacent park area frontages (i.e. along portions of 14th Road South, 14th Street South, South Fair Street, 13th Street South and 12th Road South). Tree species include: Littleleaf Linden, London Plane, Honey Locust, Red Maple and Lacebark Elm.
The refined concept plan will meet the requirements that newly planted trees shall be at least 80% native species, and at least 70% large canopy trees, as defined by the 20-year tree canopy coverage worksheet of the Chesapeake Bay Preservation Ordinance. Furthermore, the Arlington County Urban Forester has consistently collaborated with the design team to provide overall tree planting guidance, including the use of native and adaptive trees throughout the site. Items include providing a minimum 3-foot soil depth for trees, as well as providing park canopy coverage to assure adequate shade for human comfort, reduced urban heat island effect and all the benefits of increased biomass.

The PMP provides a planting palette that is consistent with the plan’s overall theme of exploring Virginia’s Coastal Plain and Piedmont physiographic regions. Within the site, planting is organized by the park’s central Meander, separating a more forested “Piedmont” landscape from a more grassy “Coastal Plain”. In each of these two areas, a series of distinct landscaped areas evoke Virginia’s native and adaptive plant communities providing for a distinct and seasonally dynamic environment. For example, Virginia wildflowers and flowering understory trees will be highlighted during the spring season. Long-flowering, perennial pollinators will be featured in the summer season; golden hued grasses will turn grey in the winter season and be complemented by evergreens. Furthermore, public urban horticulture will be featured at Met Park ranging from the persimmons within the Community Table and Edible Garden, the mixed evergreen forest with understory laurel and fern dell, Cyprus ring at the Play Garden and meadow landscapes at the Meadow Terraces. In order to support these landscapes, a minimum of 6-12 inches of soil depth shall be used at lawn areas and 18-36 inches of soil depth for meadows.

The park will also contain hardscape materials which will speak to Virginia’s petrological history while providing for a contemporary aesthetic. All surfaces will be ADA compliant and a target of 55-65% pervious surfaces has been set for the total public space area.

**Site Furniture and Lighting**

The proposed site furniture will provide comfort, facilitate maintenance and provide for a positive visitor experience. From trash and recycling receptacles, to pet stations, bicycle racks, drinking fountains, and a range of benches and lounge opportunities, site furniture will be a cohesive and complementary to the surrounding park amenities. For example, a series of social and playful elements will be highlights and include oversized swings, communal tables, and hammocks. Primary materials for benches will be wood with metal details in a neutral grey palette.

Park and street lighting will accentuate various park features within Met Park during the evening hours. Examples include tall area lights at key gathering places, pedestrian pole lights on the central path, bollards and scattered tree lights within the Forest Walk. New streetlights along portions of South Elm Street and 14th Street South are also envisioned. Energy efficient, dark sky LED fixtures provide safe, night-time visibility (consistent with Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) guidance for public parks and spaces) within Met Park while also minimizing the impacts of lighting to the surrounding residential areas.

*Figure 6: Evening Views of the Park Spaces*
County Comprehensive Plan and Zoning Compliance
Virginia Code Section 15.2-2232 requires that the Planning Commission find that the “general location or approximate location, character, and extent” of new public facilities as being “substantially in accord” with the Comprehensive Plan, unless the facility is shown on the Comprehensive Plan. Metropolitan Park is a feature detailed within the Planning Commission reviewed and County Board approved 2019 Public Spaces Master Plan (PSMP) as a privately-owned public space. The PSMP is an element of the Arlington County Comprehensive Plan. Therefore, staff finds that the expanded Metropolitan Park is a “feature shown” and is substantially in accord with the Arlington County Comprehensive Plan.

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT: A public outreach plan was designed to encourage robust participation in the planning process and to seek input from a broad group of park users and neighbors. Project notifications were sent to local civic associations, stakeholder and advisory groups, neighboring multifamily residences and were distributed through County media. The Met Park PMP and DG “Community Engagement” section (pages 36-57) provides details on each of the community engagement events and community feedback received during the process. The planning phase began during the first quarter of 2020. DPR collaborated with JBG Smith,
Amazon and their landscape architect, JCFO on an extensive public engagement process beginning in February. This included multiple engagement opportunities through 2020’s first and second quarters. The process started with visioning through an in-person open house followed by an online questionnaire. Using the community’s input DPR and the Development Team developed options and continued the robust process by adapting to the COVID-19 pandemic and using virtual engagement tools such as online video presentations, PowerPoints, questionnaires and comment opportunities to refine the concepts into a proposed PMP and DG. Currently, the final Plan is on the project website and being reviewed by commissions.

