

Donaldson Run

Neighborhood Conservation Plan



Donaldson Run Civic Association

Neighborhood Conservation Plan

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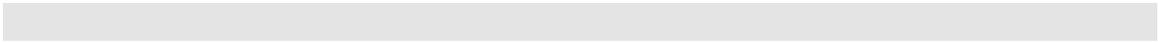
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Executive Summary

This Neighborhood Conservation Plan discusses the Donaldson Run Conservation Area as shown in the shaded area on Map 1. Donaldson Run is a neighborhood of single-family homes, containing a lot of wooded area and green space.

The Neighborhood Conservation Plan process was started in June of 1999 and the first step was the distribution of neighborhood survey in July of 1999. The project culminated with the approval of this plan by the Civic Association in March of 2000.

The Plan is intended to guide future development of the neighborhood and to make specific recommendations for its improvement. Of equal importance, the Plan is intended to protect those features of our neighborhood that make it such an attractive place in which to live and raise a family. The neighborhood is united in its passion for its parks and green spaces.

The Plan discusses 79 recommendations that are divided into "policy" and "project" categories. Policy recommendations express the opinion of the neighborhood and may be useful to the County government as guidelines for making County policies.

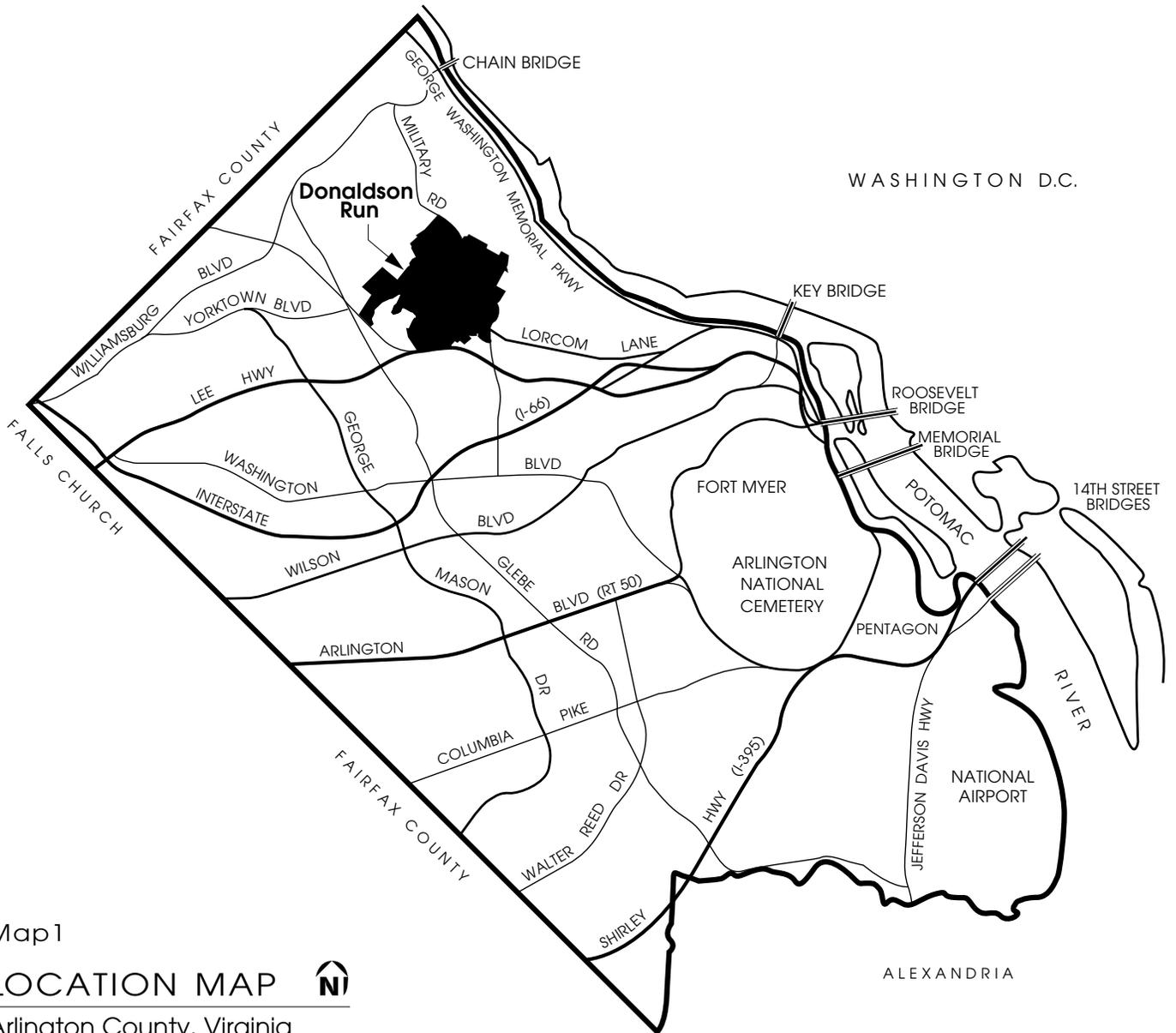
Project recommendations suggest things that neighborhood would like implemented through general maintenance funds or through the Neighborhood Conservation Advisory Committee project process. Only the 45 project recommendations are summarized here and located on Map 2 for easy reference.

The goals of this Plan are to preserve the character of our neighborhood as a quiet, wooded neighborhood, to preserve and improve the parks and green spaces that we already have, and to improve the safety and beauty of our neighborhood by solving high-speed traffic problems.

Local Shopping recommendations:

1. {Project} *The neighborhood recommends further study of the pedestrian crossing situation on Old Dominion Drive near the Lee Heights shopping center. The neighborhood would like to see a more pedestrian-friendly situation with the addition of a crosswalk, crossing signals or a pedestrian walkover.*

2. {Project} *The neighborhood recommends further study of the Lorcom Lane/Old Dominion intersection to determine ways to make it safer for pedestrians.*



Map1

LOCATION MAP 
Arlington County, Virginia

Mulch Pile Recommendations:

3. {Project} *The neighborhood recommends that a landscaping plan be developed, implemented and maintained to enhance the park area that is adjacent to the mulch pile.*

4. {Project} *The neighborhood recommends that the County monitor site runoff to verify that it is not polluting Donaldson Run stream and that annual reports be provided to the Civic Association.*

Salt Dome Recommendations:

5. {Project} *The neighborhood recommends planting bushes or trees and adding additional landscaping to improve the appearance of the site.*

H-B Woodlawn Recommendations:

6. {Project} *The neighborhood recommends that the athletic fields be re-seeded, that additional lighting be installed and an outside drinking fountain be installed.*

North 26th/31st Street Recommendations:

7. {Project} *The neighborhood believes that the intersection of Old Dominion and North 26th Street could benefit from the installation of some sort of traffic control device that operates during rush hours.*

8. {Project} *The neighborhood recommends that traffic calming measures be installed on 26th/31st to slow traffic down.*

26th Road North Recommendations:

9. {Project} *Since the intersection of North 26th Road and Military Road is used by many school children, the neighborhood believes it might benefit from installation of a traffic or crossing signal (which could be on yellow flash except during times when school children are present) or some other form of traffic control device.*

Lorcom Lane Recommendations:

10. {Project} *The neighborhood recommends installation of better signage where the lanes merge from two to one and a parking lane begins.*

11. {Project} *The neighborhood recommends that additional traffic calming measures be installed on this busy street to further slow traffic closer to the posted speed limit.*

12. {Project} *The study approved by the County Board in 1987 to re-engineer the dangerous curve near North Randolph Street should be implemented or updated.*

Military Road Recommendations:

13. {Project} *The neighborhood recommends replacing existing signs with more modern, street mounted, 25 MPH school flashing signs (such as those which have slowed traffic on Sycamore adjacent to O'Connell High School).*

14. {Project} *The neighborhood recommends further study including the possibility of using Lorcom Lane type marking (painted medians) to reduce the traffic lanes to one lane in each direction from Old Glebe to Nelly Custis and adding a right turn only lane where Southbound Military splits at Nelly Custis.*

15. {Project} *The neighborhood recommends that traffic calming measures be installed on this road to slow traffic down especially in the valley near the entrance to Zachary Taylor Park.*

Vermont Street Recommendations:

16. {Project} *The neighborhood recommends that traffic calming measures be installed on this street to slow traffic down, especially at the intersection with Upsbur Street and coming down the hill from Old Dominion.*

Beechwood Circle/Beechwood Place Recommendations:

17. {Project} *The neighborhood recommends that traffic calming measures be installed on these streets to slow traffic down.*

Marcey Road Recommendations:

18. {Project} *The neighborhood recommends that traffic calming measures be installed on this street to slow traffic down.*

Vacation Lane Recommendations:

19. {Project} *The neighborhood recommends that traffic calming measures be installed on this street to slow traffic down, especially on the hill from North Stuart to North Utah.*

Traffic Signage Recommendations:

20. {Project} *The neighborhood recommends changing the yield sign to a stop sign at the intersection of Vernon and Vermont and at the intersection of Vermont and Vacation.*

21. {Project} *The neighborhood recommends all way stop signs at the intersection of Robert Walker Place and North 26th Road.*

22. {Project} *The neighborhood suggests that all way stop signs may be needed at the intersection of North 25th Street and North Stuart Street. This intersection is close to Taylor Elementary School and lack of a sidewalk in the same area (see Page 59) just makes the situation worse.*

23. {Project} *The neighborhood suggests that a larger stop sign be installed at the intersection of Vacation Lane and North Taylor Street.*

Stop Line and Painting Recommendations:

24. {Project} *The neighborhood recommends that stop lines be painted at all intersections with stop signs. Curbs should be painted yellow to indicate the "No Parking" area at all fire hydrant locations.*

Zachary Taylor Park Recommendations:

25. {Project} *The neighborhood recommends continued maintenance of the paths, bridges and fences within the park, while not disturbing the natural look and appeal of the park. This would include reforestation along the trails to control stream bed erosion.*

26. {Project} *The neighborhood recommends that a plan be developed to control invasive, non-native vegetation and to encourage the growth of native plants.*

27. {Project} *The neighborhood recommends that per our recent Small Parks Program request, we enhance the entrances of the park with benches and a sign, rebuild the damaged stream walls and remove the rusting iron rebar from the rotted wooden trail borders.*

Lee Heights Park Recommendations:

28. {Project} *The neighborhood recommends that, per our recent Small Parks Program request, the park be enhanced with a picnic table, two benches, a trash receptacle, and a sign. Continued maintenance of the split rail fence on an as needed basis is also recommended.*

Marcey Park Recommendations:

29. {Project} *The neighborhood recommends continuation of the excellent work in maintaining this valuable park. The neighborhood suggests that the tennis and basketball courts be resurfaced and better maintained. The Civic Association should be informed of any change in the use of this land.*

Neighborhood Playgrounds Recommendations:

30. {Project} *The neighborhood recommends that the Civic Association find funding for 70% of the cost of a new tot lot (working with the Small Parks Program to fund the remaining 30%) to be located at Zachary Taylor Elementary School.*

Zachary Taylor Elementary School Recommendations:

31. {Project} *The neighborhood recommends the addition of three (3) picnic tables and one (1) trash receptacle placed near the main playground and the addition of three (3) picnic tables and two (2) trash receptacle placed around the ball field and near the basketball courts. The neighborhood recommends the replacement of the entire aging split rail fence with a new split rail fence and also the addition of several large growth trees and shrubs between the playground and the street. The neighborhood recommends placing a bench in the woods at the edge of the cement walking path. This bench would be 500 yards from the school, looking over the valley of Taylor Park below.*

Storm Drain and Grate Recommendations:

32. {Project} *The neighborhood recommends that these storm drain and grate problems be looked into with repair or replacement as needed (see page 57).*

Sidewalks, Curbs and Gutters Recommendations:

33. {Project} *The neighborhood recommends that we look into ways to install a sidewalk on North 26th Street to provide a safe area in which to walk as well as to meet the needs of the affected homeowners. Economic and environmental costs need to be considered. Re-establishing the middle school bus stop at North 26th Street and North Wakefield Street may address the concerns of school children who currently have to walk down the hill on North 26th Street.*

34. {Project} *The neighborhood recommends that we look into ways to install a sidewalk on North 25th Street near Taylor School to provide a safe area in which to walk as well as to meet the needs of affected homeowners.*

35. {Project} *The neighborhood recommends that we install sidewalks in the areas where there are none as requested by the neighbors affected (see page 60).*

Street and Paving Recommendations:

36. {Project} *The neighborhood recommends the repaving of Vermont Street as soon as possible, especially the section near Old Dominion and the section near North Upton and one of the entrances to Taylor Park.*

37. {Project} *The neighborhood recommends the repaving of the short section of North Utah Street near the entrance to the Zachary Taylor Park.*

38. {Project} *The neighborhood recommends that the other streets listed above be prioritized for repaving or pothole repair in the near future and that repaving or repair be performed as requested by the neighbors affected.*

Street Lighting Recommendations:

39. {Project} *The neighborhood recommends installation of street lights be performed as requested by the neighbors affected (see page 63).*

Landscaping, Overgrowth and Plantings Recommendations

40. {Project} *The neighborhood recommends that the appropriate County maintenance authority attend to the upkeep of areas identified by the Civic Association on a regular schedule or work with the neighborhood to organize volunteer maintenance.*

Non Traffic Signage Recommendations:

41. {Project} *The neighborhood recommends that signage and street markings for the bike trails be improved throughout the neighborhood and particularly on Lorcom Lane and Military Road.*

42. {Project} *The neighborhood recommends that the missing street sign on Woodrow Street and the Neighborhood Watch sign on Randolph Street be replaced as soon as possible.*

43. {Project} *The neighborhood recommends that the street sign for Vermont Street be moved closer to the intersection at Lee Highway.*

44. {Project} *The neighborhood recommends that parking signs and street markings be installed and/or upgraded on Vernon Street.*

Neighborhood Signage Recommendations

45. {Project} *The neighborhood recommends that decorative signs designating the Donaldson Run Neighborhood area be installed at the main entrances to the neighborhood.*

Introduction

The Donaldson Run Civic Association began its neighborhood conservation planning effort in March of 1988 with the distribution of a neighborhood survey to all households within the Association boundaries. The results of this survey were tabulated and then the effort stopped for reasons unknown to the current Neighborhood Conservation Plan Committee.

Eleven years later, a new effort was begun to produce a Neighborhood Conservation Plan, the results of which you are now reading. A written survey was developed in June of 1999 and then mailed to approximately 960 households within the Association boundaries in July of 1999. During the months of September and October, 1999, the 322 returned surveys (34%) were tabulated and the results distributed to the Neighborhood Conservation Plan Committee. The first draft of the plan was completed and distributed for review in late December of 1999.

The draft and review process continued in 2000 with the publication of the second draft which was again sent out for review to all interested neighbors. Draft two was also submitted to the County for comments. All comments were then combined to produce the final Neighborhood Conservation Plan document that was approved by the Donaldson Run Civic Association at its monthly meeting on March 22, 2000. The approved Neighborhood Conservation Plan was then submitted to the Arlington County Board in September of 2000 after going through the approval process of the Neighborhood Conservation Advisory Committee and the Arlington Planning Commission.

Throughout the process, neighborhood participation was solicited and encouraged. The monthly newsletter (mailed to all 960 resident households) carried Neighborhood Conservation Plan updates and schedules, and the Neighborhood Conservation plan was discussed at every monthly Civic Association meeting from June 1999 through April of 2000. In August of 1999, the Donaldson Run Civic Association sponsored a neighborhood social at Potomac Overlook Park as a part of the Park's on-going outdoor music series. Neighborhood Conservation Committee members were on hand to discuss the Plan as well as to pass out surveys to be completed.

During the months of August, September and October, volunteers on the Neighborhood Conservation Committee walked the survey around to many areas of the neighborhood to encourage participation in the survey process and to make sure that all parts of the neighborhood had received the survey. Copies of the survey were made available at the three drop off sites (Cherrydale Library, Donaldson Run Pool, and Taylor School). Finally, a special neighborhood meeting was held in October to specifically address the critical areas of interest in our neighborhood. In short, the Association tried to include as many people in the process as possible and keep everyone informed of the process through our monthly newsletter.

The goals of the Donaldson Run Neighborhood Conservation Plan are to:

- Preserve the character of our neighborhood as a quiet, hilly and wooded neighborhood.
- Preserve property values in the neighborhood.
- Preserve and improve the parks and green spaces that we have.
- Identify areas that need improvement so that programs can be initiated to make these improvements, particularly concerning public safety and high-speed traffic in our neighborhood.

The format of this document is to present a general discussion on the major topics of Neighborhood Characteristics, Land Use and Zoning, Areas Adjacent to Our Neighborhood, Traffic, Parks and Neighborhood Beautification. Each topic is discussed in general terms and then in specific detail that includes neighborhood recommendations. All recommendations are then summarized in the Executive Summary and identified on a map for easy reference.

