

Barcroft School and Civic
League
Walking Town Meeting
April 28, 2001

1. Park at Arlington Hall

We will assemble at the park on Arlington Hall property, entered from the stub of South Taylor extending north of 4th Street South.

Neighborhood Issue / County Response:

When the park was refurbished with bond funds, the design did not include adequate provision for controlling storm water drainage at the entrance. The result is that water runs down the street during storms.

When park improvements were made, drainage was improved by lining the drainage area that flows in the area between the upper portion of the bike trail and the parking lot with rocks. PRCR will check to see if the pipe under the road is clogged. PRCR will also determine whether there are relatively simple things that can be done with maintenance to solve the problem or if major redesign/reconstruction will be required.

This is a popular soccer field. The maintenance of the field is inadequate for the number of users.

The Arlington Hall Soccer field is a heavily used soccer field. In the year 2000, this field had approximately 544 hours of scheduled use by teams mainly affiliated with the Arlington Soccer Association's "House" and "Travel" youth teams. Arlington County currently has begun implementation of an annual athletic field maintenance program to help improve the conditions of the County's athletic fields and more specifically the soccer fields. In addition, renovation of this field, to include an in ground irrigation system, is scheduled to begin sometime in 2002 or 2003.

A water fountain at this location would provide refreshment for soccer players and those who use the playground.

PRCR has been gradually adding water fountains to park facilities as funding is available. A number have been installed via the Small Parks Program and others

by Neighborhood Conservation or other capital programs, and County staff will contact neighborhood representatives regarding these options. Within PRCR, highest priority is given to parks with the heaviest use. PRCR will evaluate this site and provide the neighborhood with status information. PRCR is examining a new drinking fountain which will be easier to maintain (although about twice as expensive to purchase). The current cost of a fountain installation is about \$4,800 (\$1,600 meter, \$2,000 water line, \$1,200 fountain).

At the bottom of the field is an underpass under George Mason Drive to the Arlington Hall property. The underpass needs to be refurbished to serve as a link in the trail from Barcroft to Thomas Jefferson Community Center. It will provide the only safe crossing of George Mason between Arlington Boulevard and Columbia Pike.

Funding is shown for FY2005 in the adopted 2001-6 CIP for this trail connection. When the next CIP is put together for public consideration in Spring, 2002, DPW would like to include some earlier funding to do the layout and preliminary engineering for modifying the structure for ramps. In addition to funding, the other possible stumbling block may be the willingness of the federal government to allow a trail here.

2. Intersection of 4th Street South and South Taylor

We will walk one block south to this intersection

Neighborhood Issue / *County Response:*

Barcroft has proposed that this intersection be improved with Neighborhood Conservation (NC) funds to provide the missing curbs, gutters and a section of sidewalk. Work at intersection was one of the neighborhood's top ten priorities in its 1990 Neighborhood Conservation Plan, to address pedestrian safety and drainage issues. The project is stalled because NC has inadequate funding for the many projects proposed, and this one fell just below the points cutoff in the last funding session. The neighborhood has sent a request for the Board to consider additional funding for NC from Pay As You Go capital in the next budget cycle.

Under its 1990 NC Plan, Barcroft has received \$883,125 in NC funds that were used to complete 22 projects identified in the plan. The County Board has recently approved \$500,000 in Pay As You Go capital funds for NC during the upcoming fiscal year.

This project is one of 55 which have qualified for the NC Spring 2001 Funding Session, and which will be evaluated by the Neighborhood Conservation Advisory Committee (NCAC) in June. The likelihood of this project being recommended to receive funding is dependent upon its ranking within the NCAC points system and the nature of the other projects under consideration. The NCAC is carefully considering the use of the newly-approved capital funds, and intends to wait until after their June meeting (where bond-funding recommendations will be made to the County Board) to discuss this special opportunity.