In January 2020, at the request of community members in advance of the formal, public engagement process, an information gathering session was hosted. Formal community engagement opportunities began in February 2020 and continued through June 2020. Prior to these engagements, County staff, JCFO, and the development team collaborated to formulate a plan for developing the ensuing Met Park PMP and DG. The engagement process was organized as part of three phases:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Engagement Phase</th>
<th>Duration</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Phase 1: Generate (introduce, intrigue, inform, inspire)</strong></td>
<td>In-Person, Community Engagement Opportunity: February 20, 2020</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Site Analysis + Vision”</td>
<td>Online Engagement: February 20, 2020 through March 5, 2020</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visioning Exercises</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Phase 2: Evaluate (excite, revise, agree)</strong></td>
<td>Online Engagement: April 30, 2020 through May 14, 2020</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Concept Development of Two Schemes”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Review of Two Concepts (“The Forest Walk” and “The Social Garden”)</td>
<td><em>Due to the Commonwealth’s stay-at-home orders in effect during the COVID-19 pandemic, online engagement was provided for the remainder of this process. Pre-recorded presentations were generated by County staff and the design team and uploaded to the project’s website.</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Phase 3: Validate (confirm, endorse, support)</strong></td>
<td>Online Engagement: June 10, 2020 through June 24, 2020</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Draft Synthesized Scheme”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Review of Refined Concept Plan</td>
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*Figure 7: Metropolitan Park Public Space Project Community Engagement Timeline*
Each phase was marked with an educational opportunity and correspondent interactive website presence. The first public engagement in February 2020 was in-person and contained an online feedback portal. Due to the Commonwealth’s stay-at-home orders associated with the COVID-19 pandemic, all engagement opportunities in April and June 2020 were exclusively virtual. The events provided just under 600 total responses with 109 respondents completing online feedback forms after Phase 1, 370 respondents after Phase 2, and 119 respondents after Phase 3.

The first public engagement opportunity included a presentation about the site, its history, and contemporary challenges. Four (4) key questions were asked and responses were solicited both in the form of an online feedback and in-person, interactive stations.

- How do you get to the site? How could it become a more significant part of your weekly life?
- What do you like/dislike about the site today?
- What design themes and values should be captured by the design of a future park?
- What do you do/would you like to do on site?

The second public engagement opportunity incorporated what was learned from the community during the first engagement by producing two (2) distinct design concepts for Met Park. Major takeaways from the second public engagement process are listed below:

1. During the second engagement period, two design concepts were provided to the community: (1) “The Social Garden” which provided for various active amenities and spaces for casual use recreation; and (2) “The Forest Walk” which provided for more contemplative and natural spaces spread through distinct park amenities.
2. There was a stronger preference expressed by respondents for “The Forest Walk” and the refined concept plan devised embraced its overall organization.
3. Responding to community feedback, various aspects of “The Forest Walk” concept was carried over to the refined concept plan which included: The Meander, the Overlook, the Central Green, South Elm Street treatment, and inclusion of the Meadow Lounge.

4. Responding to community feedback, aspects of “The Social Garden” are also incorporated in the refined concept plan: The Play Garden, the Community Table, the Cafe Terrace, and the consolidated dog run.

5. The Communal Table has grown and now sits within an edible garden and the Central Green is larger.

6. The Forest Walk Clearings (an element within the refined concept plan from “The Forest Walk” concept) features more places to socialize, sit, and linger through incorporation of a hammock clearing, forest lounge, and overlook area.

7. The consolidated dog run is larger and provides distinct spaces for large and small dogs.

8. The Play Garden is relocated to the southwest corner of the site—closer to nearby neighborhoods.

9. The main entrance gateways along the southwestern portion of 14th Street South and the northern portion of South Elm Street were developed further.

Key issues expanded upon during the third engagement’s online feedback included: the range of amenities, the size of the dog run, the size of the play garden, the appropriateness of integration of urban agricultures as well as new reactions to further developed site systems including topography, planting, lighting, furniture and sustainability. As part of the third online engagement opportunity, over 75% of respondents expressed excitement with the refined concept plan and 64% of respondents expressed that the range of uses was ideal.

The draft final PMP and DG were shared with the PRC, UFC, and the PAC for their comment on August 5, 2020. As of the date of this report, the aforementioned County commissions and advisory committees have not identified any issues with the PMP and Design Guidelines, and letters of support were received between August 25 and 26, 2020.

**FISCAL IMPACT:** The proposed Metropolitan Park will be fully funded by the tenant. Per the Metropolitan Park 6, 7/8 site plan Condition #57, “Park Improvements”, “The Developer agrees to participate in and fund a community engagement process for the Central Park Improvements as defined below and to design and construct those improvements at a total cost of up to $14,000,000 (“Developer’s Open Space Contribution”).” Furthermore, the tenant will maintain the park in perpetuity, with all features maintained by the tenant’s professional grounds and site maintenance crews. Therefore, the total contribution amount for this project is approximately $14,000,000, with separate funding provided (in perpetuity) by the tenant for park maintenance.
August 26, 2020

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

RE: Final Draft – Metropolitan Park Master Plan and Design Guidelines

Dear Chair Garvey:

On behalf of the Arlington Commission for the Arts’ Public Art Committee (PAC), I would like to express our appreciation for the opportunity to review the Metropolitan Park Master Plan and Design Guidelines. Each of the PAC members reviewed the draft plan and design guidelines and we are in unanimous support of both.

The thorough public engagement process is meaningful and commendable, especially during the current pandemic. We appreciate the careful consideration of art in the design development and recognize that the public art details will be determined through a separate process. We look forward to further engagement with the plans for public art as the process progresses.

Again, the PAC values the opportunity to participate in this exciting process and fully supports the draft plan and design guidelines.

