POPS Advisory Committee
Meeting Summary

May 24, 2017
6:30pm-9:00pm
Courthouse Plaza

In attendance:

POPS Advisory Committee

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

Absent:

- Janet Kopenhaver, Arlington Commission for the Arts
- Heather Cocozza, Sports Commission

Department of Parks and Recreation Staff:

- Erik Beach
- Irena Lazic

ARLINGTON POPS
A Plan for Our Places and Spaces

Summary:

On May 24, 2017, WRT and DPR facilitated a meeting with the POPS Advisory Committee to discuss definitions and casual use spaces.

Before discussing the topics at hand, some members inquired about the type of public feedback that will be elicited in the public meeting series in July. It was suggested that the engagement events be publicized through the public school network. It was also stressed that the feedback needs to be constrained or structured so as to be meaningful and targeted enough to incorporate into the draft plan.

Definitions

It was suggested that the definitions in the PSMP remain at a higher level to retain flexibility, while referring to other plans for more technical language. Detail might occur in the body of the plan that does not have to be in the definition.

It was generally agreed that terms that are not mentioned in the PSMP should not be defined in the plan's glossary. However, an explanation of the reasons for not using certain terms—and what terms the plan uses instead—should be included in the text of the plan. Members agreed that the role of the PSMP definitions should be to provide guidance for future sector, corridor, and other plans that pertain to public space. Members also agreed that terms that have strict legal definitions—like easement, for example— do not need to be separately defined in this plan. It was suggested, however, that the plan be clear about what type(s) of easements are being referred to, in terms of public use or public access. The committee will provide feedback on definitions by June 2.

Casual Use Spaces

The committee again discussed casual use spaces (formerly called unprogrammed spaces). The discussion focused on how to define these spaces so that they may be mapped in a Level of Service analysis and so that population-based standards may be created. Examples within the 22204 ZIP code were presented based on the committee's previous discussions about what should be defined as casual use spaces.

Some committee members expressed concern about the inclusion of courts, paved spaces, and other areas that are designed to support a particular activity. The example LOS analyses highlighted the fact that the current definition of casual use space includes spaces that are counted in other access and population-based standards (like diamond and rectangular fields). Some were concerned that this would distort the analysis to the detriment of green, natural areas. Spaces that are designed for to support a particular activity but are often used in multiple ways were labeled as "available sometimes" in the analysis. It was mentioned that these spaces could be left out of the LOS analysis, but could be considered and acknowledged in the County's broader policy efforts that address casual use spaces. Members also discussed the fact that moving forward, the County can intentionally design spaces for this type of use, whereas the LOS analysis is looking at what exists now that gets used in this way, regardless of intentionality.

Multiple thresholds were discussed that need to be drawn in order to be able to map casual use spaces and complete an access analysis: minimum size, percent of the time available for community use (perhaps, even more specifically, during after school/evening hours when the highest demand is), and whether or not a field is permanently striped for group athletic play. But members also stressed that setting an overly restrictive set of definitions or criteria would render this analysis much less useful to the County. However, clear definitions and criteria are necessary to map/inventory these spaces and perform an access analysis