A project of this scope cannot be done alone, and we would like to acknowledge the contributions of the following individuals:

Neighborhood Conservation Plan Committee Members

Ned W. Rhodes, Chairman	Arleen Rhodes
Anne Wilson	Mike Green
Dan Radke	Ron Ohlerich
Chris Burbach	Helen B. Lane
Steve Grand	Elizabeth Apple
Peter Fallon	Theresa Fallon

Donaldson Run Executive Committee

Reviewers

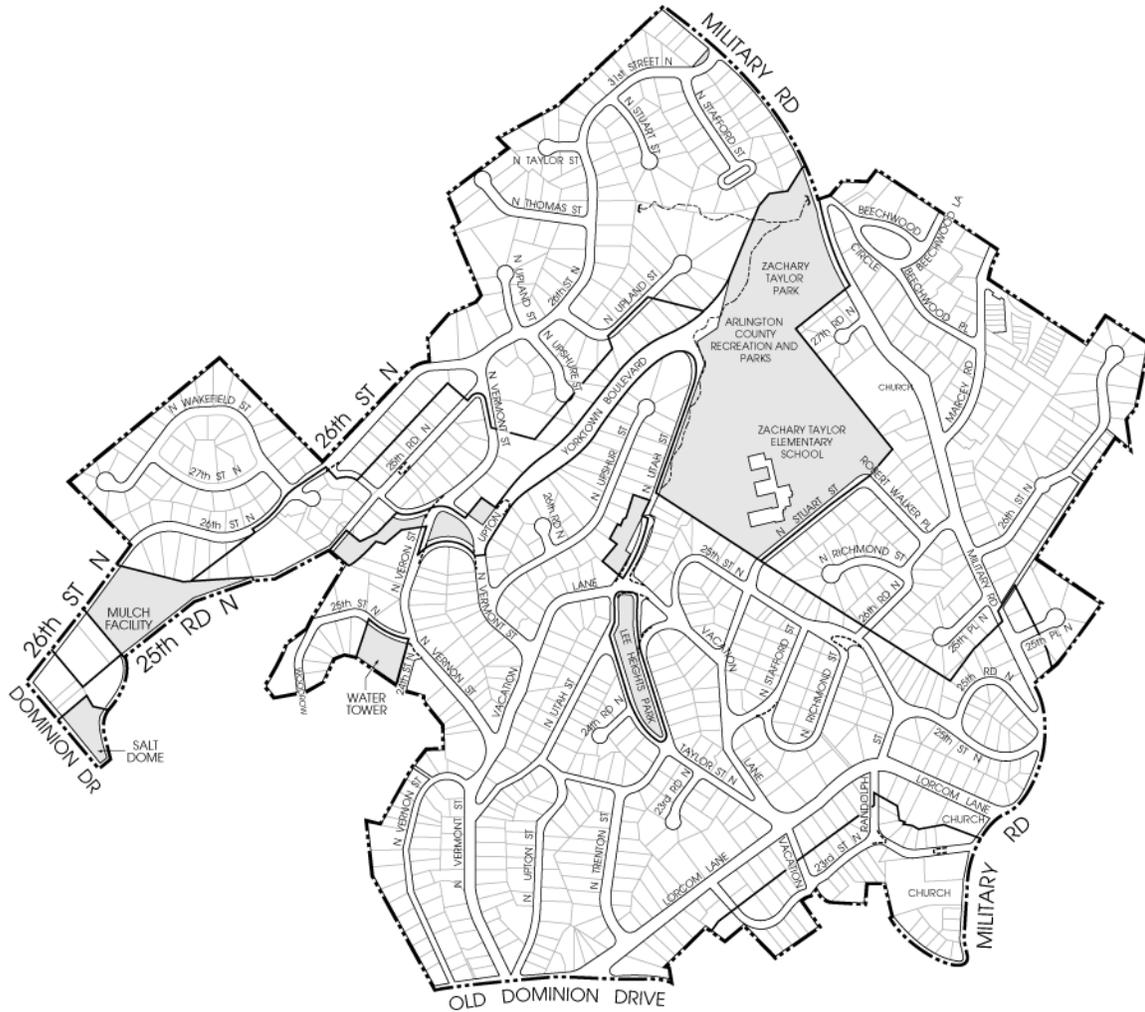
Sherwin Landfield	Rob Jones	Mike Pugh
Romona Hazera	Michael Kaas	Will McConnell
Tom Beahn	Stefan R. Fink	J.W. Connelly
George Saxton	Renée Jaussaud	David Gregg
John Bryans	Greg Gromada	Kathryn Ricard

We thank the Neighborhood Conservation Advisory Committee (NCAC) for its guidance and advice with the process.

We would especially like to thank the Arlington County staff and Christine Nixon who were so supportive of our project.

General Neighborhood Characteristics

Physically, the Donaldson Run Civic Association is bounded by the Washington Golf and Country Club, Military Road, Marcey Road, Lorcom Lane and Old Dominion Drive. Taylor Elementary School sits almost in the center of our neighborhood. The greatest characteristic of our neighborhood is green space. We have a lot of it and we all love it.



The Washington Golf and Country Club sits on one end of our neighborhood and we appreciate its open, green grounds. Potomac Overlook Regional Park, Marcey Park and Donaldson Run Park sit to our north and provide a wonderful wooded setting. And, we are fortunate to have Lee Heights Park and Zachary Taylor Park all within our boundaries. Many neighbors look out over these green spaces and we all appreciate their closeness. The neighborhood is united in its passion for these green spaces and wants to preserve them for all to use.

The people in Donaldson Run like living here. We know that for two reasons. First, everyone who responded to the question “Would you recommend living in this neighborhood?” said “yes.” Secondly, 108 or almost 34% of the respondents have lived here over 20 years. Most of the houses in



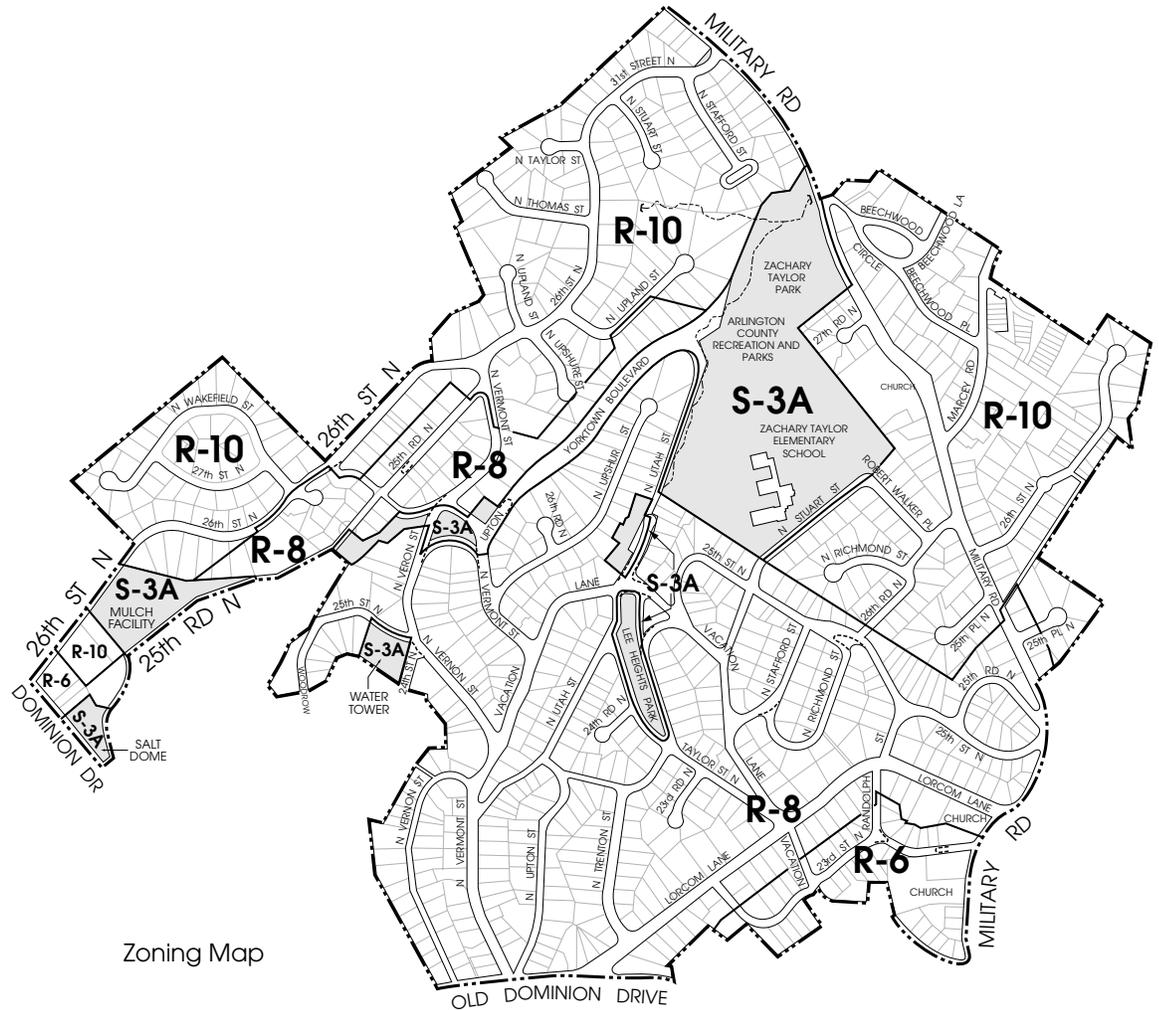
the neighborhood were built between 1941 and 1960 with the most common house style being the rambler, followed by the colonial. Many people like the fact that there are varied architectural styles in the neighborhood, including townhouses, split levels, farm houses, contemporaries and Cape Cods.

Of the 322 people who filled out the survey, 312 (97%) own their own home and 3% were renters. According to the survey results, 73% of the homes have two adults living there and 58% have no children under 18 living there. These facts seem to indicate an older mix of households who settled here, raised a family and continued to stay after the children were grown and gone. Many responded that this is a great neighborhood in which to raise a family.

The most recent census data we have is from 1990.

Median family income for our neighborhood is approximately \$100,000 and the range of house prices is \$200,000—\$800,000. Property values have started to increase after a period of relatively flat growth. Many respondents remarked on the fact that most of the houses and lawns in the area are well maintained.

A typical lot in this neighborhood would be a single family house on a quarter acre lot that contains an abundance of mature trees and borders a green space or is within walking distance of one. Zoning in the neighborhood is R8/R10 for single family homes and S-3A at Taylor School and our parks. The neighborhood has no land zoned for commercial use, a condition that adds to its charm.



Zoning Map

Donaldson Run is a quiet, wooded, suburban community that has the feel of a small town but has the advantage of being close to Washington DC. In fact, neighbors rated our location and convenience to everything that the metropolitan area has to offer as the most important thing they liked about the neighborhood. The second thing people listed was the abundance of mature trees and the quiet, park-like atmosphere of our neighborhood. And finally, the survey results said that many people like the neighbors themselves and their spirit.

When asked about what things they would like to improve in the neighborhood, the top item was traffic related. We have problems with cut-through traffic and speeding, and the neighbors would like some help. Reduced airplane noise and lessening the ugliness of the mass of overhead utility wires and cables were next on the list of desired improvement. The neighborhood would love to have less noise here and are overwhelmingly in favor of routing utility cables underground whenever possible.

History of Donaldson Run

Early Inhabitants (10,000 BC – 1860 AD)

Over ten thousand years ago when the first human beings passed through our neighborhood, it was cold and tundra-like. These hunters of large game were descendents of the Asian people who crossed the Bering land bridge. A spear point typical of these people was found during the excavation of the Donaldson Run swimming pool. As the climate slowly grew warmer the cultures of the inhabitants in our area evolved.

Pottery and other artifacts from both the Archaic (8000 – 1300 BC) and Woodland Cultures (1000 BC to 1608 AD) have been found near Donaldson Run. In the 1850s Robert Donaldson, the farmer from whom our neighborhood derives its name, found a soapstone bowl, which he used to hold chicken feed. This artifact of the Woodland Culture is now in the University of Pennsylvania museum and is dated to the late Archaic Period (2500-1300 BC).

Although Captain John Smith may have reached the mouth of Donaldson Run when he sailed up the Potomac in 1608, there was no permanent settlement in our neighborhood until after 1800. The first house in our neighborhood was that of Caleb Birch. He built his first log cabin early in the century and the farm was still in the family in 1850. On their 110 acres the Birches grew wheat, rye, corn and Irish potatoes and also had a market garden. They owned four horses, eight cows and 31 swine. The ruin of Caleb Birch's house was restored as a residence and greatly remodeled in 1939. A number of the original chestnut logs were incorporated in the restored structure, which is located at 4576 North 26th Street. A historical marker has been placed at the site.

In the early decades of the 19th century the inhabitants of our neighborhood lived on scattered and modest farms. Even though our area was then part of the original 10-mile square Federal District, the only roads serving our farmers were little more than cart tracks, along what is now Lee Highway and Glebe Road. Our farm families included the Marcys and the Donaldsons. Andrew Donaldson was also Superintendent of the Glebe, which belonged to Christ Church in Alexandria. It was Donaldson's duty to prevent the theft of timber by trespassers and to deliver every fourth load to Christ Church. Our county, then part of Alexandria County, was returned to Virginia in 1846. Around 1850 the Aqueduct Bridge across the Potomac at Georgetown was completed and in 1852 a plank toll road was built along what is now Lee Highway through Falls Church to Fairfax, then called Providence.

The Civil War and Following Decades (1860-1890)

The Civil War brought severe hardship to the farms along Donaldson Run and extreme damage to the natural environment. As soon as Virginia joined the Confederacy in the spring of 1861, our neighborhood became part of an armed camp, occupied by the Union Army. Forts were built above Chain Bridge, and Military Road was built by the Union Army to connect them with the fortifications to the south protecting the Capital.

Military Road reportedly was built in three days through what was described as broken and densely wooded country. An etching of the Civil War period shows Military Road as a muddy rutted swath. Most of the trees in the area were cut down to give a clear line of sight to the defenders and to remove cover for attacking enemies. Much topsoil washed away and erosion gullies soon formed. The origin of Military Road is noted on the historical marker in front of the Cherrydale Library.

As the war dragged on, the encamped soldiers destroyed woods, barns, furniture and homes for firewood. The end of the war left the inhabitants exhausted and impoverished. Although many of the locals had supported the South, some of the Yankee soldiers stayed and married local women.



In the next decade newcomers trickled into the area and civilization slowly took hold. A little community grew up on the periphery of our neighborhood where Glebe Road crossed what is now Lee Highway. The first public school that served our neighborhood's children was built in 1871 on Glebe Road. It was a one-room school, with one schoolmaster and about ninety pupils of assorted ages. It was replaced by a larger building with several teachers in 1885. A general store was located next door to the school.

Gentry, Trolley Lines and the Beginning of a Commuter Community (1890-1929)

After the war, the Commonwealth and local government were weak and unable to confront the gambling and criminal element which operated along the riverfront. Rosslyn was such a rough area that Donaldson Run area farmers returning from market in Georgetown often traveled through it in armed convoys. The election of a reform government in 1902 brought better public order and encouraged wealthy Washingtonians, in search of cooler locations for summer homes, to consider our area. Among these was Dr. Presley M. Rixey, the personal physician of President William McKinley, who was with McKinley when he was shot in 1901. Rixey later became Surgeon General and a member of Theodore Roosevelt's inner circle. Rixey bought the property on the periphery of our neighborhood now occupied by Marymount University and the Washington Golf and Country Club. When the Washington and Old Dominion Railway (trolley) line was built along what is now Old Dominion Drive, Rixey built a whistle stop for his family and guests. It was "the flossiest on the line" with a sign in foot high brass letters that said 'Rixey Station.' Roosevelt was a frequent guest and often went riding in the surrounding woods.

Rixey had an African-American valet named Richard Wallace, who had been a chauffeur for the Roosevelt family. Wallace discovered the abandoned Birch cabin (now at the intersection of North 26th and North Wakefield Streets) and asked Rixey if he could fix it up and use it as his cottage. Rixey agreed. In 1908, Rixey sold 75 acres to the Washington Golf and Country Club, one of the earliest golf clubs in the Washington area. When the new golf course was being laid out, Richard Wallace, who was assisting the surveyors, realized that one of the greens was to be located at his cottage. Wallace moved the markers so that his cottage would be spared. Rixey realized what Wallace had done but did not move the markers back. Rixey later deeded that portion of the estate to Wallace. Had Wallace not moved the marker, a chunk of our neighborhood would now be part of the golf course. The gnarled apple trees in front of the now remodeled cabin are said to have been planted by Wallace.



Development of the electric trolley lines, which ran from Rosslyn through Cherrydale and out to Great Falls, brought other touches of upscale urbanization to North Arlington. Frank Lyon, a newspaper publisher who later developed Lyon Park and Lyon Village, built a handsome residence in 1907 at what is now 4651 North 25th Street. This residence, called Lyonhurst, was the first home in the County to use electricity, which was tapped from the trolley line which ran along what is now Old Dominion Drive. Since 1946, when the Lyonhurst property became the headquarters of the Immaculate Heart Mission Fathers, it has been known as Missionhurst. The Joseph Tabor Johnson House at 4014 Lorcom Lane dates from 1907. Dr. Johnson named his residence Lorcom Farm, a combination of the names of his two sons Loren and Bascom, for whom he also built homes nearby. One of these later became the site of a Washington YWCA summer camp. The H-B Woodlawn School now occupies that site. The street name Vacation Lane has come down from the days of the summer camp.

Growth of the Federal City during the First World War brought more newcomers. Better roads and the advent of private automobiles soon began to shape North Arlington. The scattering of rural communities and summer residences was on its way to becoming a place of suburban neighborhoods whose residents lived in Arlington year round and commuted across the river to work. A public school opened in Cherrydale in 1916.