Sincerely,

Carl Bedell
Chair
Public Art Committee, Arlington Commission for the Arts

Enclosure

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

[Signature]
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
August 25, 2020

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

RE: Met Park Master Park Design

Dear Chair Garvey:

The Park and Recreation Commission would like to offer its thoughts on the Met Park Final Master Plan. Commission members participated in the public engagement process, including review of the online materials produced by county staff and the applicant’s design team. We would like to compliment the engagement process which allowed for a wide range of community comments whose major themes appeared to be taken into account in the final design.

Overall, we found the design to be innovative and creative, attempting to take into account multiple community needs and anticipates the popular use of this site which will be a critical component of the first Amazon office complex. The design incorporates the dual objectives of providing a connection path through this important hub of National Landing and proposing natural open space features and amenities that will serve as a local destination.

This will be an urban oasis, and for those who care about native plants, biophilia, organic design, experience in nature, and softening the rough and angular built environment that is mostly National Landing, we believe that this design is a dramatic leap as compared many previous projects in Crystal City and Arlington generally. With a few other private and public designs from the past two years (Artis, Ames, Marriott, Lubber Run, Long Bridge) we hope that the county is setting precedents for subsequent biophilic designs in Arlington that will make it easier to create actual design standards and other guidance to support all future projects.

Thank you for letting us share our views.

Sincerely,

[Signature]

William R. Pearson
William Ross  
Chair, Park and Recreation Commission  

cc: Members, Arlington County Board  
Mark Schwartz, Arlington County Manager  
Jane Rudolph, Director, Department of Parks and Recreation
MET PARK
DRAFT Master Plan & Design Guidelines
September 1, 2020
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DRAFT
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

James Corner Field Operations (JCFO), in close collaboration with Arlington County, JBG Smith, Seneca Group, ZGF Architects, Amazon, and Arlington County community members, is pleased to submit a revitalized vision for Metropolitan Park (Met Park) in Arlington, VA. Met Park was first presented as part of the Pentagon City Phased Development Site Plan, which was adopted by the County Board in 1976. Planning efforts then focused on transforming “Pentagon City from an industrial suburb of Washington DC to a high density, mixed-use area with its own identity.”

This renewed park vision is catalyzed by Amazon’s selection, in 2019, of Pentagon City as the location for its east coast headquarters spanning across two development sites, one at PenPlace and the other at Metropolitan Park Phases 6, 7, & 8 (Met 678).

On Dec. 14, 2019 the Arlington County Board approved plans for Met 678, which included the ability for Amazon to go through a Public Spaces Master Plan process (PSMP). The goal of the PSMP was to create a refreshed public open space that functions for the entire community, enhancing overall livability, connectivity, and offering a new range of public amenities.

This Met Park Master Plan is the culmination of a five-month design process, inclusive of three public engagement sessions in collaboration with Arlington County. The public process began by meeting with the Department of Parks & Recreation (DPR) as well as community members to understand and gather input regarding which amenities and uses would be desired in the park. After the initial community discussion, JCFO presented two distinct concept designs to the community for feedback.

In response to that feedback, JCFO synthesized the two plans together developing one collective scheme that incorporated specific community requests for more green space, biophilic design, and an appropriately sized dog park. The new comprehensive plan was shared with DPR as well as community members receiving overwhelmingly positive responses. The remainder of this report provides greater detail regarding the Met Park PSMP process – from research, site analysis and design studies to the ultimate Park Master Plan.

Met Park is designed as a new green heart of Pentagon and Crystal City, a place of urban refuge, community gathering, and diverse experiences and environments. Shaped by community guidance, we hope Met Park will be a beloved destination for years to come.
THE PLACE

Met Park is incredibly located— in Arlington County close to neighborhoods, parks, the national airport, Pentagon Row and Pentagon City Mall. It is no surprise that Amazon selected this area for its east coast headquarters. Beyond the monuments and buildings that define one's typical mental map of the DC Metro Area, the analysis of Met Park’s context considers it as a critical component of the area’s social, cultural and natural systems.

An understanding of the site's natural history helps explain its social history and cultural evolution; thereby unearthing its sense of place. The nearby Potomac River is at the heart of many of these systems.

At some moments the Potomac River is wide and serene, but further upstream the river is quite turbulent. These two conditions straddle either side of the Fall Line which runs parallel to the Atlantic coast and defines the landscapes surrounding many of our major east coast cities. The Fall Line is the place where the upland region (or Piedmont) meets the flat and expansive coastal plain. Incredibly, Met Park, sits almost exactly on this threshold.

Met Park’s origins are in the swampland surrounding a much wider Potomac River, unencumbered by urban edges. By 1895, almost 100 years after Arlington was established, the site was bisected by the C&O Canal, which connected Arlington to Georgetown and as far west as Cumberland, MD, running along the Potomac for its entire length. The canal provided a vital commercial connection to the goods and resources of the west.

By 1951 significant portions of the canal were erased and modernization transformed the Met Park landscape with new highways. The legacy of highway noise, traffic, and infrastructure still impact the site today. However, as we look ahead to the future, we see green and pedestrian networks defining the way we think about contemporary urban growth and development— the essential ingredients for livable cities. Met Park, therefore presents an incredible contemporary opportunity for Arlington to enhance its livability and set the stage for a new era of urban transformation that embraces, nature as one of its essential ingredients.
The Fall Line is where the wide and serene waters of the Potomac meet the more turbulent waters of the Piedmont Region. Met Park, sits almost exactly on this threshold.
Potomac River, 1861

*Turbulent and Serene conditions reveal themselves on this early aerial drawings of Washington DC from 1861.*
TODAY, AN EMERGING GREEN NETWORK
THE INSPIRATION OF THE WILD

Met Park has a critical role to play in enhancing Arlington’s livability and, with its design, should evoke its natural context of the piedmont and coastal plain. This is not only because these landscapes help define the place and its history, but also because there is strong evidence for the health and well-being wilderness brings as it re-enters our cities.