3. Intersection of South Wakefield, 3rd Street South and Pershing Drive

We will walk one block west to this three-way intersection

The neighborhood is concerned about speeding cars, measured with an 85th percentile speed of 35 miles per hour. There have been several accidents here over the past year. Barcroft has requested consideration for traffic calming measures on Abingdon, 3rd Street and Pershing/Buchanan Street. The neighborhood would like to have Pershing and Buchanan considered together, as they comprise a single cut-through system. Measures are likely to be needed on 4th Street South as well. When a demonstration traffic circle was installed on this spot some years ago, it diverted traffic from 3rd to 4th, eroding 4th Street support for the circle (the reason that the temporary circle was removed) Pershing/Buchanan is a neighborhood principal and is, with Abingdon, an EMS route.

A multi-way stop has been requested for the intersection of Wakefield/Pershing Drive and 3rd Street. the results should be available in May. Based upon the high speed profile and other factors that are used in ranking candidate streets for study under the Neighborhood Traffic Calming (NTC) program, it is likely that both Wakefield and Buchanan will be selected among the next group this Spring. Staff concurs that it would make sense for Pershing to be included in any study of Buchanan. The problem severity rankings for 3rd and Abingdon are not nearly so high, so staff is reluctant to go that far. When Buchanan is studied, the problems of sight lines at 7th (see #5) and other intersections can be included

3a. Barcroft Elementary School

We will walk one block south on Wakefield to the corner of 6th and Wakefield and stop at Barcroft Elementary School.

At the South Wakefield Street loading and unloading zone, cars are regularly making illegal U-turns in the middle of the street, placing children in jeopardy. The Barcroft Elementary School PTA and the neighborhood would like to see a No-U-turn sign installed and would also like to have the police enforce this ban on a regular basis.

The Police Department will send officers to evaluate this situation and will consult with DPW regarding signage. The Police Department also suggests that the school might consider sending a letter to parents, alerting them of the impending enforcement.

The PTA also concurs with the neighborhood regarding safety problems at the intersections of Columbia Pike / Buchanan and at 7th / Buchanan (a particular challenge when teachers take children on walking field trips to the Long Branch Nature Center).

4. Pershing /Buchanan Junction

We will walk one block east on 6th to the spot where it Pershing morphs into Buchanan and stop at the VEPCO substation

This former VEPCO substation has a PCB problem, and the County has been attempting to clear it up before acquiring the property from Virginia Power. While the neighborhood is not suggesting that the County acquire a pollution control liability, it believes that the resolution of this problem has been underway for a number of years – far longer than necessary. The neighborhood is asking that the cleanup of the site be finished so that the County can tear down the awful fence and restore this site to natural parkland. The neighborhood feels that with minimal effort it can become a pleasant entry into Grandma's Creek leading down to Four Mile Run.

This property is owned by VEPCO. The County and the electric utility have been engaged in discussions for several years regarding acquisition of this site. VEPCO will only restore the current in-ground contamination to an "industrial" standard, while the County must have a "residential" standard met for cleanliness prior to purchase. This has resulted in an impasse and no progress has been made recently. The County Manager will request a meeting with VEPCO representatives in order to resolve the situation.

5. 7th Street and Buchanan

We will walk another block south on Buchanan and stop at 7th Street South

The neighborhood feels that park entry here is more difficult than it should be, and so is entering Buchanan from 7th Street South. There is a sight line problem at this intersection, and those crossing Buchanan on foot or by car cannot see speeding cars coming from the south. The crown on the hill on Buchanan could be shaved down to improve the sight lines. Traffic calming measures could slow the cars. The neighborhood would feel comfortable recommending more use of this entrance to Four Mile Run and the W&OD trail. It has the most gradual slope of any of the Barcroft trail entrances. A look down 7th Street to the west highlights a NC curb and gutter project that greatly improved the park entrance.