A significant milestone was the inauguration in 1925 of Washington-Lee High School, built about half a mile south of our neighborhood. Before then, County students wishing to attend public high schools commuted to the District of Columbia.

Despite the urbanization on its periphery, our immediate neighborhood still retained its rural character. Except for Military Road and Lorcom Lane few roads cut across our neighborhood. Yet change was coming. In 1927, a public water supply connecting Arlington with the District of Columbia water system was turned on. Prior to that Arlington's water had come from springs and wells. Among those who campaigned most avidly for the water bond were real estate developers who were buying farms and properties in our neighborhood.

The Depression and World War II (1929-1946)

The Great Depression caused a dramatic fall in real estate values and the postponement of the subdivision developments envisioned for our neighborhood. The Washington Golf and Country Club lost members, operated in the red and came very close to bankruptcy and closure.

In 1932 the County Board began the rationalization of street names. Prior to the renaming of the streets, each neighborhood named its own streets. As a result there were eleven Washington Streets, ten Arlington Streets and five Lee Streets scattered about the County. The committee undertaking the task divided the streets into a north and a south area divided by Arlington Boulevard. Streets paralleling the Boulevard were numbered from the Boulevard. Perpendicular streets were named alphabetically starting in the east, beginning with a one-syllable, then a two-syllable, and finally a three-syllable name. This rational system would result in strange anomalies when it was applied in the 1950s to the winding streets of our neighborhood's new subdivisions.

A zoning ordinance, the County's first, was adopted in 1930, which would greatly influence the development of Donaldson Run. The plan was part of a larger effort to guide the growth of the Washington metropolitan region that was championed by the National Capital Park and Planning Commission. Adopting the ideas of landscape architects like Frederick Law Olmstead, it encouraged residential subdivision planning which would plat streets to natural topography rather than to a grid. While a few earlier subdivisions in Arlington, such as Lyon Village, include some curvilinear roads with the development, their reliance on topography to guide street layout is minimal. Donaldson Run's street layout takes full advantage of the hilly terrain, unusual for an Arlington subdivision at that time.

Although the subdivision was now platted, new house construction was very slow throughout the 1930s. An exception was the complex of a dozen houses on winding streets and wooded lots called Beechwood Hills, developed in the mid-1930s. A stand of native beech trees there has been preserved. Beechwood Hills is the oldest subdivision in the neighborhood. It is an example of garden city urban design concepts that were popular during the 1930s. During World War II home building came to a standstill.

1946 to the Present

After the war, our neighborhood as we know it today developed swiftly. Housing starts burgeoned and the hillsides soon were covered by one-family suburban homes. The principal builder was Marvin T. Broyhill and Sons. Although the Broyhills built a wide variety of houses, the typical Broyhill house was a three-bedroom Rambler which sold for about twenty thousand dollars. Most of the houses in the neighborhood today are ramblers built in the 1950s. The biggest problem confronted by Broyhill builders was our extremely hilly terrain. Moving the earth around cost more than the construction of the houses. The Broyhill houses had the reputation of being well constructed and were often purchased sight unseen. Most featured all electric GE kitchens, with the latest appliances including dishwashers.

About 1950 the Broyhill Forest subdivision was completed and North 26th Street, which came down from Glebe Road, and North 31st Street which came up from Military Road were joined, creating 26th/31st Street, one of North Arlington's strangest street name anomalies (and is even listed in Ripley's "Believe it or Not" according to The Washington Post) and providing a cut-through from Glebe to Military Road. The homeowners along the two streets were not happy when they were connected.



Some had been told when they bought their homes that the streets would never be connected. The line of trees along the golf course on North 26th Street recalls the time when this was a quiet country lane.

New families moving into the neighborhood at the height of the baby boom also required newer, larger schools. In 1954 Taylor Elementary School opened on Stuart Street and the smaller, older Marshall School on Glebe Road was closed. The polling place for the Marshall precinct was also shifted to Taylor School. In 1958 the Donaldson Run Recreation Association swimming pool opened. It was one of the first community swimming pools in Virginia. The struggle to raise money and establish the pool helped strengthen the sense of community. The pool and Taylor Elementary School are the two institutions that today give the area a greater sense of neighborhood.

New residents also organized two new churches and erected attractive church buildings. In 1951 St. Andrew's Episcopal Church was built at the corner of Lorcom Lane and Military Road. To accommodate the growing congregation, a larger edifice was built in 1961, incorporating the first building as a chapel. A Korean congregation, with membership from around the County and beyond, was organized at St. Andrew's in 1984. In 1958 the Church of the Covenant Presbyterian Church was organized. Members met for Sunday services at Taylor School until the new church was completed in late 1962. The building, at 2666 Military Road, is on the site of the old Marcy farmhouse, which had included some of the timbers of the original Marcy log cabin. The old timbers were used once more in the building of Evans Farm Inn in McLean.

The Arlington County Master Plan of 1961 included road construction projects that today seem undesirable. It included an extension of Yorktown Boulevard which would have paved over upper Donaldson Run and left it as a storm sewer. However, public opinion was shifting away from highway building and the green and rocky banks of the Run became the center of efforts to preserve trees and neighborhoods. Many old trees were felled as Military Road and Lorcom Lane were widened, but the extension of Yorktown Boulevard did not happen.

The establishment of Potomac Overlook Regional Park in 1966 preserved the last significant undeveloped area on the periphery of our neighborhood. A nature center was opened in 1974. We who now live in the most urbanized county in Virginia are fortunate that this green, natural area with its diverse wildlife and native trees was saved.

Today upper Donaldson Run, bordered by a bike path, flows through the Zachary Taylor Park and provides a green area in the heart of our neighborhood. Remnants of the 1961 Master Plan are the peculiar entrance to Yorktown Boulevard off North 26th Street, and the fireplugs along the bike trail. Although the Nature Area is no haven for native plants, it is a pleasant place to jog, ride a bike, or walk. There are big tulip poplars, oaks, and beech, but most of the under-story has been overrun by English ivy, Japanese honeysuckle, bamboo, garlic mustard and other alien species which are crowding out the remnant of native plants. If there is a pause in the noise from the planes departing Reagan National Airport, the song of a wood thrush may still be heard on summer evenings.

Unfortunately, the water of the Run is too acidic to support a healthy variety of aquatic life. The stream absorbs heavy fertilizer runoff from neighborhood lawns and the golf course. Another problem has been the leaf mulch pile which receives the fallen leaves of the entire County. It is located near the headwaters of the Run. As the mulch pile grew, the brown acidic runoff entered the Run and became a significant pollutant point for the Chesapeake Bay. Several years ago the County built a cement floor beneath the mulch pile to deter the runoff. The clarity of the water is now improved and neighborhood children know where to find a few crayfish. Eels have entered the Run every year since the time of the Indians. In 1997 there was a large “die off” of eels. The cause of the “die off” is not known, but too much fertilizer in the storm sewer runoff was among the suspected causes.

Donaldson Run Today

Despite continuing urbanization, a surprising amount of wildlife still inhabits the Donaldson Run watershed. The list of mammals includes deer, possums, raccoons, woodchucks, foxes, squirrels, flying squirrels, bats, shrews and moles. The bobwhite quail, whose calls could be heard in the neighborhood 25 years ago, have disappeared with filling in of the last empty lots. The common American crow is now the most visible and audible bird in the area.

Overall, our neighborhood is aging gracefully. Houses are well maintained and many have been remodeled. It will be interesting to see how the neighborhood grows and matures over the next hundred years.

General Neighborhood Concerns

Neighborhood Setting

Of the people who answered the survey, 98% feel safe in the neighborhood, and that is also one of the things that people liked about the neighborhood in general. When asked whether they would like more police presence, the responses were generally no, except on the issue of traffic and speed control. In addition, many responded that they rarely see police cars in the neighborhood.

Eighty percent of the respondents indicated that their street was not under a neighborhood watch program or that it was inactive; 20% indicated that they would like to establish such a neighborhood watch program. This seems like a good project for the Civic Association to take on in conjunction with the County Police department.

The results of our survey confirmed that the neighborhood is very interested in its appearance. Ninety-seven percent, or 304 out of the 313 responding to this question, indicated their support for the under-grounding of utility cables whenever possible. Most found above-ground cables ugly. Some said they would share part of the cost of burying them.



One hundred nine people pointed out structures, abandoned vehicles or areas in the neighborhood that they considered eyesores or safety hazards. Most of these comments were directed toward a few poorly maintained homes and abandoned vehicles that had been there for years. The Community Code Enforcement Office (703-228-3232) has indicated that they will respond to complaints concerning individual properties.

While we were not able to obtain a significant number of responses from renters, many respondents indicated that they were aware of rental homes on their streets and that many of them seemed to have a large number of cars parked in front during the evening hours. Enforcement of the "maximum of four unrelated persons living in one home" rule is possible if the neighborhood provides the addresses of suspected houses to the Community Code Enforcement Office (703-228-3232). Enforcement would lead to reduced traffic, better availability of parking in certain parts of the neighborhood and less clutter.

Since the neighborhood is close to the commercial jet flight path of Reagan National Airport, it is not surprising that 61% of the people indicated that there was a problem with aircraft noise. Some of the comments included the observation that the noise was so loud that it drowned out conversation and that many do not support any additional flights from Reagan National.

Our survey included a question on whether the residents supported the installation of benches along neighborhood streets for pedestrian use. Sixty percent of the respondents said no, and 30% said yes they would support the installation. The common thread of those who answered either yes or no was that they supported the installation of benches in our parks and at bus stops. The County has indicated that bench requests can be directed to Eric Smith at 703-228-3681.

It is clear that the number one wildlife problem in the neighborhood is the crows. Forty-six percent of the survey respondents identified crows as a problem. Other animals of concern were deer 17% and rats 16%. Rats had been seen at Taylor and Lee Heights Park and around areas of new construction. It was noted that the County has been responsive in setting bait in sewers. This potential problem area needs to be monitored on a continuing basis.

Neighborhood Setting Recommendations:

1. {Policy} *The neighborhood would like to see more of a police presence to monitor and to control traffic and speeding problems. If possible, the neighborhood would appreciate occasional police drive-throughs on all of our streets. In particular, the neighborhood would like to see an increased presence along North 26th / 31st street to discourage bottle throwing, littering and other such behavior.*

2. {Policy} *The neighborhood supports the under-grounding of utility cables wherever possible.*

3. {Policy} *Because the neighborhood is on the main flight path of Reagan National Airport, the neighborhood would like to see County authorities continue to actively resist any efforts made to increase numbers of flights at this airport.*

4. {Policy} *The neighborhood supports the installation of benches in our parks, at park entrances and at bus stops.*

5. {Policy} *The neighborhood recommends that the County look into the problem of rats in and around Lee Heights Park and the entrances to Zachary Taylor Park.*

In-fill development

For the purposes of our survey, we defined in-fill as the development of new, single family homes between or behind existing homes. Of the 320 responses to this question, 77% were against the practice, 12% were in favor of it and 11% had no opinion.

People were against the practice of in-fill because it destroys the character of the neighborhood, increases housing density, and cuts down on the amount of green space. Many people expressed a dislike for "monster" homes being built on small lots and how they tower over the existing homes. Many expressed the thoughts that the existing ordinances were probably sufficient, but that we need better enforcement.

Even the people supporting the practice of in-fill generally agreed with those who opposed in-fill, in that the house sizes need to be reasonable, not take up the whole lot and make an attempt to blend in with the character of the neighborhood.

Our neighborhood supports the enforcement of the existing policy regarding the percentage of a lot that can be built upon. We also would support a review of that policy with the thought of decreasing that percentage.

Pipestem development

For the purposes of our survey, we defined pipestem development as the construction of single family homes that get access to the street through a narrow stem with a driveway. This type of development is usually created around an existing home to allow a new home to be built in the backyard.

Of the 319 responses to this question, 84% did not support the practice, while 6.5% supported it and 9% had no opinion. The reasons for not supporting it were essentially the same as those who did not want in-fill development. Most thought that the houses were close enough and that pipestem development would increase clutter and population density in an already crowded area. Many felt that the continued enforcement of existing zoning ordinances would go a long way in stopping the practice of pipestem development.

The neighborhood would support modifications to the subdivision ordinance to increase access requirements for pipestem and in-fill development to a 50-foot width through the existing lot to a new subdivided lot (currently 40 feet) and to establish a minimum street coverage of at least 60 percent for new houses.

Pipestem and In-fill development recommendations:

6. {Policy} *While the neighborhood recognizes that pipestem and in-fill development are allowed "by right," the majority of the neighborhood does not support either. The neighborhood recommends a careful review of any variance request to ensure that the development blends in with the character of the neighborhood and surrounding homes.*

County Guidelines for Development

In our survey we asked residents if they were in favor of the establishment of County guidelines for new residential development or renovations. Of the 300 respondents to this question, 81% were in favor of establishing County guidelines, especially for new development. Many thought that the existing ordinances give sufficient guidelines for renovations and they were more concerned about new development.

County Guideline Recommendations:

7. {Policy} *The neighborhood recommends that the County consider the establishment of guidelines for new residential development concerning the size of the structure and how it fits on the lot, how the architecture blends in with the neighborhood, how it affects crowding, how it affects parking and traffic and how it affects mature trees.*

Designated Historical District

We also asked our neighbors whether they would want to have their homes be in a designated historical district that would govern the kinds and types of modifications or improvements that could be done to their homes. Of the 306 respondents to this question, 72.5% said they would not like to live in a historic district, 9% said they would and 18% had no opinion.

Many expressed the opinion that the houses are too new and that we would not qualify for such a designation (which is true). Far and away the most common response to the question was "absolutely not." The most interesting response was that the 50s and 60s were too recent to be considered historic.

Historic District Recommendations:

8. {Policy} *The neighbors are not interested in having our neighborhood designated a historic district.*

Local Shopping

Three hundred eighteen people responded to our question about whether they used the local shops. Sixty-three percent of the respondents said that they did “all the time” and another 36% said that they did “occasionally.” Approximately 58% of the respondents said that they “rarely” or “never” walked or biked to the local shops, and we believe this is probably due to the fact that it is very difficult and dangerous to cross Old Dominion Drive to get to the Lee Heights shops. Traffic moves very fast and there are no pedestrian crosswalks in that area. In addition, the Lorcom Lane/Old Dominion intersection was specifically identified as not being pedestrian friendly due to the right turn without stopping as you come up Lorcom Lane to Old Dominion and the fact that drivers making the left turn from the Lee Heights shops onto Old Dominion also have a hard time seeing pedestrians.

The single most important thing people felt would improve our local shopping was a pedestrian crosswalk or pedestrian crossover on Old Dominion Drive. The Virginia Department of Transportation has indicated that they have been studying the Wakefield/Old Dominion intersection for the installation of a traffic signal, but it may be two years off.



One way to make the pedestrian crossing at Wakefield and Old Dominion more pedestrian friendly would be to cut a passage through the median in the middle of Old Dominion. Currently there are curb cuts on both ends of the painted crosswalk, but without this passageway, wheelchairs, strollers and bicycles have to leave the crosswalk or jump the curb to make the crossing. We look forward to working with the Waverly Hills Civic Association in making these improvements.

Local Shopping recommendations:

9. {Project} *The neighborhood recommends further study of the pedestrian crossing situation on Old Dominion Drive near the Lee Heights shopping center. The neighborhood would like to see a more pedestrian-friendly situation with the addition of a crosswalk, crossing signals or a pedestrian walkover.*

10. {Project} *The neighborhood recommends further study of the Lorcom Lane/Old Dominion intersection to determine ways to make it safer for pedestrians.*

Other Areas of Interest to Donaldson Run Civic Association

Adjacent to the Donaldson Run neighborhood are a number of County-owned or privately-owned sites in non-residential use. Residents regard several of these quite favorably (Donaldson Run Pool, Missionhurst and Washington Golf and Country Club) as green spaces contributing to the neighborhood's uniqueness. They are divided regarding the utility of one County-owned facility in its current use (the Cherrydale Library). At the same time, they have concerns regarding the aesthetics and upkeep of several others (the Mulch Pile, Salt Dome, Lee Pumping Station and H-B Woodlawn). One privately owned site (Marymount University) is widely viewed as overdeveloped, and residents strongly oppose its further expansion.

Neighborhood residents are concerned about the future of many of these sites, as they fear they could someday be put to more commercial uses or sold to private developers. They would like to be informed should changes be contemplated in their status. Most would prefer that these sites be converted into (or preserved as) green spaces in the event they cease to be used for current purposes. Since many of these sites are in the Old Dominion Civic Association, we look forward to working with them to make improvements.

The following section discusses each of these sites individually. It describes the history and current uses of each, analyzes the problems associated with it and makes recommendations.

Mulch Pile

The mulch pile is located at 26th Street and Yorktown, directly across from Marymount University. Operated by the County's Department of Environmental Services, the property serves as a short-term storage site for leaves collected by the County. The resulting mulch is made available, free-of-charge, to County residents to haul away for their own use.

The County began using the property, once a wooded lot, as a leaf dump in the 1960s as it sought to end the practice of residents burning leaves at the curb. In the early 1980s, the site was transformed into a mulch facility. Many trees were cleared to make room and, in the 1990s, the site was graded and paved to eliminate erosion from the site. Leaves are stored at the site during the leaf collection season (Nov-Jan) and are then hauled off-site for mulching. The site remains empty from early spring through early November.