This health is not only in terms of habitat, for birds, pollinator meadows, and other urban flora and fauna, but also for the calming effects nature has on our psyche. Oliver Sacks, Professor of Neurology, NYC School of Medicine says,

“I cannot say exactly how nature exerts its calming and organizing effects on our brains, but I have seen its restorative and healing powers of nature and gardens, even for those who are deeply disabled neurologically. In many cases, gardens and nature are more powerful than any medication.”

Nature also impacts our creativity. Jules Pretty, Professor of Environment & Society, University of Essex says,

“[Being immersed in nature] can help us temporarily deactivate a part of the brain, located in our prefrontal cortex…. which allows us to scheme, plan, and innovate. It’s what makes us brilliant humans.”

Cities should be engines of biodiversity and also function as social and cultural epicenters, where landscapes can be the common ground for our face-to-face communication, exchange, and cultural expression. Arlington is committed to being a biophilic city. Situated between Pentagon City and Crystal City, Met Park has the potential to more emphatically unify these two urban districts, creating a new center for a more livable urban district.

DRAFT
A NEW CENTER: KEY WALKING ROUTES

Livability = walkability. Met Park is just a few minutes walk away from 2 major metro stations, the mall, the airport, and multiple parks, providing access to essential services, transportation, and cultural amenities.
THE SITE

At the scale of the site, there are some significant challenges and constraints, which are revealed by the analytical diagrams and images that follow. These diagrams and images trigger a series of key questions that are answered with the ultimate park design.

a. There is a Well-Defined Edge;
   So, how do we welcome & invite?

b. There is a Lack of Contiguous Open Space;
   So, how do we make a cohesive park?

c. We are building on top of existing garages;
   So, how do we grow a lush & robust landscape?

d. There are varied environmental conditions;
   So, how do we make a place that is comfortable for people?

e. The size of the site is finite,
   So, how do we accommodate programs and uses for everyone and what type?

The site is bound by six of buildings that range from 215-325 feet tall. Their first floors are varied. There are private residential entrances, gyms and other retail, loading docks and lobbies. Looking at the inverse—at the site itself, there is a relatively small amount of actual green space and the lack of contiguity between them.

The northernmost portion of the site, in particular, is segregated and provides an incredible amount of pavement for little return on experience. In addition to generous sidewalks, there are a total of 50 on street parking spaces, while numerous underground retail parking spaces and private garages sit empty on a daily basis. The roadways themselves; however, provide vital services for drop-off, loading, and deliveries, as well as emergency vehicle and fire access and staging.

The traffic volume on these roads, even after the construction of the two new Amazon office buildings is anticipated to be incredibly low, especially in relationship to the roads outside our site. We wonder, is there a better way to use the space that is currently taken up by pavement?
BUILDING ON STRUCTURE

You can’t tell from the surface, but much of the site sits on top of five (5) separate underground garages. Soil depth over existing garages will be carefully considered to assure a healthy park landscape.
ENVIRONMENTAL CONDITIONS

The site, with the tall buildings that surround it, is subject to some dynamic wind, sun and shade conditions. Summers are hot in DC and shade will be at a premium, especially in the middle of the day. In winter, the park design needs to take advantage of the sunniest area of the site for some extra vitamin D.
SIZE & SCALE

There are a finite number of uses and programs that the site can accommodate. From building face to building face within the super block, open space including roads and sidewalks, is about 5 acres. So, how big is 5 acres? It is larger than Arlington’s Rocky Run Park that features a large central lawn, picnic areas, two playgrounds, a turf field, and two basketball courts. 5 acres is also larger than Welburn Square, also in the Arlington Ballston Corridor. Welburn Square is a tree filled plaza, a bit smaller than the proposed central area at Met Park which hosts food trucks, farmers markets and craft shows, and areas for casual seating.

Looking outside of Arlington, Tongva Park in Santa Monica, is a 5 acre hilly landscape that accommodates a playground, overlook, event space, and display gardens.
SIZE & SCALE STUDY #2

Image is for Scale, not Design Intent

Welburn Square, Arlington, VA
COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

FRAMEWORK

Knowing that great parks result from the feedback and input from the people who use them, the design of Met Park was launched in close collaboration with the community. Community engagement is organized by the following phases:

Phase 1: Generate (introduce, intrigue, inform, inspire)
“Site Analysis + Vision”

Phase 2: Evaluate (excite, revise, agree)
“Concept Development of Two Schemes”

Phase 3: Validate (confirm, endorse, support)
“Draft Synthesized Scheme”

Each phase was marked with a signature event and correspondent interactive website presence. The first signature event was in-person in February 2020 and the last two were virtual (as mandated by Covid-19 stay at home orders) in April and June 2020. The events captured the attendance of hundreds of people with 109 people completing on-line surveys after Phase 1, 370 after Phase 2, and 119 after Phase 3.