In hilly terrain such as this, sight lines are often less than ideal. For example, the 6th Street intersection seems worse than the 9th, along Buchanan. There have been no reported accidents in the last five years, so people seem to be careful here. The bushes located on the corner at 701 Buchanan present a minor problem that can be corrected with some pruning. Lowering the profile sounds appealing, but few people realize how long a stretch of road must be reconstructed for even a small change in grade. More than a very small change can get into significant utility relocation, driveways and even side streets that need grade changes. A warning sign is being installed on northbound Buchanan to alert motorists of the intersection ahead. A traffic calming study, as referred to under item #3, can look at additional options.

6. 9th Street South and Buchanan

We will walk another two blocks south, past the Barcroft Community House, towards Columbia Pike

Many commercial vehicles, taxis and other vehicles spill over from the inadequate parking lot of the apartments further down Buchanan. Neighbors complain of difficulty parking in front of their own homes, trash, noise and street side oil changes. To date the County has addressed the security problem with new streetlights. On the hill leading down to Columbia Pike there is considerable traffic congestion. Additional no parking zones may be required.

DPW removed the parking on the East side of Buchanan from Columbia Pike to help eliminate the congestion at the corner. On the west side from the shopping center driveway to the corner at Columbia Pike, no parking is allowed. Hopefully these improvements give better sight distance for the vehicles entering Columbia Pike.

DPW does not recommend any additional "No Parking" at this time. Due to the limited on-street parking for current residents, implementing additional restrictions would have a negative impact on the parking supply in the neighborhood.

The actions taken to date will be monitored for the next ninety days and a report-back given to the Barcroft School and Civic League.

The neighborhood would like to have a trash receptacle installed at the corner of 9th and Buchanan

The litter receptacle requested has been installed. The can will be serviced and emptied by the Urban Operation Initiative Team working on Columbia Pike.

7. Columbia Pike and South Buchanan

We will reach Columbia Pike and South Buchanan, and cross the Pike to the corner nearest the recycling center

The neighborhood feels that this intersection needs reworking with professional design skills and has requested, as part of the Columbia Pike Initiative, that a planning study be conducted of the area from Four Mile Run east to S. Wakefield Street. Issues which should be considered include congestion, street alignment, parking, stacking, cut-throughs, entrances, and pedestrian / vehicle safety.

Solutions for improving this area should not dump traffic crossing the Pike into S. Buchanan, increasing Barcroft's cut-through problem. The current misalignment helps to avoid that problem, but is certainly not optimal with mismatched streets. The neighborhood believes that citizen solutions are inadequate for this complex of streets, and requests that the County mount a planning study to devise solutions.

A traffic consultant is analyzing a short-term scenario for the Pike. A specific supplement to that study is an analysis of this offset intersection. For this supplement and for the study of the length of the Pike, the potential for cut-through traffic and what to do about it are specific study elements.

There is no bus stop on the north side of the street here even though one is needed, and was requested long ago. The owners of the property would not approve a new shelter. The neighborhood hopes that Bob and Edith's will be more amenable to having one placed at that corner as they redevelop the property.

As sometimes occurs, property owner refusal can limit where bus shelters can be installed. The County is having a consultant inventory all current bus stops in Arlington and what is needed for them. Columbia Pike is an initial focus because the signal system to aid bus movements works best when the stops are on the far side of and close to the signalized intersections. Here, we'll be looking first at

the possibility of a bus stop closer to Wakefield than Buchanan. Should it turn out that the best location is on this property, and staff hopes to make that judgment soon, staff will seek help from the new owner.

8. North Side of Columbia Pike, Washington and Old Dominion Trail

We will walk westward ½ block and re-cross Columbia Pike, proceeding into the park.

Pedestrians find it difficult to cross at this intersection.