At one point, in mid-1980, Marymount University proposed a land swap with the County in order to use the site for a soccer facility, but the plan ran into strong neighborhood opposition.

Residents raised a number of concerns about the mulch pile. Many complained about the smell emitted by the facility, as well as its appearance and the noise associated with it. Several also expressed the belief that, contrary to the posted rules, outside contractors haul away a lot of the mulch. While many valued having such a facility, a substantial number did not believe that it belonged in a residential neighborhood. A few complained about the County storing trucks at the facility, while a others worried about its environmental impact on Donaldson Run stream, which flows nearby.

There was no consensus regarding alternative uses for the site, though almost all opposed turning it over to Marymount University. Several proposed turning the site into a playground, sports field or recreational facility, but others were opposed.

A few years ago, a small park or grassy area was developed next to the mulch pile that included benches, a water fountain, a covered bench and landscaping. Over the years since its installation, there has been no evidence that the landscaping has been maintained. In fact, no new mulch appears to have been added around any of the trees. This must be a manpower problem since the mulch is readily available 25 feet away. We would like to see this park-like setting properly maintained. It is understood that this park-like setting is under the control of the Department of Environmental Services and is not eligible for improvements under the Small Parks Improvement Program or through Neighborhood Conservation projects. In addition, since it is not a public "park," regular maintenance is not performed by the Department of Parks, Recreation and Community Resources.

Mulch Pile Recommendations:

11. {Project} *The neighborhood recommends that a landscaping plan be developed, implemented and maintained to enhance the park area that is adjacent to the mulch pile.*

12. {Project} *The neighborhood recommends that the County monitor site runoff to verify that it is not polluting Donaldson Run stream and that annual reports be provided to the Civic Association.*

13. {Policy} *The neighborhood would like to be advised and involved early on if land use of the mulch pile changes.*

Salt Dome

The salt dome is located off of Old Dominion where it intersects with North 25th Street. The County's Water, Sewer and Streets division uses the facility to store salt for its snow removal operations, along with several of its snow removal trucks. Built in 1930, the facility was originally used as a water tank. Sometime later, the bottom was filled in and it was converted to its current use. The salt dome was recently fixed up by the County in order to give the facility an additional 10-year life span. In the meantime, the County has been buying up or signing life contracts on the adjoining properties, with the intent of eventually either expanding the salt dome facility or employing the property for other County uses. However, no master plan has been drawn up for the property.

Residents dislike the salt dome, primarily because they think it is an eyesore. Several also complained about the noise associated with the site and traffic problems that were compounded by the presence of an office complex directly across the street.

Many residents would like to see the salt dome removed and the site converted to other purposes. Others think that at the very least shrubs should be planted and the area landscaped so that the dome is not as obtrusive. Another possibility would be to enclose the area with a fence and appropriate landscaping as was done at the VEPCO substation behind the Central Library.

Salt Dome Recommendations:

14. {Project} *The neighborhood recommends planting bushes or trees and adding additional landscaping to improve the appearance of the site.*

15. {Policy} *The neighborhood would like to be advised and involved early on if land use of the salt dome and adjoining sites changes.*

Missionhurst

Missionhurst Mission Center (4651 North 25th Street, the former Lyonhurst Estate—see page 17) is the headquarters of the American Province of the Congregation of the Immaculate Heart of Mary, a Catholic missionary order. The congregation was founded in Belgium in 1862. Worldwide it has about 1400 members who are working in over 20 countries. Many of the missionaries are pastors in impoverished Third World parishes. Others are involved in community development and social services. The American Office publishes a magazine about the Order's activities and raises funds to support the Order's work. The Center also holds prayer retreats and has facilities for hosting conferences. It can accommodate 17 overnight guests and has a conference room that can accommodate 50 people. The complex includes the old Lyonhurst mansion, a two-story office building constructed in 1960, a parking area, a tennis court and a playing field that is sometimes used for youth soccer practices. The complex is well maintained.

16. {Policy} *The neighborhood recommends that if the Missionhurst area ever becomes available, the County should consider its purchase for public green space.*

17. {Policy} *The neighborhood would like to be advised and involved early on if land use of Missionhurst changes.*

H-B Woodlawn

Located at 4100 North Vacation Lane, alongside Old Dominion Drive, H-B Woodlawn was formed in 1978 through the merger of two smaller alternative education programs, Hoffman Boston and Woodlawn. The former was a program for high school students that allowed for significant independent study and apprenticeships; the latter a program for 7-9th graders which focused on contract-based work. In 1978, Arlington County merged the two programs and moved the new program into the Stratford Junior High School building. The resulting program is the only public alternative education program for middle and high school students. H-B Woodlawn currently has an enrollment of 506 students ranging in grade from 6-12. Governed by biweekly “Town Meetings” of students, teachers and parents, H-B Woodlawn is designed to provide students with greater academic freedom than traditional schools permit. Students are chosen for the program from throughout Arlington by lottery. In addition to the school building, there are tennis courts, a baseball field and a soccer field on the property.

A few residents thought H-B Woodlawn should revert to being a neighborhood school. A few others complained about students wandering around the neighborhood and about weekend parties. A greater number complained about the poor condition of the school’s soccer field and that the tennis courts should be resurfaced and better maintained. There was a suggestion to add a water fountain. Several felt the area around the back entrance of the school was dangerous.

H-B Woodlawn Recommendations:

18. {Project} *The neighborhood recommends that the athletic fields be re-seeded, that additional lighting be installed and an outside drinking fountain be installed.*

19. {Policy} *The neighborhood would like to be advised and involved early on if land use of H-B Woodlawn changes.*

Cherrydale Library

Cherrydale Library is a County-run library on North Military Road just off Lee Highway. The Cherrydale Community Library, as it was first known, is believed to have been founded around 1922-1923 and was originally sponsored by the Cherrydale League of Women Voters. The current contemporary-style building was opened in 1961. Its 5,500 square feet of space house 30,000 items.

Eighty-eight percent of the respondents to our survey indicated that they believed it was an asset to the neighborhood. Many said they visited the facility at least once a week even though the main branch is less than a mile away.

Several residents also complained about the condition of the building, particularly its roof, and urged the County to give it a facelift. A few others argued that the facility functioned more as a daycare center than a library. Another suggestion was to explore the possibility of better separating the upstairs from the rest of the facility so as to be available for small group meetings and children's sessions.

There was some concern that if the library were to close, the building would be converted to commercial use.

Cherrydale Library Recommendations:

20. {Policy} *The neighborhood is passionate in its belief that Cherrydale Library is a valuable community resource and should remain open.*

21. {Policy} *The neighborhood recommends upgrading and developing the facility into more of a community center.*

22. {Policy} *The neighborhood would like to be advised and involved early on if land use of Cherrydale Library changes.*

Lee Pumping Station

The Lee Pumping Station is tucked back in the woods between Vernon Street and North Wakefield. There a large, green water tower hovers over the Donaldson Run neighborhood. The Station is part of the main water supply system which draws water from Dalecarlia Reservoir and distributes it throughout the County. Underground tanks near the tower store additional drinking water. The facility was constructed by the County in the 1940s. Attached to the walkway rail of the tower are three cellular antennas that are owned and operated by Sprint. They have a power output of 20 watts and transmit in the 1.9 GHZ range. There are also several receive-only and land mobile antennas (which have a power output of 500 watts) operated by the County.

Measurements of the radio frequency emissions by the Sprint antennas conducted over the last two years have shown levels well within the acceptable range as defined by the ANSI/IEEE standard (10% of the standard in 1998, 3.6% in 1999 and 16% in 2000).

Several residents complained that dead trees and other undergrowth in the area around the tower posed a fire hazard. Many residents voiced opposition to having any further antennas attached to the tower. A significant number expressed fears about the area around the tower eventually being developed into housing.

Lee Pumping Station Recommendations:

23. {Policy} *The neighborhood would like to continue to receive the annual radio frequency (RF) measurement reports that are required of Sprint.*

24. {Policy} *The neighborhood would like to be advised and involved early on if land use of Lee Pumping Station changes.*

Marymount University

The main campus of Marymount University is located off Glebe Road. Marymount was founded as a women's college in 1950 by Bishop Ireton. Now an "independent, comprehensive Catholic university," Marymount "combines the liberal arts tradition with career preparation." It is governed by a board of trustees comprised of members of the Religious Order of the Sacred Heart of Mary, graduates of Marymount, and corporate and professional executives.

Marymount has grown considerably over the last two decades, to the point where it now enrolls approximately 3,900 co-ed students. In order to cope with this growth, the university has greatly expanded its physical plant and facilities on the main campus, and opened campuses in Ballston and Loudon.

Residents had a number of complaints about Marymount University. In general, they felt that the main campus had grown enough. Several complained about traffic congestion near the university and a lack of adequate parking. Many voiced opposition to any further development or land purchases by the university in and around the Donaldson Run neighborhood. A few wanted to see the university offer use of some of its facilities to neighborhood residents.

Marymount University Recommendations:

25. {Policy} *The neighborhood recommends that we maintain and monitor the conditions of the Marymount use permit U-1671-65-2 as it pertains to student caps, parking and land use.*

26. {Policy} *The neighborhood recommends that Marymount do a better job of litter control along 26th street. The neighborhood would appreciate more frequent clean up efforts as well as the placement of several trash cans to hold the litter that now winds up on the street.*

27. {Policy} *The neighborhood recommends Marymount do a better job of informing students of the zoned parking restrictions along 26th street and to alert them to the hazards of making U turns in that same area.*

28. {Policy} *The neighborhood recommends that Marymount complete the landscaping effort that was begun when the parking garage was built. Many of the original plantings have died off and have not been replaced leaving unsightly "holes" in the landscape.*

29. {Policy} *The neighborhood would like to be advised and involved early on if land use of Marymount University changes.*

Donaldson Run Recreation Association Pool

Completed in 1958, this private community swimming pool is located at the end of Marcey Road, bordering the property of the Potomac Overlook Park. There is a lengthy waiting list for those wishing to become members. Set down in a hollow, the facility features one large pool and one tot pool, a snack bar, locker rooms and substantial green space.

The swimming pool has long been a point of pride within the neighborhood and is used as a gathering place where many of our residents truly feel the spirit of neighborhood and community. Many recognize what a valuable asset the pool is to our community.

Residents' comments about the pool were generally quite favorable. Several appreciate the open green space. A few identified it as one of the neighborhood's great treasures. Many residents expressed concern that the area might be developed if the pool were ever to close.

There were a few complaints about the pool's public address system being too loud. One resident complained that runoff from the pool is eroding his property.

Donaldson Run Pool Recommendations:

30. {Policy} *The neighborhood would like to be advised and involved early on if land use of the Donaldson Run Pool changes.*

Washington Golf and Country Club

Washington Golf and Country Club is an exclusive, members-only country club located next to Marymount University at 3017 North Glebe Road. The club's extensive property is bounded by Glebe, Rock Spring Road Street, Military Road, and 26th/31st Street. The club features an 18-hole, par-70 golf course, a driving range, a large clubhouse and dining room.

Residents were quite favorable in their views of the WGCC. The club is regarded by most to be a good neighbor.

Residents appreciate the green space it provides. Several commended the club for opening its July Fourth fireworks to the neighborhood.

Several residents would like to see the club make its grounds even more accessible to the neighborhood. One suggested a path be cut through the club where neighborhood residents could walk. A few others suggested those in the neighborhood be offered free or reduced-price memberships.



Washington Golf and Country Club Recommendations:

31. {Policy} *The neighborhood would like to be advised and involved early on if land use of the Washington Golf and Country Club changes.*

Zachary Taylor Elementary School



Zachary Taylor Elementary School was built in 1953 on eight acres purchased the year before. Since that time, the school has undergone some dramatic structural changes. In the early 1970s, renovation was completed adding a considerable amount of square footage to the building. This school currently has enrollment of over 560 students, and a teaching staff of 40.

Zachary Taylor School provides many services to our community beyond the education of our children. The school is used as a meeting place for our community civic association, the scouts, and as a voting poll location. The indoor gym is available after hours to both children and adults via the Parks and Recreation programs.

Zachary Taylor Elementary School Recommendations:

32. {Policy} *The neighborhood would like to be advised and involved early on if land use of Zachary Taylor Elementary School changes.*

The neighborhood will work with the Neighborhood Traffic Calming Commission to find solutions to traffic problems on designated “neighborhood” streets and with the Department of Public Works to find solutions to traffic problems on “non-neighborhood” (major/minor arterial) streets.

Increasing volume, combined with the speed of the motor vehicle traffic and failure of drivers to obey traffic signs and street markings, results in unsafe conditions for children, pets, pedestrians, and bicyclists, as well as possible damage to the adjoining properties. It appears that more and more commuters are using Military Road, Lorcom Lane and North 26th/31st Street as alternatives to Lee Highway, I-66 and the George Washington Parkway. Many of these drivers use these Donaldson Run streets to avoid increasing congestion on their way to the Metro, shopping malls, DC restaurants, DC employment centers and other places of business.

Automobiles are recognized as being necessities within the neighborhood as more than 46% of the respondents reported using them for commuting to work. It is interesting to note that the same percentage consider speeding cars to be a hazard to pedestrians within the neighborhood. Thus, control, not elimination, of automobiles is clearly the desire of many living in the neighborhood.

Bicycle Traffic and Bus Service

In general, residents are satisfied with the bike trails in the neighborhood. Of those who expressed a desire for improvement, most were concerned with trees and brush blocking the paths or the rough condition of the pavement. Residents were also generally satisfied with the bus service although a significant minority was concerned that bus service is frequently late and undependable.

Specific Concerns and Recommendations

From both the survey and the discussion meetings with residents, the primary concern in the transportation/traffic area involves danger from automobiles. The overwhelming concern is speeding and the impact that speeding has on tranquility, safety and livability within the neighborhood.

While approximately one-third of the survey respondents indicated that they could not identify any traffic hazards and they did not know of areas where the traffic exceeded the posted speed limit, the vast majority cited these issues as problems. In addition, *more than 80% of the respondents who support traffic calming measures support physical devices (e.g., all-way stop signs, traffic circles, speed humps and planted medians such as are used in Lyon Village)* while fewer than 20% believe that police enforcement alone will solve the problems in the neighborhood. The combination of devices found on Key Boulevard in the Lyon Village area suggests a method of traffic calming that may be appropriate for this area.

The following are specific areas that were identified as significant problem areas and issues to be corrected in consultation with County staff.

North 26th/31st Street

North 26th/31st Street is a minor arterial connecting Glebe Road/Old Dominion Drive with Military Road. North 26th Street and North 31st Street were originally designed to dead-end and were not planned to connect. While this street may be designated as a minor arterial, the original design, including width, grade, curves, and housing locations limits the usefulness and safety of the street. In the one mile that the street meanders through the civic association area, there are 12 curves and 11 major grade changes, including several extremely steep hills. At no point does the road remain level or straight for more than 40 yards, and several of the curves exceed 90 degrees from beginning to end. North 26th/31st Street is also two lanes its entire length and even has areas where there are no sidewalks on either side of the street.

DC-bound commuter traffic coming from Old Dominion Drive in Fairfax County uses the turn onto North 26th/31st Street as a convenient way of bypassing traffic lights on Old Dominion Drive and Lee Highway. The original traffic plans for Marymount University show no allowances for the increased enrollment, the addition of a graduate program, night classes, a parking garage and intercollegiate sports, all of which have increased traffic on North 26th/31st Street.

Given the high volume of traffic and the nature of commuting drivers, speeds in excess of 35 MPH except on uphill segments are normal. The single stop sign on the road is routinely ignored. Residents reported that they are unable to leave their cars parked on the street overnight for fear of property damage from cars traveling too fast. Egress from driveways during rush hour is dangerous due to traffic volume, speed, and the poor design of the road.

North 26th/31st Street Recommendations:

33. {Policy} *The neighborhood recommends that the classification of North 26th/31st street should be changed to residential from minor arterial.*

34. {Project} *The neighborhood believes that the intersection of Old Dominion and North 26th Street could benefit from the installation of some sort of traffic control device that operates during rush hours.*

35. {Project} *The neighborhood recommends that traffic calming measures be installed on 26th/31st to slow traffic down.*

26th Road North

This is a road that carries a considerable amount of traffic from Military Road to Taylor School. Because of the number of small children in the area of the school, it is a serious concern. In addition, it is difficult to turn left from Military Road onto 26th Road because of the hill on Military Road. Although most residents appreciate Taylor School, there is a parking problem on Robert Walker Place caused by the school that affects both the quality of life and safety in the neighborhood.

26th Road North Recommendations:

36. {Project} *Since the intersection of North 26th Road and Military Road is used by many school children, the neighborhood believes it might benefit from installation of a traffic or crossing signal (which could be on yellow flash except during times when school children are present) or some other form of traffic control device.*

Lorcom Lane

Another minor arterial, Lorcom Lane suffers from speeding and a dangerous curve in its middle. In March 1987, the County Board approved a plan for physically narrowing the Lane (cost permitting), making other improvements, and further study of the North Randolph Street curve. In 1989, after new cost estimates and a traffic test of a two-lane Lorcom Lane, the Board revised the approved plan to substitute painted narrowing of Lorcom Lane for physical narrowing. The curve remains.