PHASE 1: GENERATE

With three phases as a key framework, outreach and engagement focused on effective communication, building widespread awareness and enthusiasm, and maintaining positive support and momentum for the project. The following pages summarize the process, information presented at each event / online forum as well as the community feedback and input received.

The Phase 1 Event on February 20, 2020 included a presentation about the site, its history, and contemporary challenges. Four (4) key questions were asked and responses were solicited both in the form of an on-line survey and interactive stations.

ARRIVAL: How do you get to the site? How could it become a more significant part of your weekly life?

THE SITE: What do you like / dislike about the site today?

THEMES: What design themes and values should be captured by the design of a future park?

USES: What do you do / would you like to do on site?
HOW DO YOU ARRIVE?

39%  Walk (45)
20%  Personal Vehicle (23)
17%  Bike (19)
10%  Transit (12)
 5%  Taxi / Hired Ride (6)
 4%  Electric Scooter (5)
 3%  Carpool (3)
 2%  Car share (2)

*115 responses from both public meeting & online feedback
WHAT DO YOU LOVE / WOULD YOU TRANSFORM?
WHAT DO YOU LOVE / WOULD YOU TRANSFORM?

22% LIKE SHADE (81) *most popular aspect of the site; (374 responses)

20% LIKE CENTRAL LAWN (70) *2nd most popular aspect of the site; (374 responses)

20% DISLIKE STREETS (49) *least popular aspect of the site; (251 responses)

16% DISLIKE PARKING (39) *3rd least popular aspect of the site; (251 responses)
WHAT ARE PREFERRED THEMES?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>24%</td>
<td>Nature &amp; Biodiversity</td>
<td>104</td>
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<tr>
<td>18%</td>
<td>Community &amp; Events</td>
<td>78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13%</td>
<td>Art &amp; Water</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12%</td>
<td>Food &amp; Dine</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11%</td>
<td>Discovery &amp; Education</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11%</td>
<td>Play &amp; Explore</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10%</td>
<td>Health &amp; Recreation</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*428 responses to date w/ online feedback from 3/6/2020
WHAT ARE PREFERRED USES?

18% Sit & Lounge (90)
16% Enjoy Nature (80)
16% Stroll & Walk (79)
13% Attend Events (65)
11% Dine & Drink (53)
9% Dog Amenities (43)
8% Outdoor Fitness (40)
7% Appreciate Art (32)
7% Play (35)
5% Gardening (27)
5% Jog & Recreate (26)
2% Bike (11)
0% Ride Share & Drop-off (1)

*492 responses from both public meeting & online feedback
COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT 2

PHASE 2: EVALUATE

The second phase of engagement was marked by the exploration of two conceptual scenarios for a future Met Park: “The Social Gardens” and the “The Forest Walk.” These two schemes purposefully tested the bounds of what was learned from the community during Phase 1. They probed additional feedback about the appropriate balance between things like active recreation and urban refuge; large and flexible space for events versus more intimate spaces for gardens and walks; more direct routes versus meandering paths; and ornamental display versus more natural, seemingly wild spaces.

The Social Garden composed an active, fun, and community-focused future Met Park, while the Forest Walk was a more natural, cohesive and immersive urban oasis. Each promoted unique features such as an Art Walk, Overlook, Game Room, and Fitness Garden. The schemes also explored potential modifications to the approved street network—including the removal of parking spaces, redundant sidewalks and perhaps the relocation of a segment of South Elm Street.

By sharing two schemes, it was not the intention that one was picked to move forward, but rather that the best aspects of each would be combined into a different, third final scheme that best reflects community values and aspirations for a future Met Park.

Questions asked through on-line engagement, which launched on April 2, 2020 reflected this approach and asked, overall, what excites you the most? Why? Is anything missing? Of the themes identified as important during the first public visioning, what is the appropriate balance between each? And which places and features do you like best?

Almost three quarters of survey participants—over 250 people could definitively see a future for Met Park in the concepts we presented. A summary of the two schemes and correspondent community feedback follows.
WHAT IS THE APPROPRIATE BALANCE?

62% Urban Refuge vs. 38% Active Park
The Forest Walk vs. The Social Garden

65% Meandering Paths vs. 35% Direct Circulation
The Forest Walk vs. The Social Garden

61% Gardens & Walks vs. 39% Lawns & Flexibility
The Forest Walk vs. The Social Garden

67% Natural vs. 33% Ornamental
The Forest Walk vs. The Social Garden
WHAT DO YOU LIKE MOST ABOUT THE SOCIAL GARDEN?

1- Overall variety and distinctiveness of spaces.
   “I love that you managed to thoughtfully place each [use] into a confined space. The park has lots of different uses. I think that’s what makes [it] engaging.”

2- Commons as a flexible event space.

3- Elm Street Promenade as a formal central feature.

4- Play Space as a garden.
   “I like that it will be a space [without] plastic structures, but a more natural space.”

WHAT DO YOU LIKE LEAST?

1- Overall, too much program.
   “It is too ambitious, trying to have too many spaces in one park, which can lead to a feeling of crowding.”
   “Overall, I feel this Social Garden is too ‘busy.’”

2- Two (2) Dog Runs are not necessary.

3- Play Space is not resonant with the demographics of the area.