This signalized crossing of Columbia Pike for W&OD trail users is at the intersection of the Pike with South Four Mile Run Drive (the west roadway.) Because the trail crossing is on the East side of this "T" intersection, the only crosswalk conflicts are with right-turning vehicles to eastbound Columbia Pike. This is a major crossing —major road and major trail — and there is a long distance to the northwest, at East Falls Church, without another signalized crossing. This intersection is on two lists for improvement. For many crosswalks along Columbia Pike, including this one, the County will be installing signs to designate that violators failing to yield to pedestrians in the crosswalk can be cited with fines of \$100 to \$500. A contractor is fabricating these signs and they should go up throughout Arlington in late 2001 and early 2002. Also, this location is on the list for a "Countdown" pedestrian signal, not for the initial 20 locations which will have units installed using FY2002 funds, but in a future procurement. These units supplement the information provided by the flashing "Don't Walk" indication, by indicating how many seconds remain to finish crossing the street.

Barcroft obtained Neighborhood Conservation funding to plan an interpretive park in this area demonstrating the neighborhood's connection to Chesapeake Bay preservation with a best practices landscaping approach, interpretive signage and perhaps some public artwork. The design is not yet final, and will require NC funds, or park bond funding if the cost is too high.

The neighborhood has been seeking since 1990 to have the outmoded County right of way for continuation of Four Mile Run Drive through this park removed from the GLUP. Although the prospects for extension of the arterial through this park seem remote at present, leaving it on the map raises questions about the County's long-range intent, and suggests unnecessarily that the park might someday be a target for road building.

The County has a portion of street right of way, apparently for the continuation of Four Mile Run Drive, that extends into the park from Columbia Pike to the north. There are additional segments of Four Mile Run Drive and of other streets that are incorporated into the park. Staff will review these segments and determine if there is a method for vacating the streets without having portions of what appears to be parkland revert to adjacent landowners.

The W&OD is narrower here by four feet than it is north of Arlington Boulevard, although this is a heavily used section of trail and needs the additional width. The neighborhood notes with disapproval the removal of the original meandering parallel trail in the Glen Carlyn area and supports the maintenance of that original Four Mile Run trail in this area.

The Northern Virginia Regional Park Authority plans to widen this section of their trail to ten feet all the way to Shirlington Road.