The painted narrowing has substantially improved safety and the perception of safety without impeding or diverting commuter traffic flow. Although it has not eliminated speeding, the use of the painted median has proven the effectiveness of this type of traffic calming on wide neighborhood streets. Indeed, this has the effect of also calming traffic on cut-through streets that are fed by Lorcom Lane.

A major traffic bottleneck occurs at the intersection of Nelly Custis and Lorcom Lane every workday morning as commuters are heading for Spout Run. The right turn only lane on westbound Lorcom Lane has enhanced both traffic flow and safety but the aggressive or impatient commuter still makes this a scary intersection for many.

The locations where the road merges from two lanes to one are not marked well enough. This could simply be a vegetation problem but needs further investigation.



Lorcom Lane Recommendations:

37. {Project} *The neighborhood recommends installation of better signage where the lanes merge from two to one and a parking lane begins.*

38. {Project} *The neighborhood recommends that additional traffic calming measures be installed on this busy street to further slow traffic closer to the posted speed limit.*

39. {Project} *The study approved by the County Board in 1987 to re-engineer the dangerous curve near North Randolph Street should be implemented or updated.*

Military Road

Military Road is a primary road for eastbound and westbound commuters from outside Arlington as well as Arlington residents. Currently, Military Road varies from two traffic lanes with street parking to three traffic lanes with restricted street parking to four traffic lanes. It is a long road with only one signal and no stop signs from Old Glebe Road to Nelly Custis. Traffic routinely exceeds the speed limit during rush hours and late in the evening.

The speed limit problem was exacerbated several years ago when, after the road was re-paved, a second northbound lane was added between Marcey Road and North 30th Street. This was done without consultation with the civic association and has considerably increased both speed and aggressive driving along its length. Students living on the north side of Military have to cross Military at rush hour, which is a serious traffic concern.

Military Road Recommendations:

40. {Project} *The neighborhood recommends replacing existing signs with more modern, street mounted, 25 MPH school flashing signs (such as those which have slowed traffic on Sycamore adjacent to O'Connell High School).*

41. {Project} *The neighborhood recommends further study including the possibility of using Lorcom Lane type marking (painted medians) to reduce the traffic lanes to one lane in each direction from Old Glebe to Nelly Custis and adding a right turn only lane where Southbound Military splits at Nelly Custis.*

42. {Project} *The neighborhood recommends that traffic calming measures be installed on this road to slow traffic down especially in the valley near the entrance to Zachary Taylor Park.*

Vermont Street

This is a very hilly road. Because of the hills, drivers tend to speed well above the posted speed limits while going downhill.

The neighborhood has also noticed that there may be a problem with parked cars on Vermont Street near the intersection with Old Dominion. Site lines and room to maneuver have been reduced.

Vermont Street Recommendations:

43. {Project} *The neighborhood recommends that traffic calming measures be installed on this street to slow traffic down, especially at the intersection with Upsbur Street and coming down the hill from Old Dominion.*

Beechwood Circle/Beechwood Place

This street is used as a bypass to avoid the traffic signal at the intersection of Marcey and Military Roads.

Beechwood Circle/Beechwood Place Recommendations:

44. {Project} *The neighborhood recommends that traffic calming measures be installed on these streets to slow traffic down.*

Marcey Road

This road is the only access to the Donaldson Run Recreation Association (DRRA) community swimming pool. Accordingly, it gets considerable traffic in the summer months, when children are likely to be walking to the pool, biking and playing along its length. Automobile traffic tends to speed on this street.

Marcey Road Recommendations:

45. {Project} *The neighborhood recommends that traffic calming measures be installed on this street to slow traffic down.*

Vacation Lane

This is another narrow, winding and hilly street that has more than its share of speeders. In addition, at the intersection of Vacation Lane and North Taylor Street, adjacent to Lorcom Lane, the stop sign is frequently ignored. This is a safety concern for cars travelling to Lorcom Lane from North Taylor as well as for school buses and pedestrians.

Vacation Lane Recommendations:

46. {Project} *The neighborhood recommends that traffic calming measures be installed on this street to slow traffic down, especially on the hill from North Stuart to North Utah.*

Throughout the Neighborhood

Although few specific locations were identified, several residents were concerned that many intersections, especially those that are not perfect 90 degree crosses, do not have stop lines. The absence of stop lines leads to an increase in the number of drivers who make “rolling stops” and increases the danger to both other automobiles and pedestrians.

Because of the residential character of the neighborhood, visitors are often distracted and do not notice things like ‘one way’ streets (e.g., 2200-2300 block of North Vernon Street), and yield signs (e.g., North Upton at 24th Street). These would be much safer if there were street markings. Also fire hydrants are often blocked because parked cars are too close to them. Further, many signs that now exist are obstructed by vegetation and regular inspections should be conducted to ensure that homeowners trim trees and bushes that obstruct signs and sight lines at intersections.

Traffic Signage Recommendations:

47. {Project} *The neighborhood recommends changing the yield sign to a stop sign at the intersection of Vernon and Vermont and at the intersection of Vermont and Vacation.*

48. {Project} *The neighborhood recommends all way stop signs at the intersection of Robert Walker Place and North 26th Road.*



49. {Project} *The neighborhood suggests that all way stop signs may be needed at the intersection of North 25th Street and North Stuart Street. This intersection is close to Taylor Elementary School and lack of a sidewalk in the same area (see Page 59 and above) just makes the situation worse.*

50. {Project} *The neighborhood suggests that a larger stop sign be installed at the intersection of Vacation Lane and North Taylor Street.*

Stop Line and Painting Recommendations:

51. {Project} *The neighborhood recommends that stop lines be painted at all intersections with stop signs. Curbs should be painted yellow to indicate the "No Parking" area at all fire hydrant locations.*

Reduce non-resident on-street parking

Although a majority of the residents do not desire zoned parking, 18% said that there is a problem with street parking near their homes and support zoned parking. The households that favor parking zones tend to be in the areas listed below but it is interesting to note that several comments from residents of streets abutting North 26th/31st Street complained that residents of North 26th/31st Street parked on the side streets out of fear of damage from speeding cars along North 26th/31st Street.

The other areas of concern for parking were near Taylor Elementary School and near Marymount University. Because Taylor school is used for night events and is the neighborhood polling place, residential parking can be a problem. But, the fact that teachers seemed to want to park in front of neighborhood homes instead of in front of the school itself seemed to annoy our neighbors the most.

On Street Parking Recommendations:

52. {Policy} *The neighborhood recommends better enforcement of the current zone parking restrictions near Marymount University on North 26th Street.*

Parks and Recreation Areas

Our Parks

The residents of Donaldson Run consider themselves fortunate to have such convenient access to our park resources. A majority of our respondents to the Neighborhood Conservation Survey reported that what they liked most about our neighborhood (second only to the proximity to DC) was the abundance of trees, and the rural feel the wooded parkland provides us. Many of our residents purchased their homes here because of these assets. Eighty-one percent of our survey respondents use the parks on a regular basis, 55% use the park several times per week. In reviewing some of the responses from our survey, we learned that 78% of the respondents use the park for nature walks, 32% use the parks for walking their dogs, 26% use the parks for jogging, 24% use the parks for play. We learned that 62% of our respondents support having benches or picnic tables in our parks, 49% support having neighborhood playgrounds, and 30% support specifically adding a neighborhood Tot Lot. In addition, 36% would support the addition of a fitness trail, 23% support the addition of an athletic field, and 27% support having designated off-leash dog exercise areas.

The goals for our parks can be summarized as:

- Protection of the existing woodlands
- Improved park maintenance

Protecting and Retaining Natural Areas

Many of the parks in Arlington County are locations for soccer fields, playgrounds, or open grassy areas. However, the majority of the parks in and around Donaldson Run are forest woodlands and natural ecosystems with many flora and fauna. The two largest concerns of our survey respondents were the protection of the existing woodlands within our community, and improved park maintenance to preserve that which we treasure most. Much of the land bordering our parks, although privately owned, has been left in its natural wooded state and gives the appearance of an even larger park footprint. Many of our citizens have expressed concern over the potential for future development of these wooded lands. Although many these wooded lands are protected both by the County DPW right of way easements, and the proposed Chesapeake Bay Preservation Ordinance (protecting a 100 foot buffer along each side of our primary streams), the determination and political skills of a few of our local housing developers have given many of our citizens reason for concern. Many of the comments in the Neighborhood Conservation Survey were similar to this one: "I oppose any development adjacent to the parkland. I encourage the County to acquire any wooded property adjacent to the park to assist in enhancing the open space and parkland of Arlington."

Improved park maintenance is another issue that was frequently mentioned. The concerns over park maintenance can be summarized within two categories. First, it appears that Arlington County park maintenance workers are not often available to work on areas of concern that could improve the parks. The community routinely organizes for litter control within the park and streambeds, but some projects require County assistance (for example, replacing broken planks of a walking bridge over the stream). Second, when the County does assist with projects in the park, it is often completed in a manner that sometimes appears to cause more harm than good. (For example, recently, to clear a path blocked by a large fallen tree, County workers drove a bulldozer into the park and into the streambed. This caused damage to the stream banks causing potential for increased erosion and widening of the stream. The log was cut into many small pieces, and stacked in three large piles, creating the appearance of a large landfill site. Perhaps in the future, only the portion of tree that blocked the path could be cut and moved.)

The neighborhood recognizes that there may be a shortage of County resources to perform Park maintenance as well as funding issues. The neighborhood would like to work with the Department of Parks, Recreation and Community Resources to obtain continued maintenance of our neighborhood parks. Could a horticulturist or arborist (county, state or private) make a review of the current state of our parks and make recommendations as to what things need attention?

General Park Recommendations:

53. {Policy} *The neighborhood recommends that DPRCA and the Civic Association meet on an annual basis to review the current state of the neighborhood parks, to discuss maintenance issues and to plan park improvements to be funded by programs such as the Small Parks Program or through Neighborhood Conservation funds.*

Zachary Taylor Park

Donaldson Run has three County owned parks totaling approximately twenty-two (22) acres of land. The largest of the parks is the Zachary Taylor Park, located in the heart of our Civic Association area. This park borders Taylor Elementary School, which sits on fifteen acres of land, some of which is wooded and blends in with the wooded parkland. Taylor Park also borders a County maintained bike path, which runs from Military Road up to North 26th Street at Marymount University. Much of the land bordering this bike path, although privately owned, has been left in its natural wooded state. Signs at both ends of the park incorrectly identify this as Zachary Taylor Nature Center.

Zachary Taylor Park was named after the twelfth President of the United States. Zachary Taylor (1784-1850) was born in Orange County, Virginia, the son of a Revolutionary War officer. His family moved near Louisville, Kentucky, in 1785. Zachary Taylor became a national hero in the Mexican War, and died only sixteen months after becoming president.

Zachary Taylor Park was created as one of Arlington's "finger parks" around two streams that merge in the center of the park and feed into Donaldson Run at the northern corner of the park. In fact the bike path itself is, in reality, a DPW easement for the construction of the Yorktown Boulevard extension. The neighborhood does not favor the construction of this extension and would like to explore ways to protect the park from development using things such as conservation easements. At this point in time, it is only the Chesapeake Bay Preservation Ordinance that is protecting the park with its restrictions to development within a 100 foot buffer on either side of the stream.

The majority of the rainwater falling within Donaldson Run Civic Association's footprint flows into one of these two streams. Several storm sewers empty into these streams, carrying not only rainwater, but also anything else that may be on our roads, such as oil or trash. There is also some concern about the effect of water runoff from the County mulch pile stored at the source of one of these streams and the volume of water that is released from the water tower at the Lee Pumping Station. As recommended in the Arlington County Watershed Management Plan, the neighborhood agrees that Donaldson Run is a perfect candidate for stream restoration to include the stream bed and sides.

Tulip poplar, oak and beech dominate the variety of species of trees within the park. The wildlife regularly seen roaming the park includes white-tailed deer, red foxes, raccoons, opossums, squirrel, chipmunks and mice. We also have a large population of crows, woodpeckers, and occasional owls and hawks. The underbrush is dominated by english ivy, poison ivy, mayapple and christmas fern.

Our citizens have passionately expressed two concerns over the future care of this park. First is the protection of the natural woodlands within and around the park. We recognize that Northern Virginia is one of the fastest growing population areas in the country, and that Arlington County is one of the most urbanized areas in Northern Virginia. As the pace of life around us becomes more and more hectic, there is need for a place of sanctuary for people to experience the freedom of nature. These parks provide more than just a safe habitat for our local wildlife; they provide an unequalled place of peace and relaxation for our human residents. Many have learned that just a fifteen-minute walk through this wooded paradise is good for the soul as well as the body. It is with this in mind that we encourage the County to protect the existing wooded natural areas used by so many.

The second large concern of our citizens is proper maintenance of the existing parklands. Our community regularly gathers for park clean up days. These efforts collect litter, cutback vines, and clear paths from fast growing shrubs. We rely on the County to clear paths of fallen trees, and protect stream banks from further erosion by use of large rocks placed in the outer corners of the stream walls. The County also maintains the four bridges within the park. Should a dead tree be found leaning dangerously over a trail, for safety's concern, we believe that it should be cut down. Otherwise, dead trees should not be toppled, or cut up and stacked in the woods as if in a landfill. Other than cutting a segment out of a log to clear the trail, fallen trees should be left in the woods in a natural state.

More than 100 respondents favor steps to control invasive, non-native plants. The community would like to work with the County Park naturalists to develop a program to confront this problem.

Recently, the Civic Association submitted a Small Parks Program request to a) repair damage done to the stream banks by a County bulldozer, b) remove the rusting iron rebar buried along the walkway. (This rebar was installed to hold wooden 4x4s in place to border the path. Over time, the wood has dissolved; the iron is rusty and protrudes and is a safety hazard.) c) install a park bench and a sign at the park entrance on North Upton Street.



Zachary Taylor Park Recommendations:

54. {Policy} *To retain a natural woodlands environment, the neighborhood recommends that Zachary Taylor Park be protected from encroaching development and that its borders be increased through the continued purchase of private property adjacent to the Park by the County along North Utah and North Upshur Streets.*

55. {Policy} *The neighborhood recommends that DPW clean the culverts in the park once or twice a year and investigate a number of pipes along the stream banks that may be discharging water from private swimming pools into Donaldson Run.*

56. {Policy} *The neighborhood recommends that DPW meter or control the discharge of water from the water tower at Lee Pumping Station so as to minimize the erosion of the Donaldson Run stream bed.*

57. {Policy} *In order to facilitate the ability to reforest the old construction road within the park as well as to perform trail improvements, the neighborhood recommends that School Board consider transferring some of the woods around Zachary Taylor Elementary School to the Parks department or granting an conservation easement.*

58. {Project} *The neighborhood recommends continued maintenance of the paths, bridges and fences within the park, while not disturbing the natural look and appeal of the park. This would include reforesting along the trails to control stream bed erosion.*

59. {Project} *The neighborhood recommends that a plan be developed to control invasive, non-native vegetation and to encourage the growth of native plants.*

60. {Project} *The neighborhood recommends that per our recent Small Parks Program request, we enhance the entrances of the park with benches and a sign, rebuild the damaged stream walls and remove the rusting iron rebar from the rotted wooden trail borders.*

Lee Heights Park



Lee Heights Park is a 2.5 acre land parcel surrounding a secondary tributary that flows into Zachary Taylor Park, where it eventually joins Donaldson Run. This park is one block long, and surrounded on two sides by North Taylor Street. Lee Heights Park was named after the subdivision that created several of the local property lots (i.e. Deed 1524, page 136, Lee Heights subdivision, Section 6, Arlington County, Virginia). The goals of this park are similar to those of Zachary Taylor Park, only one block away: improved park maintenance and preservation of the wooded natural areas. This park was identified repeatedly as an area that would be more usable if it were upgraded and maintained. To this end, the Civic Association recently requested and received a Small Parks Program grant to improve the deteriorating split rail fence, and add a park sign and several benches for the community to enjoy. We believe that this will greatly enhance the beauty and use of this neighborhood park. Ongoing care of this area is also needed to ensure that the improved condition of the park is maintained. To that end, the split rail fence was recently repaired by the Parks and Natural Resources maintenance staff using maintenance funds.

Lee Heights Park Recommendations:

61. {Project} *The neighborhood recommends that, per our recent Small Parks Program request, the park be enhanced with a picnic table, two benches, a trash receptacle, and a sign. Continued maintenance of the split rail fence on an as needed basis is also recommended.*

Marcey Park

Marcey Park is a three-acre park located at the end of Marcey Road. This County park is surrounded on all sides by Potomac Overlook Park, part of the Northern Virginia Regional Park Authority property. This park is isolated from nearby housing due to the natural wooded environment of Potomac Overlook Park. Marcey Park consists of three acres of manicured lawn with tennis courts, a basketball court, a covered gazebo, and a park bench. Some residents pointed out that the tennis courts are run down and in need of repair.

Although the official name of the park is Marcey Park, a sign in the park identifies it as Marcey Road Park. The Department of Parks, Recreation and Community Resources has indicated that it will have the sign replaced with one showing the correct name.

This park is named after James Marcey, one of the original settlers of our neighborhood. In 1843, James Marcey bought one of 26 lots (26 lots plus 43 quarry lots) created in 1836 by subdividing all of the bankrupt George Mason properties. James and Lewis Marcey bought lot 24, totaling 93 acres (in 1842, his neighbor, Robert Donaldson, bought the 98 acres of lot 25 for \$1,225).

