
Long Range Planning Committee (LRPC) of the Planning Commission
Meeting Summary
June 10, 2024
7:00 p.m.

This meeting was a hybrid virtual/in-person public meeting held through electronic communication means.

Planning Commissioners in attendance:

- Eric Berkey, LRPC Chair (in-person)
- Daniel Weir (in-person)
- Devanshi Patel, (absent)
- Jim Lantelme (in-person)
- Karen Guevara (absent)
- Leo Sarli (in-person)
- Nia Bagley (virtual)
- Peter Robertson (absent)
- Sara Steinberger (virtual)
- Tenley Peterson (absent)
- Tony Striner (absent)

Staff in attendance (CPHD Planning):

- Natasha Alfonso-Ahmed, LRPC Coordinator (in-person)
- Olivia Sontag, CPHD Planning (in-person)
- Matt Mattauszek, CPHD Planning (in-person)
- Melissa Danowski, CPHD Housing (in-person)
- Kristin Calkins, DES Transportation Planning (virtual)
- Robert Gibson, DES Transportation Planning (virtual)
- Jeremy Smith, DPR Planning (virtual)

Other:

- Jill Barter, Park and Recreation Commission
- Pamela Van Hine, Pedestrian Advisory Committee
- Robert Benson and David Howell, Forestry and Natural Resources Commission
- Alice Hogan, Alliance for Housing Solutions
- Jean Henceroth, Leeway Overlee Civic Association
- Gregory Ward, Jair Lynch
- Lauren Riley, Walsh Colucci
- David Hilde, Jair Lynch

Barcroft Apartments Land Use Analysis LRPC Meeting

Commissioner Berkey opened the meeting at 7:00 p.m.

Commissioner Berkey recognized members of several other Arlington County advisory boards and commissions and civic leaders in attendance, as well as staff members.

A staff presentation was provided by Olivia Sontag and Matt Mattauszek (CPHD – Planning), on Jair Lynch’s Master Financing and Development Plan (MFDP) for the Barcroft Apartments, including an overview of the 2024 land use analysis, working group engagement process, proposed policy recommendations, phasing plan, and site redevelopment plan, which identifies the areas that will be preserved, renovated or redeveloped and where future improvements are expected.

The presentation referenced earlier policies and visioning documents (the 2012 Neighborhoods Area Plan and 2005 Revitalization Plan) that provide guidance for the Barcroft site’s future and will be updated to support the recently adopted Financing and Affordability Plan and deepened affordability. The presentation highlighted the land use analysis incorporated additional site analysis and information provided by Jair Lynch and explored existing and new tools to ensure the updated vision and Jair Lynch’s commitments to site improvements are clearly documented and can be successfully implemented as part of a phased strategy for the site. The LRPC meeting kicks off a series of upcoming commission meetings to review the proposed updates to the 2012 and 2005 Plans, as well as amendments to the General Land Use Plan (GLUP) and the Master Transportation Plan (MTP) needed to reflect/support the changes to those plans.

The presentation was followed by discussion with the following questions and comments, which focused on:

- Process – timing for addressing commitments to tree canopy conservation and percent of open space as well as ensuring development is cohesive and reflects one Barcroft community regardless of ownership or multiple phases of development. Staff clarified that in the second half of 2024, more detailed policies will be developed involving amendments to the form based codes to implement the vision that’s outlined in the MFDP document, which is a legally binding agreement. For example, the affordability requirement is for 99 years on the entire property and that wouldn’t change regardless of ownership because it is a covenant running with the land.
- Urban Design – opportunity to address the northwest corner of Columbia Pike and Four Mile Run, a County-owned parcel under the high-tension transmission lines currently used as a parking lot for buses, as part of this process and consider it for a future mini park. Staff clarified that this site is not part of the larger visioning process for the MFDP, however, in the future there will be a need for connectivity from Four Mile Run Minor to the W&OD trail for the bike infrastructure that’s being planned, and at that point there may be an opportunity to think about other uses for that space.
- Massing – concern with massing transitioning to the neighborhood and ensuring a cohesive campus like aesthetic by thinking of how existing architectural types transition to the new bigger scale development and opportunities for creating a seamless community where there

are no visible differences between the social economic classes that will exist between the affordable and market rate units. Staff clarified that the FBC provides guidance on transitions in sensitive areas and requires projects adjacent to preservation areas to review and respond to feedback from the HALRB. Staff further clarified that while projects under the FBC do not go to the Site Plan Review Committee, they will have their own review process with input from the Form Base Code Advisory Working Group and Planning Commission. Additionally, there will be an opportunity during the second half of this year for public input on the amendments to the form based codes that will address the transitions to conservation areas and maximum building heights in redevelopment areas that consider the relationship between the preserved garden style apartments and redevelopment, and other mitigating factors such as topography and compatible architecture, among other things.