9. Barcroft Community House

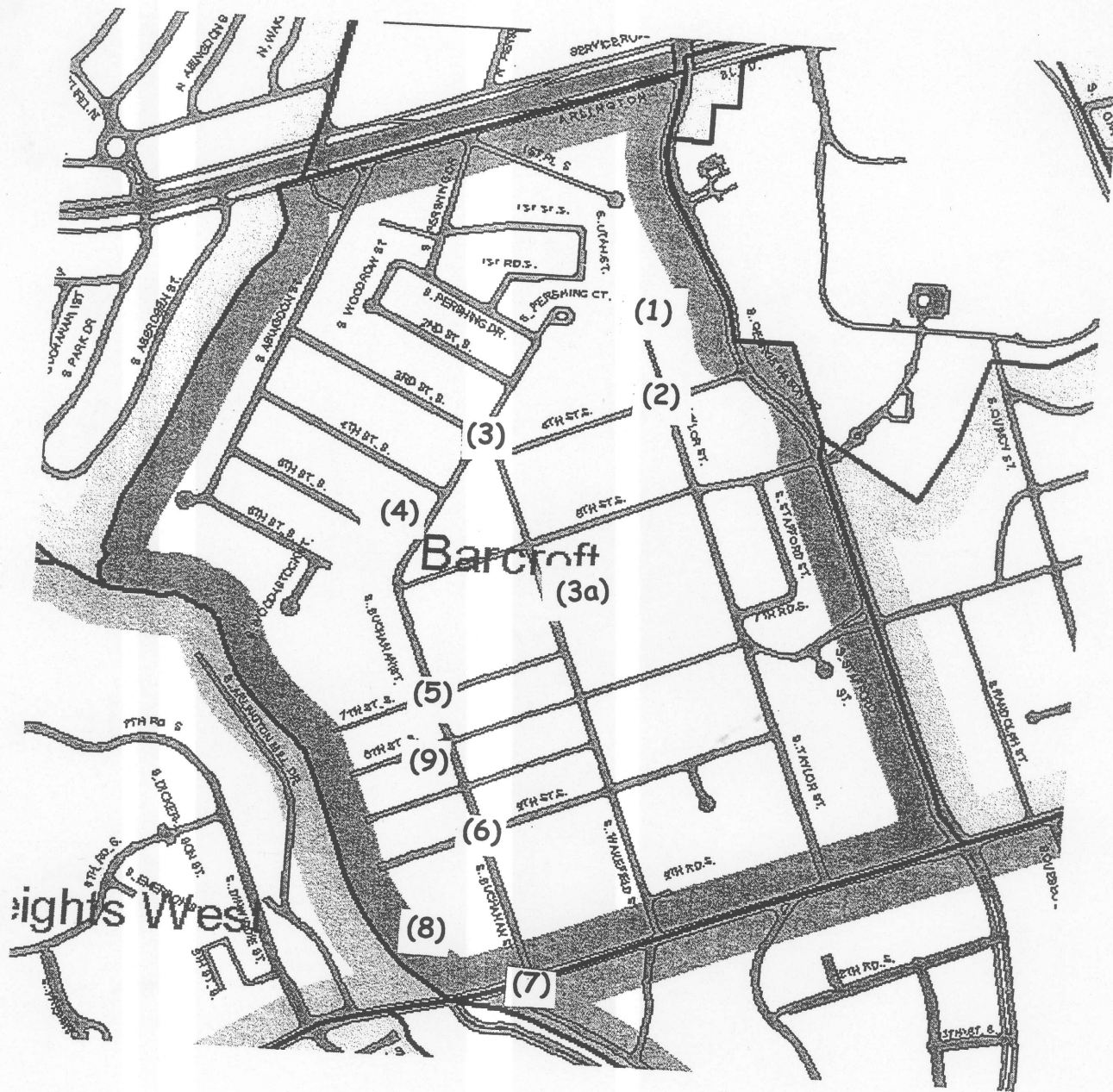
We will walk north on the W&OD trail, re-entering the neighborhood at 9th Street and walking east to Buchanan. Turning left at Buchanan, we will walk two blocks north to the Community House

Although out of convenient walking range, the neighborhood wishes to signal to the County Board its continuing concern with murders at Hi Cue Billiard Parlor, in the shopping center at George Mason Drive and Columbia Pike. Barcroft does not understand why this activity is still sanctioned by the County despite the perpetual problems that reoccur when the police guard is not present. The neighborhood wonders why the County is powerless to close this business. A second issue is the generally run-down condition of the shopping center and its businesses. They hope that the Columbia Pike initiative will spark some improvement in this shopping center and that a redevelopment of the property will eliminate Hi Cue.

The County is very aware of residents concerns surrounding the unfortunate incidents at the Hi Cue Billiards. The County, including the Police Department and County Board members, met with the community after the last incident in a meeting facilitated by the Columbia Pike Revitalization Organization (CPRO). Information provided at that meeting indicated that the business itself is run lawfully and is not in any violation of any public laws or ordinances. The Police suggested that the latest incident, although having its unfortunate conclusion at this location, actually originated within Fairfax County. The steps that the business owners take to maintain a safe and orderly business include the hiring of off-duty police officers on the weekends. The night of the latest incident, a police officer was on-duty at the premises that particular evening but was assisting another on-duty officer in an incident off the property.

The general location of the premises is a priority area for the Columbia Pike revitalization effort. The property in question is owned by a partnership, who has been actively working with the County and CPRO in exploring financially feasible options for the redevelopment of this property. County staff has every

expectation that this property will be revitalized in a manner complementary to the surrounding neighborhoods in the near future.



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