Marcey Park Recommendations:

62. {Project} *The neighborhood recommends continuation of the excellent work in maintaining this valuable park. The neighborhood suggests that the tennis and basketball courts be resurfaced and better maintained. The Civic Association should be informed of any change in the use of this land.*

Donaldson Run Park



Bordering our Civic Association area is Donaldson Run Park, a 29-acre park extending from Military Road, following and including Donaldson Run Stream towards the Potomac River, until meeting US Federal Park land purchased for the construction of the George Washington Memorial Parkway. This park is thus the western border of Potomac Overlook Park. Sitting within this park property at Military Road is a County pumping station.

Prior to the Civil War, Donaldson Run was the primary point of access into these parts. The Donaldson family initially transported their farm produce for sale in Georgetown via the Potomac River by using this stream. After the Civil War (and the creation of Military Road), overland transport became more frequent. In the late 1800s, this stream was both a popular swimming hole and boat landing.

This stream was first named Rock Run in the early 1800s and after the Civil War it was renamed Swimming Landing Run. The County map of 1900 shows that the name of this stream was changed to Donaldson Run, named after the Donaldson family that populated the land above and east of the stream. If you walk along the trail next to Donaldson Run, you will see remnants of a stone wall that was used to dam an area of the stream for swimming. It is believed that this stone wall was built in the late 1800s. Farther upstream there are also remains of a cement dam and small bathhouse with pipes for showers fed by stream water believed to date from the early 1920s..

There is a small section of mowed lawn at the entrance to this park on Military Road. The rest of the park has been left in its natural wooded state. There is a trail (blazed with yellow paint) that follows and crisscrosses the streambed down to the riverfront. It connects with several trails in Potomac Overlook Park and the Potomac Heritage Trail at the riverfront and is primarily maintained by the Potomac Overlook Park Ranger and his crew of volunteers.

Arlington County has paved over the streambed from the pumping station upstream under Military Road for approximately 30 yards into Zachary Taylor Park and has also recently reinforced the streambed at the 30th Street entrance with a cement retaining wall. Although we believe that both of these projects were done with the best interests of the park in mind, we would like to encourage the County to preserve the natural surroundings of these park settings as much as possible.

Potomac Overlook, Northern VA Regional Park Authority

Our Civic Association shares a common border with Potomac Overlook Park. The Northern Virginia Regional Park Authority purchased 67.5 acres of wooded parkland in the late 1960s. Potomac Overlook Regional Park was created in 1971 by a planning team from the National Audubon Society in order to create an urban nature sanctuary within Arlington County. “Potomac Overlook Regional Park was designed to fulfill a threefold mission: (1) preserve the land in its natural state to promote the health of our environment and safeguard the diversity of species; (2) educate the public on natural and cultural history, stressing the interrelatedness of all living organisms with the environment and the need for all humans to be caretakers of the Earth; (3) provide a natural setting for recreation and exercise.”¹

The Nature Center opened in 1974 and offers a variety of displays and live animal exhibits. A wide variety of community events is scheduled, such as summer and winter concerts, Junior Naturalist camps, and education oriented nature hikes. Potomac Overlook Park has a full time park ranger or naturalist living on the park grounds.

Potomac Heritage Trail on US Federal Park Land

The Potomac Heritage Trail is part of a 700-mile corridor designated by Congress in 1983 to connect outstanding natural and cultural features of the Potomac River Basin in Virginia, Maryland, Pennsylvania, and Washington DC. Our local section of this trail winds along the riverfront from Theodore Roosevelt Island for 10 miles ending just beyond the American Legion Bridge. The federal land containing miles 2.5 to 3.0 of the Potomac Heritage Trail borders Potomac Overlook Park. The citizens of Donaldson Run have an easy walk through the woods of Donaldson Run Park to find themselves at the river front, with a rugged, natural 10-mile hiking trail at their disposal with outlets such as Turkey Run Park, Ft. Marcy Park, and Theodore Roosevelt Island park. Volunteers from the Potomac Appalachian Trail Club maintain this section of hiking trail. It connects to the 17-mile Mount Vernon bike trail as well as the 184.5-mile Chesapeake & Ohio Canal Towpath ending in Cumberland, MD. Access to park resources such as these are of great importance to our neighborhood and should be supported and strengthened by our County.

¹ A Field Guide to Potomac Overlook Regional Park, May 1998.

Bikers, Hikers and Joggers

Many of our residents use our public lands for recreational purposes. The wooded trails are excellent for our walkers and joggers. There are many paths to choose from. Almost 80% of our Neighborhood Conservation Survey respondents use the wooded paths regularly. This reinforces our goal of protecting and maintaining the existing natural woodlands we have.

While bicycles are not permitted on our wooded trails, we do have access to Arlington's extensive bike trails. Arlington County has 36 miles of off-street bicycle trails and 50 miles of on-street connecting routes. A segment of this off-street trail corridor passes through Zachary Taylor Park from Military Road to Marymount University.

Neighborhood Playgrounds

Donaldson Run Civic Association has use of the outdoor facilities on the Zachary Taylor Elementary School property. These include two playground stations, a jungle gym / swing set arrangement, an outdoor basketball court, and the ball field (used for baseball and soccer). We also have convenient access to the tennis and basketball courts at Marcey Park and the nature center within Potomac Overlook.

Until recently, Marcey Park also contained a tot lot playground. It was located away from the parking lot, behind the tennis courts and out of sight of the picnic tables and gazebo. This facility needed to be upgraded to comply with new safety standards; however, the level of usage from the community did not warrant the additional investment. This playground was removed to comply with newer safety standards.

Many parents with pre-school children have expressed interest in a community tot lot for their children's use during the school day. Throughout the school year, the students of Taylor School use their own playground facilities all day. This does not provide an inviting place for parents of toddlers to bring their children (it is also discouraged by the staff at Taylor for security reasons). Parents of pre-school children take them to a playground outside of our community. The closest tot lot is at Glebe Park. This is not a popular destination due to the many stairs separating the parking lot and the tot lot, as well as the condition of older equipment. This causes our residents to drive to other playgrounds in neighboring communities (Lyon Village Park on Highland, Chestnut Hills Park on Harrison, Woodlawn Park at the end of 14th Street off Glebe, or Cherrydale Park off Vacation Lane behind the 7-11 on Lee Highway).

The need for a tot lot was expressed repeatedly throughout the Neighborhood Conservation Survey results. The Survey showed that 42% of our respondents have children living in their homes and 49% said they would support more playgrounds in our neighborhood. Thirty percent of our Neighborhood Conservation Survey respondents requested a tot lot be returned to our community. A tot lot becomes a wonderful gathering place, not only for young

children, but also new parents, eager to learn and share their experiences with others. Typical of the comments received in the survey was: “I want to emphasize my interest in getting a neighborhood playground. As a new parent, I am eager to meet other parents/kids in the neighborhood. A play area would facilitate this goal nicely.” The community supports the establishment of a community tot lot.

The strong response from our Neighborhood Conservation Survey concerning this topic has led us down two paths. First, we have requested funding through the Small Parks Program to return the tot lot to our community. This request was denied because funds were available for only 30% of the project. A second source of funds was needed for this request. The Parks and Recreation committee reviewing these proposals suggested we re-submit our request next year, and use this time to find another organization to fund the remaining 70%. Our next path towards finding options for the tot lot took us to the Zachary Taylor Elementary School property. The school’s administration feels that it has space available, and that this tot lot would accomplish goals consistent with its long-range plans. This option appears to be a winning solution. Taylor school administrators as well as the PTA have encouraged us to use the school property for the location of our new tot lot.

Neighborhood Playgrounds Recommendations:

63. {Project} *The neighborhood recommends that the Civic Association find funding for 70% of the cost of a new tot lot (working with the Small Parks Program to fund the remaining 30%) to be located at Zachary Taylor Elementary School.*

Zachary Taylor Elementary School

The results of our Neighborhood Conservation survey, relating to Zachary Taylor School, were shared with the school principal, and we determined that many of the long-range goals of the school coincided with the immediate requests of our neighbors. The administration at Taylor School and the PTA have strongly supported our plans to add a tot lot to the community (see letters in the Appendix) and they have agreed to provide maintenance. It has been suggested that we locate this tot lot on school grounds, away from the building, on the field across the parking lot from the school. The Department of Parks, Recreation and Community Resources also supports this location, which would give parents a place to bring their younger children without interfering with recess or after-school play time. This would also be convenient for parents of older children playing soccer or baseball, or using the “older” playground facilities, while parents of younger children could stay close and within eyesight.

Our Neighborhood Conservation Survey respondents agreed with Taylor administrators in identifying that they would like to improve the landscaping in front of Taylor School. We would like to work with the County staff and the school in proposing the addition of several large growth trees to be added near the playgrounds, with picnic tables, and trash receptacles.

Zachary Taylor Elementary School Recommendations:

64. {Project} *The neighborhood recommends the addition of three (3) picnic tables and one (1) trash receptacle placed near the main playground and the addition of three (3) picnic tables and two (2) trash receptacle placed around the ball field and near the basketball courts. The neighborhood recommends the replacement of the entire aging split rail fence with a new split rail fence and also the addition of several large growth trees and shrubs between the playground and the street. The neighborhood recommends placing a bench in the woods at the edge of the cement walking path. This bench would be 500 yards from the school, looking over the valley of Taylor Park below.*

Neighborhood Beautification

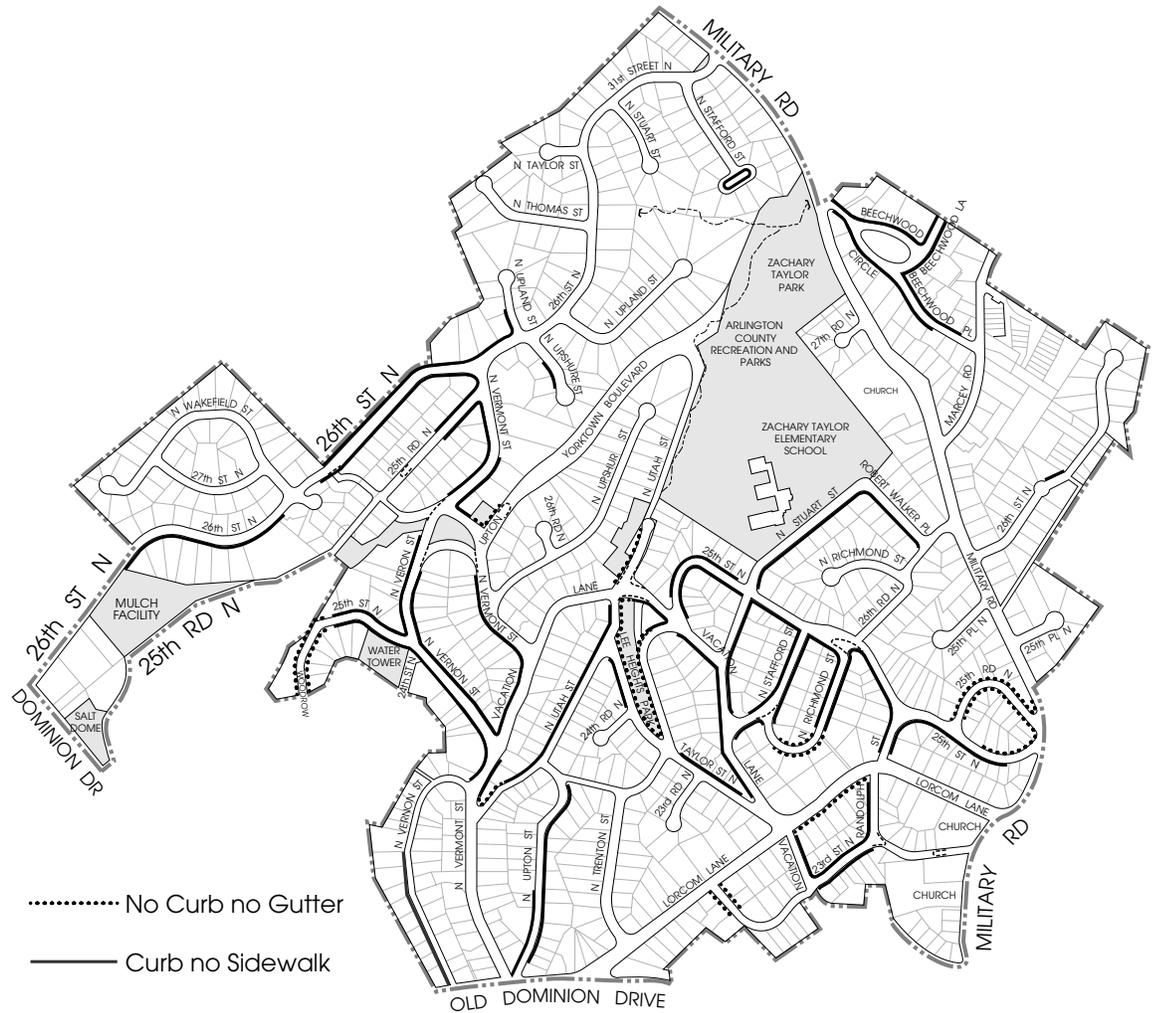
Storm Drains and Grates

The vast majority of the neighborhood, 273 households (or 94%), said that existing storm drains and grates are sufficient. However, 16 households said that existing drains or grates should be repaired, or that new drains and grates were needed in various locations. The following table shows these locations.

Location	Issue
Lorcom/Randolph	Need storm drain
Vermont & Upton intersection	Need storm drain
North 31st & Stuart	Need grate over existing drain for safety
North Utah & North Taylor	Need storm drain
25th Street and North Vermont	Need storm drain
Donaldson Run & Vernon	Need grate over existing drain for safety
Wakefield Street cul-de-sac	Need storm drain
Lee Heights Park	Need storm drain
3800 North 26th Street	Storm drain needs repair/replacement
Vernon & Vermont	Storm drain becomes clogged

Storm Drain and Grate Recommendations:

65. {Project} *The neighborhood recommends that these storm drain and grate problems be looked into with repair or replacement as needed.*



Sidewalks, Curbs and Gutters

There is some work to be done in the area of sidewalks, curbs and gutters. A majority of households in the neighborhood, 64%, said that there should be a sidewalk on at least one side of each street in Donaldson Run. Those surveyed mentioned 19 streets where sidewalks are needed. However, there were three streets that were of particular concern. Ten or more households mentioned these streets as needing a sidewalk.

North 26th Street by Washington Golf and Country Club

Almost 14% of households (45) expressed concern over the lack of a sidewalk and the need for curb repair on North 26th Street, which runs adjacent to the Washington Golf and Country Club. Many of those surveyed noted that there is a school bus stop used by middle school children at the intersection of North Vermont and North 26th Street and that children have to walk down the hill on North 26th Street to get to this bus stop. In addition, survey respondents also noted that cars on this busy street often exceed the speed limit (see Traffic and

Transportation section). This combination results in safety concerns that can be addressed in part by the addition of a sidewalk on this street.

The topography of the street would make the addition of a sidewalk difficult. If the sidewalk were added to one side of the street, many houses would have a part of their front yards paved over, while placing the sidewalk on the other side may require the removal of mature trees and shrubs. A partial solution may be to re-establish the school bus stop at North 26th Street and North Wakefield so that school children would not have to walk down the hill on North 26th Street.

North 25th Street

Thirteen households noted the lack of a sidewalk on North 25th Street as an issue. This one-way street is around the corner from Taylor Elementary school. The lack of a sidewalk is a particular problem because drivers cannot see pedestrians around the sharp turn on this street. Residents report that this street is the recommended walking route to Taylor School and that children often have to walk in the street around parked cars.



Taylor Street by Lee Heights Park

Ten households noted lack of a sidewalk around Lee Heights Park. Many residents use this route for walking and jogging, and it is also one of the streets used by residents for exiting the neighborhood.

North Vernon Street and North Vermont Street

Ten households noted the need for sidewalks on each of these streets. Both streets are on hilly terrain, with vehicles speeding down the hill an issue at times (see Traffic and Transportation section). The safety concern caused by lack of continuous sidewalks on these streets is exacerbated by the speeding issue. Several residents also mentioned the need for curb repair on North Vermont Street.

Streets in Need of Sidewalk, Curb and Gutter

Residents cited the need for sidewalks on all or portions of the following streets:

Location	No. of Responses
North 26th Street by Washington Golf and Country Club	45
North 25th Street	13
Taylor Street by Lee Heights Park	10
North Vernon Street and North Vermont Street	10
Lorcom Lane	9
25th Street (off Military)	4
Beechwood Circle	3
25th Road (off Military)	3
North 25th Road	3
Robert Walker Drive	3
North Upton Street	3
North Randolph Street	2
North Stafford Street	2
Vacation Lane	2
Military Road	2
North Utah and Vermont Streets (needs curb only)	2
26th Road (near Robert Walker)	1
25th Place (off Military)	1
23rd Street North	1
North 25th/26th Streets (top of hill—needs curb only)	1
North Richmond Street (2301-2313—needs curb only)	1

Condition of Existing Sidewalks

Residents are generally satisfied with the condition of existing sidewalks. However, a few households noted the need for sidewalk repair on Vacation Lane in the first block north off Lorcom Lane. In addition, one resident noted that asphalt was used instead of concrete to repair the broken sidewalk at 4500 North 25th Road.