- Streets and Transportation – support for proposed increased parking ratios in response to community feedback on parking constraints; support for a true bike facility (not a sharrow) along N. George Mason Drive as County is currently contemplating; concern about intersections on Columbia Pike and need for enhanced signalization; concern with anticipated density along Four Mile Run Minor where it turns into Buchanan and already high traffic and no signalization for people crossing at intersection; concern with proposed vehicular connection to Columbia Pike changing picturesque landscape of campus park-like setting and desire for pedestrian connection instead; and concern that internal private streets will not be maintained to the same level of standard as public streets. Staff clarified that the vehicular connection is needed so that all the traffic does not end up at the intersection of S. George Mason Drive and 12th Rd., which is challenging for the network as a whole. Staff also clarified that enhancements to intersections is not a focus of this study as it is not a long range planning issue and was addressed (to some extent) through the recently completed Columbia Pike multimodal improvements, which were based on a forecast year that assumed a significant amount of redevelopment along the corridor. However, in the future or during the implementation phase when an MMTA is completed for a proposed project, staff will evaluate what intersection improvements will be needed from a total capacity perspective, including vehicular, pedestrians, and cyclists.
- Open Space – support for establishing a plan or vision (to enable County to seek grant funding) for improving Doctors Run, one of the few daylighted streams in the County with wildlife, by extending it or opening it up further down and turning it back into a natural asset rather than a concrete culvert; support for understory trees, shrubs along conduits, etc. and biophilia in general - not added like the trimmings on a tree but inherent in the DNA of the space; concern with soil erosion, sediment control and maintenance of natural areas and public parks; support for designing the public space on S. Taylor Street and 12th Street with special considerations for the whole open space and the way the building engages the space; and support for preserving the stonewall along Four Mile Run Minor or rebuilding it as part of the new larger development. The applicant clarified that each development project will comply with the latest guidance from the County on stormwater retention measures and be subject to conditions of permit approval that will require public areas be maintained in perpetuity. Staff clarified that the County is currently evaluating regulations for flood resiliency and resource protection areas that may affect development along Doctors Run and will need to confirm the County will be investing in the units surrounding it before considering opportunities for improvements. Additionally, staff acknowledged that such an effort would take a significant amount of time for review internally and there may be

instances where federal agencies will also need to review, which could preclude this project from moving forward in a timely manner.

Public Comment

- Potential changes to the proposed site redevelopment plan to improve the open space and natural capital aspects of the design – representatives of the Forestry and Natural Resources Commission and Donaldson Run Civic Association strongly recommend:
 1. Enhancing the natural design plan even more by preserving as much of the existing natural resources as possible, consistent with the county-adopted FNRP.
 2. Preserving mature trees at the corner of Columbia Pike and George Mason.
 3. Moving the 0.3 acre mini-park at the east corner of Columbia Pike and George Mason to a location within the main community.
 4. Ensuring that 12th Street is a tree and plant-lined boulevard, providing a grand and scenic entrance portal into the community.
 5. Preserving as many existing mature trees as possible in the restoration areas of the community.
 6. Redesigning the landscaping at the landslide site to allow for the planting and survival of canopy trees and other native plantings.
 7. Preserving the existing mini-forests in the south areas of Barcroft in their entirety.
 8. Maximizing the number of street trees along lower George Mason Drive by using private lawn areas if the new utility strip is too narrow. Installation of the bike lane should not come at the expense of adequate area for the preservation of mature trees and the planting of new street trees along this entire stretch of road.
- Support for the commitment of affordability, livability, sustainability, and so many of our values in Arlington through this project.
- Request for clarification on the proposed public spaces at the Penske site and on George Mason Drive and discussion about the usability of those spaces at major intersections.
- Request for information on whether there has been discussion with the small businesses on Columbia Pike and ideas for retaining/bringing them back after redevelopment.

Next Steps

The LRPC expressed appreciation to staff and the applicant for their work and reminded everyone that the next steps include a series of commission meetings to review the proposed updates to the 2012 and 2005 Plans, as well as amendments to the General Land Use Plan (GLUP) and the Master Transportation Plan (MTP) needed to reflect/support the changes to those plans.

Chair Berkey adjourned the meeting at approximately 9 p.m.