4- “The Common” is too big.
1. The Meander
2. The Trellis
3. The Art Walk
4. The Overlook
5. The Discovery Playground
6. The Central Green
7. The Children’s Garden for Daycare Facility
8. The Dog Run
9. The Meadow Lounge
10. The Meadow Terrace

The Forest Walk
1. The Elm Street Promenade
2. The Commons
3. The Game Room
4. Small Dog Run
5. Fitness Garden
6. Play Garden
7. The Community Garden & Orchard Table
8. Children’s Garden
9. Culinary Gardens & Cafe Terrace
10. Big Dog Run

The Social Gardens
WHAT IS YOUR REACTION TO…..

TOPOGRAPHY
82% (Very) Excited (94)
18% Not Excited (21)

PLANTING
82% (Very) Excited (94)
18% Not Excited (21)

LIGHTING
82% (Very) Excited (94)
18% Not Excited (20)

FURNITURE
67% (Very) Excited (76)
33% Not Excited (37)

SUSTAINABILITY
88% (Very) Excited (89)
20% Not Excited (23)
WHAT DO YOU LIKE MOST ABOUT THE FOREST WALK?

1- Overall Natural Feel and Biophilic Inspiration; Strong overall preference for this scheme over the other.

   “I like that it feels like a refuge that people can connect with something - either art, nature or each other. It feels very meaningful.”

   “I love the meandering paths that allow for different Views and vistas and allow people to spread out.”

2- Overlook and interesting topography.

3- Art Walk’s rambling intimate quality.

   “I can see people stopping to read a book, couples taking in the art on a date… or maybe a class field trip”

4- The Central Green feels more inviting and like the right size.

WHAT DO YOU LIKE LEAST?

1- The Playground is unnecessary vs. The Playground is too small.

2- There are not enough spaces for dogs.

3- It’s not active enough.

   “I dislike how most of the park is paths and art. It limits the amount of opportunities for public activities and options other than walking”
OVERALL, WHICH FEATURES DO YOU LIKE MOST?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Feature</th>
<th>FW/SG</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>50%</td>
<td>Art Walk, FW (156)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40%</td>
<td>The Meander &amp; Trellis, FW (126)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>37%</td>
<td>Overlook, FW (118)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>32%</td>
<td>Central Green, FW (102)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28%</td>
<td>Elm Street Promenade, SG (89)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21%</td>
<td>1 Dog Run, FW (67)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21%</td>
<td>Playful Site Furniture, SG (66)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20%</td>
<td>Play Garden, SG (64)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19%</td>
<td>Culinary Garden, SG (59)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19%</td>
<td>Orchard Table, SG (59)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16%</td>
<td>2 Dog Runs, SG (51)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15%</td>
<td>Meadow Lounge, FW (49)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15%</td>
<td>Fitness Garden, SG (48)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13%</td>
<td>Discovery Playground, FW (42)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9%</td>
<td>Game Lounge, SG (27)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

SG - The Social Gardens
FW - The Forest Walk
OVERALL, WHICH FEATURES DO YOU LIKE LEAST?

60%  2 Dog Runs, SG (206)
40%  Game Lounge, SG (138)
28%  Discovery Playground, FW (96)
25%  Culinary Garden, SG (85)
23%  Play Garden, SG (79)
22%  Fitness Garden, SG (76)
19%  1 Dog Run, FW (67)
16%  Orchard Table, SG (55)
15%  Central Green, FW (52)
12%  Elm Street Promenade, SG (43)
10%  Art Walk, FW (35)
 9%   The Meander & Trellis, FW (31)
 8%   Overlook, FW (28)
 7%   Meadow Lounge, FW (26)
 5%   Playful Site Furniture, SG (17)
COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT 3

PHASE 3: VALIDATE

The third phase of engagement synthesized a single vision for Met Park that responded to the preferences and values expressed by the community following the evaluation of two alternative schemes in phase two.

Given the strong preference for the Forest Walk, the synthesized scheme embraced its overall organization and formal underpinnings. Carried forward are the features and places that were most important to the community: the Meander, the Art Walk, the Overlook, the Central Green, the relationship between the Daycare Garden, South Elm Street, and the Meadow Lounge.

But, aspects of the Social Garden are also incorporated: the Play Garden, The Community Table, the Cafe Terrace, and the consolidated dog run. The synthesized scheme is a more social version of the Forest Walk. Specifically,

- The Communal Table has grown and now sits within an edible garden.
- The Central Green is Larger.
- The Art Walk is renamed the “Forest Walk” and features not only opportunity for public art, but also more places to socialize, sit, and linger.

- The dog run is larger.
- The Play Garden is relocated to the South Western corner of the site—closer to nearby neighborhoods.
- And, more broadly the design of the park’s two main entrances is developed.

Questions via on-line engagement, which launched on June 10, 2020 focused on validation of the design response with specific follow up to issues where feedback was not explicitly clear or did not express consensus among community members. Key issues were the range of amenities, the size of dog run, the size of the play garden, the appropriateness of integration of urban agricultures as well as new reactions to further developed site systems including topography, planting, lighting, furniture and sustainability.

In addition to these topics, community members commented on the amount of hardscape, the comfort of the benches, a dislike of the “+” shaped table, and encouragement for additional porosity.