Sidewalks, Curbs and Gutters Recommendations:

66. {Project} *The neighborhood recommends that we look into ways to install a sidewalk on North 26th Street to provide a safe area in which to walk as well as to meet the needs of the affected homeowners. Economic and environmental costs need to be considered. Re-establishing the middle school bus stop at North 26th Street and North Wakefield Street may address the concerns of school children who currently have to walk down the hill on North 26th Street.*

67. {Project} *The neighborhood recommends that we look into ways to install a sidewalk on North 25th Street near Taylor School to provide a safe area in which to walk as well as to meet the needs of affected homeowners.*

68. {Project} *The neighborhood recommends that we install sidewalks in the areas where there are none as requested by the neighbors affected.*

Street and Paving Problems

A significant number of households (87, or 28%) mentioned the need for repaving of neighborhood streets or repairing potholes. The overwhelming problem seems to be North Vermont Street coming off Old Dominion; 40 households said that the road needs repaving and 9 said that potholes needed repair.



North Utah Street, near the entrance to the Zachary Taylor Park, was also mentioned as being in need of repaving. It was reported that when the other portions of Utah Street were paved, that the little section leading down to the Nature Area was overlooked. Now that landscaping work has been done at the Nature Area entrance, the street looks particularly bad.

Other streets mentioned as needing repaving or repair are listed below:

Location	No. of Responses
North Vermont Street	87
North Utah Street (2500 Block)	7
North Vernon Street	5
Military Road at Beechwood	4
North 23rd Street	3
25th Road	2
North Trenton Street	2
North Taylor Street	2
26th Street North	3
25th Street (poor repaving job recently completed—globs of cement)	1
Marcy Road	1
Vacation Lane	1
23rd Road	1
North Upton Street	1
North Woodrow Street	1

Street and Paving Recommendations:

69. {Project} *The neighborhood recommends the repaving of Vermont Street as soon as possible, especially the section near Old Dominion and the section near North Upton and one of the entrances to Taylor Park.*

70. {Project} *The neighborhood recommends the repaving of the short section of North Utah Street near the entrance to the Zachary Taylor Park.*

71. {Project} *The neighborhood recommends that the other streets listed above be prioritized for repaving or pothole repair in the near future and that repaving or repair be performed as requested by the neighbors affected.*



Street Lights

Most of the street lights in the Donaldson Run neighborhood are located on poles with other utilities and above ground wiring. 49% of the neighbors expressed a desire to change the style of these street lights; however, the respondents are not in support of paying personally for the undergrounding of utilities. If light styles are changed, residents prefer either carriage or acorn shaped lamps that are energy efficient.

While a majority of respondents to the questionnaire were satisfied with the level of street lighting where they live, a handful of streets were repeatedly mentioned as needing additional street lights. When driving on these streets at night, it is clear that the lighting is uneven, and there are areas which are significantly darker than others. This is particularly true at the following locations:

Location
North 25 th Street between Military Road and North Randolph Street
North 25 th Street between North Stafford Street and North Stuart Street
North Utah Street between North Taylor and North 24 th Street
Middle of 2500 block of North Utah Street
North Vermont Street between North Upshur and Vacation Lane
North Vermont Street, at the intersection of North Vernon and North Upton where the streets intersect with the bike trail and parkland
North Vernon Street between North Vermont and North 24 th Street
At the end of North Woodrow Street near North Vernon, where several homes were recently built

Street Lighting Recommendations:

72. {Project} *The neighborhood recommends installation of street lights be performed as requested by the neighbors affected.*

73. {Policy} *The neighborhood recommends that when financially feasible, more attractive, energy efficient street lights with underground wiring be used whenever new street lights are installed or old ones are replaced.*

Graffiti

The problem of graffiti in Donaldson Run has improved in recent years, although there are still occasional incidents. The bus stops on Military Road are the most common target, and they are usually cleaned quickly. Other locations that have had graffiti problems include Taylor and H-B Woodlawn Schools, playgrounds, the retaining wall on Old Dominion near Upton Street, and occasionally stop signs.

Other incidents of vandalism that were cited in the neighborhood include egging of the bike trail, broken car windows on Vermont Street, breaking of bottles and littering along 26th /31st Street. It was also reported that paint spilled on North Upton Street is very unsightly.

The Civic Association encourages anyone who is aware of graffiti on County property to report it promptly so that the County can address it in a timely fashion.

Community Services

Several residents of North 26th Street and Vermont Street have also noticed salt and sand accumulation at the intersection of North 26th and Vermont Streets. Both of these streets are curvy and hilly (as previously mentioned) and are heavily treated after winter storms. This particular intersection collects heavy amounts of salt and abrasives which is a hazard for drivers and bicyclists. The area should be periodically swept to remove the hazard.

Landscaping, Overgrowth and Plantings

A significant number of respondents (50) expressed concern about the state of landscaping and plantings. The areas of overgrowth which were most often identified as needing attention were along the trails of Donaldson Run Park (6), Lee Heights Park (4), and along 26th Street between Wakefield and Vermont Streets (3). Comments made included concern about vines choking trees, the overgrowth of kudzu and as one neighbor put it, “poison ivy everywhere.” Some of the overgrowth may involve safety issues as one neighbor noted, “old trees on Utah block cul-de-sac are dangerous and have fallen.” Additional locations of out of control vegetation growth are:

Location	Nature of overgrowth
Lorcom Lane	Wooded area that abuts H-B Woodlawn and bushes that over hang Lorcom sidewalk
Lee Highway	Vines growing on power lines
Military and Nelly Custis	Vines growing on stone wall
Old Dominion between Military and Lorcom	Overgrowth around H-B Woodlawn fields
Oval at Stafford St cul-de-sac (off 31 st Street)	General overgrowth
Vermont near Upton	Ugly branches and vines hanging over the road
Vernon	Driving downhill on Vernon to Vermont, sidewalk is completely unusable
25 th and Richmond	Remove poison ivy
31 st and Military	Lots of kudzu and visibility is obscured for cars merging onto Military Road

It is impossible and undesirable to control all overgrowth in a woodland setting such as Zachary Taylor and Lee Heights Parks. However, concern was expressed about the degree of overgrowth and its effect on the health of the park's trees. It is important that the County have a realistic plan and the resources for implementation of the plan regarding the control of overgrowth that will ensure the continued health and beauty of these woods. Such a plan may already exist, but it is clear from responses that a significant portion of neighbors are concerned about the care of the forest. Perhaps DPRCR will work with neighborhood volunteers to coordinate the removal of invasive plant species in public areas.

There were several areas that were cited as needing additional plantings and landscaping work. These included the green space adjacent to the mulch pile, and traffic circles/triangles/islands at the following locations:

- Island in front of H-B Woodlawn
- Triangles at 24th and 25th Streets and Vacation Lane
- Island at Vacation and Stafford

A suggestion was also made to add tree medians to Lorcom Lane.

Landscaping, Overgrowth and Plantings Recommendations

74. {Project} *The neighborhood recommends that the appropriate County maintenance authority attend to the upkeep of areas identified by the Civic Association on a regular schedule or work with the neighborhood to organize volunteer maintenance.*

Non Traffic Signage

Relatively few concerns were expressed about non traffic signage, and the most often noted related to the lack of clear markings for the bike trails, particularly on Lorcom Lane and Military Road. In fact, some asked where the bike trails were.

Sign maintenance was identified as needing attention in a couple of areas. On Woodrow Street it was noted that the street sign had been missing for eight months, and at Randolph Street and Lorcom Lane, the Neighborhood Watch sign needed to be restored.

Street identification signs (i.e. street signs that need improvement) were cited in the following locations with comments:

- Vermont at Old Dominion. When driving east on Lee Highway, it is very difficult (actually the respondent said “almost impossible”) to see the Vermont Street sign.
- Vernon Street: needs improved street markings and parking signs

The aesthetics related to signage were highlighted by several respondents. Concern was expressed about the homemade signs for yard sales etc. that regularly appear on utility poles. A suggestion was made for a more distinctive style of street sign, and the need for neighborhood identification signs at the entry points to Donaldson Run was expressed.

Non Traffic Signage Recommendations:

75. {Project} *The neighborhood recommends that signage and street markings for the bike trails be improved throughout the neighborhood and particularly on Lorcom Lane and Military Road.*

76. {Project} *The neighborhood recommends that the missing street sign on Woodrow Street and the Neighborhood Watch sign on Randolph Street be replaced as soon as possible.*

77. {Project} *The neighborhood recommends that the street sign for Vermont Street be moved closer to the intersection at Lee Highway.*

78. {Project} *The neighborhood recommends that parking signs and street markings be installed and/or upgraded on Vernon Street.*

Neighborhood Signage Recommendations

79. {Project} *The neighborhood recommends that decorative signs designating the Donaldson Run Neighborhood area be installed at the main entrances to the neighborhood. A few suggested locations are:*

1. Military Road at Stafford Street or 31st Street
2. Military Road at Nelly Custis Drive or Lorcom Lane
3. Old Dominion Drive at Lorcom Lane
4. 26th Street after the mulch pile

Appendix A—Background on Crows

Some neighborhood residents reported that they find crows to be a nuisance around their homes. For advice about coping with crow problems Jane Huff of the Audubon Naturalist Society of Greater Washington was contacted. Jane reports that crows are present in increasingly large numbers in many neighborhoods in the Washington area. The biggest problem from a naturalist's viewpoint is that they prey on other birds, particularly young doves, robins and other songbirds. In a few areas around town, Jane mentioned White Flint Mall, there are nocturnal roosting area where tens of thousands of crows gather every night.

The crow population in Donaldson Run is not a serious problem at present. Whereas the noisy cawing of the crows may be a nuisance to some, others enjoy watching their antics. We probably have a few more crows than we had twenty years ago. There are two look-alike species of crow in Donaldson Run, the American Crow and the Fish Crow. The American Crow has a loud, lusty call, whereas the Fish Crow's call is nasal and not as loud. All crows are communal nesters. In our neighborhood there are places where small groups of crows gather in the late afternoon before flying off at dusk to a communal nesting place. Crows are territorial during the daytime when they are feeding. We have small groups of crows in the neighborhood, which we might think of as extended families, who are around foraging during the day, but who keep other crows away from their feeding grounds.

Our current crow population is not a major problem, but the situation should be watched closely. Meanwhile persons concerned about crows around their homes could refrain from using corn, which crows relish, as bird or squirrel food. Large tray-type feeders with sunflower seed may also attract crows. If you find that your tray feeder is attracting crows, the tray can be replaced with tube type feeders with perches that are too small for large birds. Crows are also attracted to trash and garbage in plastic bags, which crows tear open easily. If groups of crows in the hundreds appear to be hanging around the neighborhood after dark, DRCA should consider other measures. The Jewish Community Center on Montrose Road in Montgomery County deterred crows from roosting around its grounds by hanging a number of balloons in the shape of Great Horned Owls from the trees. Crows often choose trees near well-lighted areas for their roosts. This may be because the lighting is unwelcome to the Great Horned Owl, the crows' principal natural predator. White Flint Mall might discourage the roost in its vicinity if it turned off the lights at the Mall and on the parking lot after closing time, something it may be unwilling to do for security reasons

Appendix B—Marymount Land Use Permit Summary

Use Permit Amendment, June 1988

On June 29, 1988, Marymount University (Marymount), located at 2807 North Glebe Road, requested a Use Permit Amendment to: 1) change the program from a junior college with an enrollment of 1,000 students to a university with an enrollment to expand from 1,000 to 1,500 students at any one time, and 2) to permit the construction of a three-story addition containing 32,804 square feet of gross floor areas to provide additional library space and related services.

At that time, a total of 383 parking spaces were located at the North Glebe Road Campus (Main Campus) and an additional 200 spaces at the Spout Run Campus. Marymount provides free parking and a free shuttle service to students and staff parking at the Spout Run campus to the Main Campus. Of the 548 students living on campus, 100 had registered vehicles. Marymount would be required to provide a total of 560 parking spaces to support the Main Campus. Marymount management stated in its use permit that adequate parking spaces were available to meet the requirement. In addition to the 548 residential students, the Main Campus had a total of 94 full-time faculty members and 107 part-time faculty members. Additional support staff on campus included 98 full-time and 39 part-time staff.

Background

In 1948, Marymount received a use permit approval as a boarding school and convent for approximately 50 teenage girls ranging from 15 to years. In 1965, the Arlington County Board approved a new use permit for Marymount Junior College with an enrollment of 800 students. In the filing of this particular use permit amendment, the Arlington Country staff has been unable to locate records to indicate that Marymount was granted an increase in enrollment to the current 1,000 students. In 1972, a use permit amendment was granted for the Parkmont School, Inc., a private junior high school that was in existence from 1972 through 1974, at which time it was discontinued. In 1974, a use permit was granted for a daycare center for 60 children, expanded in 1986 to 120 children. In 1974, Marymount's status changed from a two-year junior college to a university.

Discussion

Arlington County staff inquired about future needs for additional development on the campus. Marymount stated no further plans for any major expansion at the university. However, the University's Master Plan addressed the need to provide additional recreations space in the future. Marymount proposed to add the space to an existing building, Butler Hall, the current location of the campus's recreational facilities.

While the expansion of the library was the subject of the use permit request, Arlington County staff believed it was important to establish limitations which are realistic and which give the community a sense of the future direction of this major institutions facility.

Arlington County Approval

The Arlington County Board unanimously approved the use permit amendment:

- Use permit amendment to address change in program from a junior college with enrollment of 1,000 students to university with enrollment which may exceed 1,000
- To permit construction of a three-story addition to provide additional library space and related services.
- Marymount would submit a detailed landscape plan to the County Manager which would be reviewed by DRCA prior to submitting.
- Parking for construction workers would be provided without charge.

Use Permit Amendment, May 8, 1992

Use permit amendment request to build a 289-space parking garage and swap Marymount land for county land.

Discussion

In July 1991, the Arlington County Board established the Marymount University Neighborhood Relations Committee and appointed a group consisting of the four impacted neighborhoods (Donaldson Run, Rock Springs, Northwest Arlington and Old Dominion) and Marymount University representatives to analyze chronic parking and traffic issues associated with the university and ongoing complaints from the surrounding neighborhoods: students parked on streets in the adjacent residential neighborhoods; unauthorized parking on campus lots; unauthorized parking in nearby private lots including the Country Club and church lots. It was also determined that in addition to students and staff, visitors and others attending seminars, testing, research, etc., also required parking above what had been considered.

The rezoning of a parcel of land and a use permit amendment that would not expand the University's programs but rather address the chronic student parking problems associated with the university was the basis for analysis by the Committee. Marymount was still expected to continue existing policies of providing transportation to and from the Glebe Road campus from other locations.

After many meetings, Marymount proposed to develop a parking facility on a 42,357 triangular shaped area formed by the eastbound and westbound lane of Yorktown Boulevard and 26th Street North. In exchange for this parcel of land, Marymount University would convey a 22,000 square foot parcel of land (adjacent to county's leaf much site) and an unspecified sum of money to Arlington County.

In December 1989, following the June 1988 approval to expand the library and facilities use and student population increase, Marymount hired Kellerco, a traffic consultant firm, which concluded that Marymount was maximizing the utilization of existing parking at the Main Campus. In May 1991, Kellerco prepared another report, presented to the Committee, that identified the need for a minimum of an additional 169 additional parking spaces based on a survey of on-street parking near campus and cars parked illegally on campus. It was acknowledged that the report did not include all neighborhood areas where on-street parking occurred. While the Committee could not agree on the location of the parking garage, it did agreed that a garage was necessary.

Enrollment Cap

The Committee recommended support of a parking facility but stated the need for a verifiable student cap on the number of students in class at any one time. It was essential to define the Main Campus as "mature" with no further expansion to take place. The Committee agreed to daytime cap of 1,300 students in class at any one time on campus and an evening cap of 1,000 students in class at any one-time on campus after 4:00 PM. Furthermore, Marymount stated that personnel policies required staff to park at the Spout Run Campus parking garage.

Future Expansion

The Marymount master plan notes the construction of a new student union facility atop an existing building some time in the future. Marymount notes the expansion should have a limited impact on the university's parking demand.

Master Transportation Plan

The Plan classified North Glebe Road (Route 120) and Old Dominion Drive (Route 309) as principal arterial streets and 26th Street North east of Old Dominion Drive as a minor arterial. The Plan designated Old Dominion Drive to be improved to a four-lane cross section between North Glebe Road and Lee Highway. To date, this has not occurred. The number of accidents on 26th Street, Yorktown Boulevard, and Old Dominion has increased. Kellerco used the accident data in assessing location, egress and access to a potential parking structure.

Arlington County Approval

The Board approved the parking structure and land swap, and made conditional the concerns of the neighborhoods during construction and landscape arrangements.

Use Permit Amendment, July 8, 1998

Use permit amendment to permit construction of an addition to provide a gym, locker rooms, an aquatic center, athletic offices, storage space and a lounge to Butler Hall. Use guidelines evaluation with guidelines established in 1988. The two parameters, set in 1988, included an enrollment cap of 1500 and a development limitation of .52 floor area ratio, which apparently would not be exceeded according to Arlington County staff.

Discussion

Nearby residents expressed concerns over building mass, proximity of building to their property, construction traffic, noise, etc. Marymount agreed to various conditions including landscape, noise reduction and hours of work, truck routes, parking, etc.

Arlington County Approval

The County approved the use permit subject to conditions which include reconstitution of the informal Marymount Neighborhood working group and establishment of acceptable conditions to include a landscape plan, lighting plan, construction routes and work hours, a 24/7 Marymount liaison, construction-related parking, and sound dampening screens.

