

Arlington
Community Facilities Study

A resource and facilities plan for our future

Siting Principles Subcommittee

Draft Siting Principles/Considerations
June 10, 2015



Siting Principles Subcommittee

High Level Siting Principles/Considerations

- Subcommittee reviewed past siting documents, case studies, and Resident Forum discussion notes to develop high level siting principles/considerations
- Tonight's discussion will focus on principles; next meeting (June 24 meeting with Resident Forum) will include discussion of siting process (incl. when process would apply)
- It may not be possible to identify a site that meets all principles
- Tradeoffs will likely need to be considered as part of the siting process

Siting Principles Subcommittee

High Level Siting Principles/Considerations

1. Demonstrating need for a facility
2. Information sharing & communication
3. Site suitability
4. Facility function & impacts
5. Location within the County
6. Time constraints
7. Cost & financing

Siting Principles Subcommittee

High Level Siting Principles/Considerations

8. Site availability
9. Existing conditions: site programs/uses and plans/policies
10. Adaptability & co-location opportunities
11. Opportunity cost
12. Balancing County-wide and local needs

1. Demonstrating need for a facility

- County and Schools should regularly communicate known facility needs
- When a facility need requires a site, the County or Schools should demonstrate and explain the need to the community as early as possible
- Provide basic information and facts on facility need that may seem obvious, but may not be understood by all

2. Information sharing & communication

- Create trust at the beginning of all siting projects by sharing information
- Make a commitment to transparency and consistency in communicating with residents
- Develop public information and materials that are accessible to diverse groups through a variety of channels
- Establish opportunities for ongoing resident and staff dialogue throughout the siting process
- Determine and use existing, as well as new, platforms for communications

2. Information sharing & communication

- Establish an understanding that communications are adaptable based on information, audiences and timing of siting process
- Some information cannot be made public:
 - Discussions of acquisition and disposition of real property that would affect County's or Schools' bargaining position or negotiating strategy
 - Other provisions of Virginia FOIA laws that allow closed meetings for public bodies

3. Site suitability

- Define the highest priorities for siting a specific facility need – non-negotiables
- Examples could be physical characteristics of site, transportation access, impact on service delivery

4. Facility function & impacts

- Multi-function/use flexibility
- Economic impact
- Demographic/diversity impact
- Transportation impact
- Green space impact
- Neighborhood impact

5. Location within the County

- Facilities need to be located in a manner that facilitates efficient, effective service delivery
- Locational requirements vary by facility
 - Some facilities (e.g. fire stations) need to be distributed
 - Some facilities (e.g. administrative offices) have more options
 - Other facilities require land with certain characteristics (e.g. minimum acreage) that can limit options
- Given scarcity of land in Arlington, opportunity may drive location decisions
- 1993 Siting Principles: “Ensure fairness by equitable distribution of facilities or programs throughout the County”

5. Location within the County

- Not all siting options will meet needs equally; tradeoffs and considerations need to be openly discussed with the community
- Available land may be too close to another of the same facility, making the site less desirable.

6. Time constraints

- All facility needs are time sensitive. Service delivery needs and financing can help to determine how quickly a siting decision must be made.
- Some needs will require a siting decision in a limited time frame to meet an urgent need
- Land or property can become available for acquisition with a short turnaround time
- Time constraints should not limit full community participation in siting decisions. More resources may be needed for a shorter turnaround and clear schedules should be set.

6. Time constraints

- Timetable for making siting decisions should be developed and shared early on
- Making facility needs known early will allow for more time to follow a process without needing to compress the schedule
- Applying the siting principles and process early on should shorten the overall process in the long run

7. Cost & financing

- Rough cost estimates need to be provided to compare multiple site options
- More complex projects or deals (co-location, public-private partnerships) can increase costs; need to consider benefits as well as costs
- Consider County's debt capacity, other financing sources

8. Site availability

- The selected site for a facility need must be available:
 - At a cost that meets the project's budget or with an explanation of why an additional expenditure is necessary
 - Within a time frame that meets the service delivery need
- Site ownership: County, APS, other gov't (state, federal, regional), private

9. Existing conditions: site programs/uses and plans/policies

- Inventory and evaluate existing conditions on each site to establish a baseline
 - Physical elements
 - Government and/or community programs being provided
 - Recent public investments and planned near-term initiatives
 - Site-specific sensitivities
- Community should have opportunity to contribute to existing use assessment from various perspectives
- Siting process should include parameters for initial site assessments
 - Balanced between superficial site review and exhaustive study of every detail

9. Existing conditions: site programs/uses and plans/policies

- Consider legal and zoning parameters, GLUP designation and Sector or Area Plan guidance
- 2011 County/APS MOA for considering APS use of County land/facilities:
 - “Services provided to County residents will continue at a comparable or greater level.” This could be on site or at an appropriate alternative site.
 - “Any permanent solution will respect the County’s articulated goals in open / green space, affordable housing, historic preservation, land use, transportation, smart growth, and energy and environmental goals, among others.”
 - Factors include: “Consistency with neighborhood land use and development plans.”

10. Adaptability & co-location opportunities

- Build community facilities with flexibility of use as a major design consideration instead of building a single-use facility
- General support for co-location in Resident Forum discussions
- Timing is critical; flexibility of uses is difficult to build into project if not incorporated into design early on
- In addition to combining public uses on a site, consider opportunities for public-private partnerships; partners could be for-profit or non-profit

10. Adaptability & co-location opportunities

- Arlington does not have a history of designing and building general purpose spaces
- Co-location can be difficult due to timing of needs for multiple uses
- Added complexity can increase project costs and timeline; consider cost-benefit of co-location versus building two separate facilities

11. Opportunity cost

- Consider the future opportunities for a site that would be given up if the site is selected for today's facility need
- Is this facility need the highest and best use for the site?
- A site may be adequate for multiple facilities; prioritization of needs will be critical
- Think long term about needs and sites to avoid being short-sighted

12. Balancing County-wide and local needs

- Include county-wide interests/organizations in siting process along with local neighborhood representation
- Consider how neighborhood impacts can be minimized while still providing effective service
- Mitigate less desirable uses, possibly by coupling with desired facilities (e.g. new park)
- Articulate the consequences of different siting alternatives (i.e. if not sited in this neighborhood, what are the impacts to other neighborhoods?)
- Focus on positive impacts for all – neighbors and Arlington as a whole