A summary of the synthesized scheme and correspondent community feedback follows.
1. The 12th Street Gateway
2. The Community Table
3. The Meander & Trellis
4. The Central Green
5. The Overlook
6. The Forest Walk
7. The Play Garden
8. The Children’s Garden
9. The Meadow Lounge
10. The Dog Run
   (Big & Small Zones)
11. Drop-off & Bus Shelter
12. The South Eads Gateway
The Draft Concept Plan for Met Park reflects the values expressed by Arlington County community members and renders the site as a more verdant and lush urban refuge. Met Park will be a place for respite, exercise and play; for social life and cultural expression. It will contribute to Arlington’s livability and should do so for generations to come. Met Park’s public open space is proposed to grow from 2 acres to 2.8 acres.
1. The 12th Street Gateway
2. The Community Table
3. The Meander & Trellis
4. The Central Green
5. The Overlook
6. The Forest Walk
7. The Play Garden
8. The Children's Garden (private facility)
9. The Meadow Lounge
10. The Dog Run (Big & Small Zones)
11. Drop-off & Bus Shelter
12. The South Eads Gateway
A. Public Access Esmt  0.19 ac  
B. Public Access Esmt  0.90 ac  
C. Public Access Esmt  0.16 ac  
D. Public Access Esmt  0.41 ac  
E. Public Access Esmt  0.08 ac  
F. Public Access Esmt  0.33 ac  

TOTAL  2.07 ac
A. Public Access Esmt 0.20 ac
Sidewalk Esmt 0.13 ac
B. Public Access Esmt 1.09 ac
Sidewalk Esmt 0.21 ac
C. Public Access Esmt 0.15 ac
Sidewalk Esmt 0.14 ac
D. Public Access Esmt 0.38 ac
E. Public Access Esmt 0.31 ac
F. Public Access Esmt 0.34 ac
Public Access Total 2.47 ac
Sidewalk Total 0.48 ac
TOTAL 2.95 ac

Area "D": Eastern sidewalk of central block is included in open space total and is to be considered part of the park.
PLACES & AMENITIES

Within the network of Met Park paths and streetscapes are a series of new places and amenities that cater to the community. At the northwestern corner of the site, large social tables are situated within an edible garden. This place is envisioned as a hub of community gathering, for meals and celebrations. The surrounding garden will be didactic—featuring regionally appropriate adaptive edible species to showcase the incredible connections between nature and the food we eat. We can imagine an annual community chef’s dinner featuring some of these food at the large communal tables.

On the eastern portion of the site in front of Met 6, is a private Children’s Garden operated by a daycare facility on the first floor. Nearby is the Meadow Lounge and the future location of the Amazon Banana Stand. Across 14th Street South in front of Met 7/8 is the Café Terrace and a consolidated 4,000 sf dog run with two zones at 2,000 sf each—one for small and the other for large dogs.

Public Art will be incorporated into the project and will move through a separate process.

In the center of the site, taking advantage of its sunniest sliver is the Central Green. The Central Green is envisioned as a place for casual picnics, movie nights, and festivals and is sized to accommodate several hundred people. Looking over the Central Green is the Overlook and along its western edge is a large bench shaded by a signature trellis.

In the southwestern corner of the site a large playground, the “Play Garden” offers a nature-immersed play space with two distinct areas for children ages 2-5 and 5-12. The Play Garden is envisioned to host forts, swings, climbing nets, and plenty of places for parents to sit under the shade of surrounding trees.
1. Community Table & Edible Garden; 2,300 sf
2. Forest Walk Clearings
   a - Hammock Clearing
   b - Forest Lounge
   c - Overlook (1,200 sf)
3. Central Green; 8,800 sf
4. The Meadow Lounge; 1,500 sf
5. The Banana Stand
6. The Play Garden; 5,000 sf
7. The Dog Run (Large & Small Areas); 4,000 sf
The Meadow Lounge at East Elm Street
CIRCULATION

Park Paths
The park is organized by its meandering paths. Its widest and most significant is the Meander, a conceptual “Fall Line” within Met Park which connects the site’s two important gateways—the northern portion of South Elm Street at 12th Street South and the western portion of 14th Street South at Eads. In addition to being associated with Amazon’s development sites, these two gateways are closest to major transit stops.

In contrast to the Meander, The Forest Walk is situated in the western portion of the site between 13th and 14th Streets South. Along the Forest Walk are four clearings, which offer informal places to relax, linger, and socialize with neighbors. One might find hammocks, lounge chairs, an overlook with swings, or even art installation. Additional secondary paths connect other park entrances and destinations throughout the site.

Streetscapes and Gateways
The design team has worked with the County, the Department of Environmental Servers (DES) in particular, to maximize park space while allowing roads and curbs to function flexibly for the county in the future. The central portion of South Elm has shifted west, 15 parking spaces have been removed from South Elm Street and 13th Street South, sidewalk planters have been expanded and other roads have been reduced in width. The northern portion of South Elm Street, one of the site’s two main gateways, is perhaps the most important of these locations.

Closer to the park along the northern portion of South Elm Street, a processional arrival is elevated with verdant streetscapes that frame views of the park beyond. On-center with this axis is the Overlook which offers sweeping elevated views of the park’s Central Green.

On 14th Street South, the site’s second gateway at Eads Street, is rendered as more pedestrian friendly with flush curb edges and a series of parklets along-side. Planters are expanded and between them there are new places where people can gather under the shade of some majestic new street trees.