Chronology of Arlington County Board Actions:

May 11, 1948: Approved user permit for Marymount School, a boarding school and convent for girls.

August 2, 1965: Approved use permit for operating a junior college with increased enrollment of 800 students.

September 9, 1972: Approved use permit for private school (junior high grades) for a maximum of 49 students.

June 6, 1973: Continues use permit for one year.

June 1, 1974: Approved use permit to operate daycare center for 60 children.

June 5, 1974: Discontinued use permit for junior high school.

June 17, 1974 to June 4, 1977: Continued use permit for daycare for 60 children.

June 3, 1978: Continued use permit with no further review for daycare for 60 children.

August 16, 1986: Approved use permit amendment to increase daycare enrollment from 60 to 120 children.

June 29, 1988: Approved use permit amendment to change program from junior college with 1,000 students to university with enrollment that may exceed 1,000 (no cap) and to permit construction of three-story addition to provide additional library space and related services; review in 18 months.

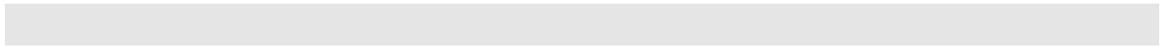
NOTE: 1965 to 1988—No record of authorized expanded use permit from 800 to 1,000 students.

January 9, 1990: Continued use permit with 1,000-plus students.

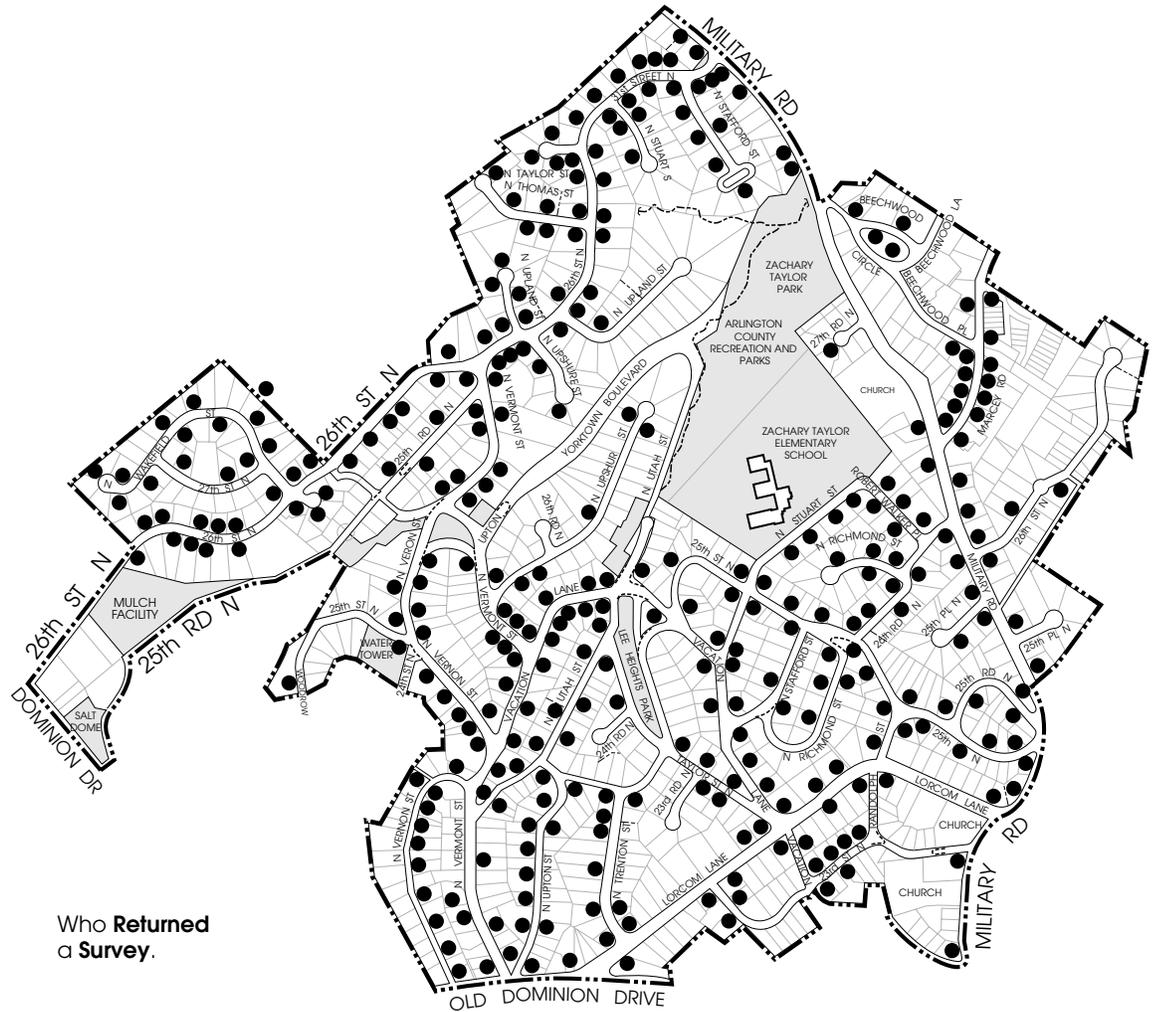
July 13, 1991: Continued use permit permitting the 1,000-plus student enrollment, establishment of Marymount University/neighborhood working group to develop a solution to parking problems associated with the university.

May 26, 1992: Approved use permit amendment to build a parking facility and land swap to support same and continued use permit for operation.

July 8, 1998: Approved use permit amendment to permit construction of an addition to provide gym, locker rooms, athletic offices, lounge to Butler Hall.



Appendix C—Map of Survey Responses



Appendix D—Arlington County Staff Report

September 14, 2000

TO: The County Board of Arlington, Virginia

FROM: William T. Donahue, County Manager

SUBJECT: Donaldson Run Neighborhood Conservation Plan

RECOMMENDATION: Accept the Donaldson Run Neighborhood Conservation Plan with the comments specified in this report.

ISSUES:

1. The Plan makes specific recommendations regarding traffic concerns. Some recommendations have already been implemented, others will require further study.
2. Staff has provided minor comments regarding County property adjacent to the leaf mulch area and the availability of resources for acquisition and maintenance of park facilities.

SUMMARY: Donaldson Run is bounded by the Washington Golf and Country Club, Military Road, Marcey Road, Lorcom Lane and Old Dominion Drive. Taylor Elementary school sits in the center of the neighborhood.

The Donaldson Run NC Plan presents the following as Neighborhood Goals:

- Preserve the character of the neighborhood as a quiet, hilly and wooded area
- Preserve property values in the neighborhood
- Identify areas that need improvement so that programs can be initiated to make these improvements, particularly concerning public safety and high-speed traffic

There are a few recommendations where staff has provided comments to clarify issues and provide additional information. Staff generally supports the plan, and recommends County Board acceptance of the Donaldson Run Neighborhood Conservation Plan, subject to the staff comments specified in this report.

BACKGROUND: The Donaldson Run Civic Association began its NC planning effort in March of 1988 with the distribution of a neighborhood survey. The results of this survey were never tabulated. Eleven years later, a new effort was begun to produce a NC plan. The neighborhood re-committed to participation in the program in January of 1999, and a written survey was developed in June of 1999 and then mailed to 960 households within the Association boundaries during July. During September and October, the 322 returned surveys (34%) were tabulated and the results distributed to the NC Plan Committee. The first draft of the plan was completed and distributed for review in late December of 1999. The draft and review process continued in 2000 with the publication of a second draft which was again sent out for review to all interested neighbors. All comments were then combined to produce the final NC Plan document that was approved by the Donaldson Run Civic Association at its monthly meeting on March 22, 2000. Neighborhood Conservation staff has worked extensively with volunteer plan writers to complete and review this plan. The Neighborhood Conservation Advisory Committee reviewed the Plan on May 11, 2000 and recommended that it be forwarded to the Planning Commission and County Board for acceptance.

DISCUSSION: The Donaldson Run NC Plan makes 77 recommendations covering a broad spectrum of topics. NC staff and the staff from other appropriate County departments will work to implement the community projects as initiated by the neighborhood, subject to funding availability and/or NCAC approval.

For non-capital recommendations, NC staff will act as a liaison between the community and other County agencies. To follow are staff comments on minor sections in the Donaldson Run NC Plan where additional explanation is useful. The chart also lists recommendations made in the Donaldson Run NC Plan which have already been investigated and/or implemented by the Department of Public Works (marked with an asterisk *). One major item which was completed in the period between first and second drafts (and thus does not appear in the final version of the NC Plan) was the repaving and repair of 31st Street west of Military Road, noted as a major neighborhood problem.

This entire memorandum will be printed and bound with the NC Plan when it is published.

<p>Chapter Heading/ Page # Recommendation #</p>	<p>Plan Recommendation</p>	<p>Comment (Department)</p>
<p>Pipestem Development / page 24 #6</p>	<p>While the neighborhood recognizes that pipestem and in-fill development are allowed “by right,” the majority of the neighborhood does not support either. The neighborhood recommends a careful review of any variance request to ensure that the development blends in with the character of the neighborhood and surrounding homes.</p>	<p>In reviewing variance applications and making recommendations to the Board of Zoning Appeals, staff can be sensitive to the issue of proposed development blending in with the neighborhood character. All variance cases are decided in public hearings, and residents are urged to attend and speak on specific requests. Staff always encourages neighbors to provide written comments that can be inserted into staff reports. (DCPHD-Planning)</p>
<p>* Local Shopping / page 25 #9</p>	<p>The neighborhood recommends further study of the pedestrian crossing situation on Old Dominion Drive near the Lee Heights shopping center. The neighborhood would like to see a more pedestrian-friendly situation with the addition of a crosswalk, crossing signals or a pedestrian walkover.</p>	<p>VDOT is conducting a study for the feasibility of a traffic signal at Old Dominion Drive and North Wakefield Street to be completed by 2001 (DPW)</p>
<p>Mulch Pile / page 27 Paragraph 3</p>	<p>It is understood that this park-like setting is under the control of the Department of Environmental Services and is not eligible for improvements under</p>	<p>The property and improvements (trail, picnic tables, covered shelter, drinking fountain) adjacent to the DES mulch pile is regularly maintained by</p>

	<p>the Small Parks Improvement Program or through Neighborhood Conservation Projects.</p>	<p>DPRCR and, as County property, is eligible for these improvements. Small Parks Improvement Program funds were not allocated for the Donaldson Run request because it was for park signage and the area is not part of Zachary Taylor Park. (DES/DPRCR)</p>
<p>* Lorcom Lane / page 39 #39</p>	<p>The study approved by the County Board in 1987 to reengineer the dangerous curve near N. Randolph Street should be implemented or updated.</p>	<p>Staff has improved signage by installing lane reduction signs along Lorcom Lane where traffic lands change from two to one, where the parking lane begins. The project to improve the Lorcom Lane curve at N. Randolph Street is expected to begin construction in Spring 2001 (DPW)</p>
<p>* Military Road / page 39 #42</p>	<p>The neighborhood recommends that traffic calming measures be installed on this road to slow traffic down especially in the valley near the entrance to Zachary Taylor Park.</p>	<p>The Neighborhood Traffic Calming Program is currently applicable to “neighborhood” streets. Military Road, which is an arterial with a speed limit of 30 mph, will be sent to the Transportation Commission for their consideration when the “arterial traffic calming” study is complete. The Police Department was advised of the speeds and will conduct enforcement. Additional speed limit signs will also be installed.(DPW)</p>

<p>* Vermont Street / page 40 #43</p>	<p>The neighborhood recommends that traffic calming measures be installed on this street to slow traffic down, especially at the intersection with Upshur Street and coming down the hill from Old Dominion.</p>	<p>Staff conducted accident analysis and collected speed and volume data for N. Vermont Street north of Vernon Street in response to this request. The posted speed is 25 mph and the 85th percentile speed was found to be 28 mph. A review of existing speed limit signs will be undertaken to determine if additional signs are necessary. A review of accident records for a five year period indicated no accidents on the winding sections of Vermont Street from Upton Street to Lee Highway. (DPW)</p>
<p>* Beechwood Circle, Beechwood Place, Marcey Road / page 40 #44 and #45</p>	<p>The neighborhood recommends that traffic calming measures be installed on these streets to slow traffic down.</p>	<p>Staff collected volume and speed data in order to address this request for traffic calming. As indicated below, the following speeds would not qualify for traffic calming measures:</p> <p>Beechwood Circle Volume</p> <p>603 <u>Beechwood Circle</u> <u>85th Speed</u> 23 mph</p> <p>Beechwood Place Volume 254 <u>Beechwood Place</u> <u>85th Speed</u> 21 mph</p>

		<p>Marcy Road Volume 1206 <u>March Road 85th</u> <u>Speed</u> 26 mph (DPW)</p>
<p>* Vacation Lane / page 41 #46</p>	<p>The neighborhood recommends that traffic calming measures to installed on this street to slow traffic down, especially on the hill from North Stuart to North Utah.</p>	<p>Volume and speed data was collected to address speeding concerns. The 85th percentile was measured at 24 mph and the average speed was 20 mph. Staff conducted an accident analysis and will continue to monitor Vacation Lane and Lorcom Lane intersection to to determine if any additional traffic control measures are needed. (DPW)</p>
<p>* Traffic Signage Recommendations / page 41 #47</p>	<p>The neighborhood recommends changing the yield sign to a stop sign at the intersection of Vernon and Vermont and at the intersection of Vermont and Vacation.</p>	<p>Due to limited sight distance at North Vernon Street and North Vermont Street, a “Stop” sign will installed to replace the existing “Yield” sign. At North Vernon Street and Vacation Lane, neither sight distance nor accident records support a change. (DPW)</p>
<p>Parks and Recreation Areas / pages 43 – 47 #53</p>	<p>The neighborhood recommends that DPRCR and the Civic Association meet on an annual basis to review the current state of the neighborhood parks, to discuss maintenance issues and to plan park improvements to be funded by programs such as the Small Parks Program or</p>	<p>While this review will be arranged, staff cautions that there are limited resources available for development and maintenance of park facilities and that any future proposals for improvement or acquisition would need to be reviewed in this context. (DPRCR)</p>

	through Neighborhood Conservation funds.	
* Sidewalks, Curbs and Gutters / page 57 #66	The neighborhood recommends that we look into ways to install a sidewalk on North 26th Street to provide a safe area in which to walk as well as to meet the needs of affected homeowners.	Funding for a project to build a sidewalk along one side of 26 th Street is included in the FY 2000 – 2005 CIP. It is planned that the sidewalk will be installed along the North side of the street where it would have the least impact upon adjacent residences. During design, staff will work to create a project that best meets the desires of the nearby residents. (DPW)
* Sidewalks, Curbs and Gutters / page 58 #67	The neighborhood recommends that we look into ways to install a sidewalk on North 25th Street near Taylor School to provide a safe area in which to walk as well as to meet the needs of affected homeowners.	County staff will pursue construction of a sidewalk on 25 th Street, near Taylor School, through the new Safe Routes to Schools Program. (DPW)
* Non Traffic Signage / page 64 #77	The neighborhood recommends that the street sign for Vermont be moved closer to the intersection at Lee Highway.	Staff will relocate the street name sign for better visibility.

FINANCIAL IMPACT:

The acceptance of the Donaldson Run Neighborhood Conservation Plan does not have any immediate fiscal impact upon County operations. If recommendations from this plan requiring funding or staff resources outside of the NC bond allocation are brought forward for implementation, they will each be analyzed as part of the County budget process.

CONCLUSION:

Staff generally supports the Donaldson Run Neighborhood Conservation Plan, subject to the staff comments specified in this report, and recommends County Board acceptance of the plan on that basis.



Appendix E—County Board Acceptance Motion of Neighborhood Conservation Plans

Whereas, the County Board created the Neighborhood Conservation Program in 1964 to encourage neighborhoods to carry out neighborhood improvement plans and provide dedicated funding to implement those plans; and

Whereas the Neighborhood Conservation Program is a mechanism for improvement and maintenance of areas where residents indicate a desire to achieve an improved neighborhood and fulfill a broader vision of the modern “urban village” through coordination of public and private efforts; and

Whereas, these plans are initiated and prepared by the neighborhoods, who work with the Neighborhood Conservation Advisory Committee and County staff; and

Whereas, Neighborhood Conservation Plans have three purposes:

- 1) To build a neighborhood vision and consensus on issues affecting the neighborhood, to evaluate County service delivery and the state of the neighborhood, and to suggest policies and projects that will improve the neighborhood
- 2) To establish eligibility for Neighborhood Conservation funding
- 3) To provide guidance to the County Board, Commissions, Departments and staff concerning issues in neighborhoods; and

Whereas, the County Board created the Neighborhood Conservation Advisory Committee (NCAC) to guide the Neighborhood Conservation Program, and the NCAC reviewed this new, updated or amended Neighborhood Conservation Plan and recommends plan acceptance; and

Whereas the Planning Commission also recommended acceptance of this plan.

Now, therefore be it resolved that after careful consideration of the recommendations of the Neighborhood Conservation Advisory Committee, the County Board hereby accepts the Donaldson Run Neighborhood Conservation Plan as a statement of the Donaldson Run neighborhood and directs the County Manager to ensure that the recommendations of this plan are considered in decision-making and actions that affect Donaldson Run neighborhood.



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