



POPS Advisory Committee Meeting Summary

October 13, 2016

6:30pm-9:30pm

In attendance:

POPS Advisory Committee

- Caroline Haynes, Park and Recreation Commission
- Heather Coccozza, Sports Commission
- Claire O'Dea, E2C2
- Lisa Grandle, Department of Parks and Recreation
- Carrie Johnson, At Large
- Leo Sarli, Arlington Commission for the Arts
- William Gillen, APS
- Elizabeth Gearin, Park and Recreation Commission

Absent:

- Jane Rudolph, Department of Parks and Recreation
- Jim Feaster, NCAC
- Janet Kopenhaver, Arlington Commission for the Arts
- Toby Smith, At Large
- Jane Siegel, Planning Commission
- Dean Amel, Urban Forestry Commission

Department of Parks and Recreation Staff:

- Robin Leonard
- Bethany Heim
- Irena Lazic

Public:

- Bill Ross, Park and Recreation Commission



Summary

On October 13, 2016, WRT facilitated a meeting with the POPS Advisory Committee, along with team members David Barth from Barth Associates and Austin Hochstetler from PROS Consulting, to present the results of the Level of Service (LOS) analysis. WRT also presented options for the Plan's vision statement and a strategy for a visioning charrette.

Before the consultant presentation began, the Committee discussed submitting a letter to weigh in on the process that is underway to create a joint County/APS citizen advisory committee as recommended by the Community Facilities Study. It was suggested that the letter could provide relevant information from the POPS process and identify any overlapping issues both groups are addressing.

Level of Service

The Committee saw a brief presentation by David Barth on the value of a level of service analysis and a reminder of how the POPS LOS analysis embodies a unique combination of considerations and variables. The Committee noted that using either the term "amenities" or "assets" was preferable to using the term "facilities."

DPR then presented an inventory of the County's existing assets as well as usage and participation rates for various activities and programs. It was noted that participation has increased for almost all activities, and with the exception of tackle football, all decreases in participation are due to capacity limitations. It was noted that the population projections for the County predict an increase in the under-35 and elderly populations, something that should be taken into account when making LOS decisions in the future.

WRT and PROS then presented the LOS analysis findings. For the categories that were geographically analyzed, a discussion arose about the difference between "need" and "lack." The maps show areas where there is a lack of access to a certain amenity, such as community gardens, but more nuanced discussion is needed in order to determine whether that lack of access translates into a need. For example, there is a lack of access to community garden space in the northern part of the County, but since the area is overwhelmingly single-family homes with yards, there may not necessarily be an unmet need for community gardens. In this way, the LOS analysis is not a prescriptive set of recommendations but rather a tool that the County can use to make informed decisions when placing new amenities. It was also pointed out that the LOS analysis can be used as leverage to induce private developers to site needed amenities in high-density areas.

The Committee noted that the grouping of indoor and outdoor pools into one category could be problematic, as they are used very differently throughout the seasons. It was also suggested that Natural Resource Conservation Areas be broadened to include other natural areas and that the plan be clear on what was included as natural areas. Given that the County's community centers are very different from one another, a question was raised whether that category should be broken up into recreation centers and community centers. A further complication is that recreation and community



functions often occur in different spaces within the same facility; a member raised the possibility of calculating level of service for this category based on square footage rather than number of facilities.

The definition of “open unprogrammed space” was discussed at length. WRT collected real-time votes as to whether certain spaces should or should not be counted in the category. Issues that were discussed include whether to have a size threshold for these spaces and what percentage of the time the space could be programmed in order for it to qualify. The Committee agreed to first try to define what types of activities they see happening in open unprogrammed spaces before attempting to define what counts as that type of space.

Vision Statement

WRT presented three possible vision statements created from a vocabulary exercise held previously. While there was a preference for options 2 and 3 over option 1, some members felt the phrasing was not specific enough to Arlington because it did not mention the County’s challenges and there was no emphasis on preserving and protecting existing assets. Other ideas for the vision statement included balancing needs and emphasizing creativity and innovation.

Charrette

The Committee briefly discussed an upcoming design workshop or charrette that will take place in December. It was noted that while there are certain plans in the County are more “fixed” than others, it would be most productive to consider the entire County during the session and perhaps keep to a higher-level and more generalized discussion.