The central portion of South Elm within the park in front of the new building at Met 6 is also curbless. Pavers rather than asphalt, compose its surface, thereby to better situating it within the public realm.
THE MEANDER, Max 20’
(14 people across)

SIDEWALKS 6’-12’
(max 8 people across)

FOREST WALK 6’
(max 4 people across)
South Elm Street, Existing Condition
- Arlington County Street Tree Soil Volume
  *Arlington County Landscape Standards, 2017, pg15
  - Min 600 - 1200 cubic feet
South Elm Street (East Segment)
DESIGN GUIDELINES

The pages that follow include design guidelines, goals and benchmarks for a future Met Park. These guidelines reinforce the concept of bringing “big nature” into Arlington County with soft, natural, and texturally rich palettes for hardscape materials, planting, and topography along-side a clean, contemporary aesthetic that defines site furniture, signage, and lighting.
HARDSCAPE MATERIALS

Hardscape materials are meant to evoke a rocky Virginia palette with a contemporary edge. For primary paths and the area immediately outside Met 678, stone paving with stone edging is proposed. At secondary paths and the Forest Walk, small stone unit paving, exposed aggregate concrete and / or stabilized stone screenings compose texturally rich paths and evoke a casual sensibility. Materials in shades of gray resonate with Virginia’s native rocks. Of particular interest are Virginia’s grey granites as well as the state rock, nelsonite, which is a speckled, “salt and pepper” featuring black, white, and tan colors.

Robust synthetic turf and “salt and pepper” epoxy coated surfacing shall be used at the dog run, while warm natural shades of poured in place safety surfacing shall be used at the Children’s Garden.

All surfaces shall be ADA compliant. A target of 55-65% pervious surfaces has been set for the total public open space area.
TOPOGRAPHY & PLANTING

Topography
The site’s sculpted topography is an essential underpinning that helps define spaces, buffer noises and create the illusion of a park that is much larger than it really is. Topography also dramatically increases surface area, creates new micro-climates, and organizes a series of swales at the base of hills for stormwater bio-infiltration. The site’s highest point is at the overlook, which offers sweeping views of the Central Green.

Planting
Within the site, planting is coarsely organized by the Meander, which acts as a conceptual fall line, separating a more forested “piedmont” landscape from a more grassy “coastal plain.” In each of these two areas, a series of distinct landscape rooms draw on Virginia’s native plant communities to compose an extraordinary palette that is distinct and seasonally dynamic.

The plant palette is rich and multilayered. Virginia wildflowers and flowering understory trees will be highlights in spring. Perennial pollinators will be featured in summer; golden hued grasses will turn grey in winter and be complemented by punctual evergreens.

From the edible garden with its persimmons, to the mixed evergreen forest with understory laurel and fern dell, a cypress ring at the Play Garden and meadow landscapes at the Meadow Terraces; public horticulture will be elevated at Met Park.

To support these extraordinary landscapes, adequate soil depth is of the utmost importance. A minimum of 6-12” of soil shall be used at lawn areas, 18”-36” for meadows, and a minimum of 3’ (5’ maximum) for trees. Park canopy coverage shall be a minimum of 40% to assure adequate shade for human comfort, reduced urban heat island effect and all the benefits of increased biomass.
SITE FURNITURE & FIXTURES

Site Furniture
Site furniture is considered to instigate social exchange, assure comfort, facilitate maintenance, and overall visitor experience. From trash and recycling receptacles, to pet stations, bike racks, drinking fountains, and a range of benches and lounge opportunities, site furniture will be a cohesive family of elements—robust and aesthetically resonant.

A series of social and playful elements will be highlights and include oversized swings, communal tables, and hammocks. Primary materials for benches will be wood with metal details in a neutral grey palette.

Lighting
At night, Met Park will transform. From tall area lights at key gathering places, pedestrian pole lights on the central path to the bollards and scattered tree lights around the Forest Walk; a range of fixtures create rich and subtle layers of light. New street lights along portions of South Elm Street and 14th Street South will further help to define the fresh, simple, and clean aesthetic of the fixture family.

Energy efficient dark sky LED fixtures provide a sense of safety and night-time visibility without flooding neighbors with light. Target illuminance levels of 0.5-1 foot-candles vertical at 5’ above grade for primary paths, 0.2-0.5 foot-candles vertical at 5’ above grade for secondary paths and the Forest Walk, 0.2-0.4 foot-candles horizontal at grade for key gathering locations, and 2-5 foot-candles horizontal at 5’ above grade for primary building and park entries.

Signage & Wayfinding
As part of the PSMP process signage and wayfinding has not been designed, but it will certainly be part of the overall use network and will match the design aesthetic of the park.
The Forest Walk @ Night
SUSTAINABILITY

In each of Met Park’s site systems, the idea of maximizing sustainability and minimizing negative environmental impact drives choices and decisions. The design of Met park considers human health, the use of regional, recycled, and reclaimed materials and energy efficient lighting. Met Park will radically increase biomass and urban habitat. It will include green infrastructure and places for bio infiltration. It plans on non-potable sources of water for irrigation.

From its porous edges and inviting streetscapes to its immersive interior that offers a sense of refuge and nature in the city along-side an incredible range of new public amenities, the future Met Park will be extraordinary.