



**POPS Advisory Committee
Meeting Summary**

May 11, 2016

6:30pm-9:30pm

The Hendry House @ Fort C.F. Smith Park

In attendance:

POPS Advisory Committee

- Caroline Haynes, Park and Recreation Commission
- Jane Rudolph, Department of Parks and Recreation
- Jane Siegel, Planning Commission
- Jim Feaster, NCAC
- Dean Amel, Urban Forestry Commission
- Heather Cocozza, Sports Commission
- Claire O’Dea, E2C2
- Lisa Grandle, Department of Parks and Recreation
- Toby Smith, At Large
- Carrie Johnson, At Large
- William Gillen, APS
- Elizabeth Gearin, Park and Recreation Commission

Absent:

- Janet Kopenhaver, Arlington Commission for the Arts

Department of Parks and Recreation Staff:

- Erik Beach
- Irena Lazic
- Bethany Heim



Summary

On May 11, 2016 the County staff and WRT Team facilitated a meeting with the POPS Advisory Committee to get direction on how to develop a park classification system and level of service standards that are appropriate for Arlington.

The meeting started with a presentation that served as a primer on park classifications and level of service and how they fit into the planning process. Generally, the message to the Advisory Committee was that there are many ways to approach both classifications and level of service and none is universally accepted as being “correct;” each community must decide what works best for them.

A second presentation and facilitated discussion re-framed concepts from the primer in a way that solicited targeted input from the Advisory Committee.

Classifications

Four park classification systems were presented to the Committee:

- Venues: each location is a specialized facility for one activity
- De-Centralized: each location has a set of pre-determined amenities
- Context-Based: context-appropriate amenities are put where space is available
- Activity-Based: amenities are put where space is available

The Committee was asked to classify four of Arlington’s parks using example classifications that might be found in each of the first three classification systems. The Committee indicated that it was difficult to classify the parks according to the venues model. With the de-centralized and context-based systems, the Committee generally agreed that each park fell into one or two classifications.

When asked to rank their top two choices among the four systems presented, the Committee slightly preferred the activity-based approach, followed very closely by the context-based approach, again followed closely by the de-centralized approach. Through discussion, the Committee seemed to reach consensus that they would prefer a classification system that is activity- / facility-based (as opposed to park-based), is context-sensitive, and distributes amenities equitably.

Level of Service

To frame the discussion on level of service, a number of questions were posed to the Committee:

- What counts?
- How should access be defined?
- How should service be measured?
- What role does context play?
- What role does quality play?

The Committee was nearly unanimous in agreement that County-owned parks, National Park Service lands, Arlington Public Schools property, Northern Virginia Parks, and public access easements should



count when the County tallies public space. There was minimal support for including the National Cemetery or Northern Virginia Conservation Trust lands in the inventory, since use of these spaces by the public is limited or prohibited. However, the Committee indicated that those lands could be counted when analyzing certain environmental issues, such as tree canopy and habitat. Additionally, there was discussion about the role restricted, privately owned spaces play in assessing the need for public space. While a restricted, privately owned space may reduce the need for public space within the community that has access to it, it may not reduce that need for adjacent communities.

Regarding access, the Committee agreed that multiple travel modes should be considered but that not all modes may be relevant for all facilities. It was suggested that information gleaned from the public survey and first series of public meetings—in which people were asked about preferred travel times and modes—could be used to help define level of service.

To define what areas are well served, the Committee reacted positively to using a combined size and distance analysis to take both site capacity and travel time into account. There was no expressed support for reporting service numerically by neighborhood or other geographic sub-area of the county.

The Committee agreed that both context and quality should play a role in defining level of service and that level of service could vary by density of development.

Trail Classifications

Three classification systems were presented to the Committee:

- Functional: using a hierarchy based on traffic volumes, similar to road classifications
- Context-Based: defining trails by their context
- User-Based: emphasizing the activities users can expect to participate in along the trail

When asked to rank their top two choices among the three systems presented, results were almost evenly split. The Committee slightly preferred the user-based approach, followed very closely by the functional approach, again followed very closely by the context-based approach. Through discussion, it was suggested that a user-based framework would be most easily understood by residents. The Committee seemed to reach consensus that a primarily functional classification system that acknowledges different users would work best.