

Career Center Working Group

Columbia Pike Library Subcommittee Final Report



Final | 5.17.18

Assistance to the Columbia Pike Library Subcommittee was provided by staff from Arlington County and Arlington Public Schools. Following is a roster of the Subcommittee members:

SUBCOMMITTEE ROSTER

CHAIR	Nancy Birnbaum
VICE-CHAIR	Betty Siegel
PLANNING COMMISSION	Kathleen McSweeney
RESIDENT	Carrie Johnson
BLACK HERITAGE MUSEUM OF ARLINGTON	Kim Phillip
COLUMBIA PIKE REVITALIZATION ORGANIZATION	Cecilia Cassidy
ARLINGTON PUBLIC LIBRARIES	Gale Koritansky
PIKE PRESIDENTS GROUP	Lander Allen
ARLINGTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS STAFF	Theresa Flynn
ARLINGTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS STAFF	Sarah Johnson
ARLINGTON COUNTY STAFF	Matt Mattauszek

BACKGROUND

As a result of Arlington's growth and increasing school enrollment, the School Board adopted a plan to add 1,300 new high school seats, of which 700-800 are to be accommodated on the Career Center site. To this end, the Arlington County Board and the Arlington School Board created a joint working group that will recommend how the Career Center site may be developed in phases to accommodate more high school capacity and new community amenities. The charge for the Career Center Working Group (CCWG) directs the CCWG to:

“convene a subgroup of CCWG members to evaluate options for the Columbia Pike Library, including staying on the site in coordination with school facilities or alternatively moving it from the site to a location on Columbia Pike in support of economic development and place making. Cost estimates developed as part of the CCWG process should reflect library relocation and reconstruction costs for any option. The subgroup, which will be led by a member of the CCWG but may include additional Columbia Pike and Libraries stakeholders, will work in parallel to the CCWG and any recommendations will be part of the CCWG report.”

Individual subcommittee members provided community perspectives and input to the working group. The subcommittee has proceeded in a collaborative spirit, respecting each other's concerns and working diligently to build consensus. The effort has been aided immensely by the work of very able, energetic staff from both the County and APS. APS and County staff have responded to requests for information and prepared detailed presentations for the group and community. Every member of the subcommittee has had the opportunity to review and contribute to this report.

The subcommittee first met on March 20, 2018 and again on April 10, 2018 before updating the CCWG on its initial findings on April 12, 2018. The subcommittee also met on May 3, 2018 to finalize its principles in anticipation of preparing this report. These meetings were open to the public, as well as announced at the CCWG meetings. Meeting agendas and all materials provided to the working group have been posted on the CCWG's website at <https://www.apsva.us/career-center/ccwg-follow-journey/library-subcommittee/>. Background materials and presentations were provided by County and APS staff, including information on the public libraries' roles in communities throughout Arlington and information on construction costs for public libraries throughout the region. The subcommittee also provided preliminary information to the County Board and School Board at a joint work session held on April 17, 2018.

FINDINGS & RECOMMENDATIONS

Long-term vision: Relocate the library to front Columbia Pike by acquiring or leasing properties on the south block (bounded by Highland St, 9th Street, Walter Reed, and Columbia Pike) to help create a visible, architecturally dynamic, learning and cultural space for all ages and abilities. In the event opportunities within the south block are not available or feasible or other nearby opportunities may arise, permanent relocation of the library should be limited to those properties fronting Columbia Pike between S. Glebe Road and S. Adams Street.

Funding: Since this project has the potential to be an economic and cultural driver for the Town Center node of Columbia Pike Commercial Revitalization District and be considered the “crown jewel” of the placemaking efforts underway, the County should fund the move.

Temporary Issues: The library will remain in operation in its current location until it moves to its permanent location on the Pike. If, due to construction on the site, the library must be moved temporarily before its new space is ready, it needs to be in a visible location that is easy to find, clearly identified, and within walking distance of its current location.

Parking: Structured, on-site parking reserved for library patrons and other co-located programs is needed to accommodate patrons and facilitate use.

Co-location: Other entities should be co-located to maximize use of the space and synergy between the library and the other entities (e.g., cultural spaces such as a museum and performance space, Arlington Community High School, hands-on programs for CTE students such as a salon or restaurant, and/or NVCC programs). The County should further investigate other co-location opportunities beyond those listed above.

Expansion: The library should be expanded from its current 20,000 sf space to a minimum of 25,000 sf to allow for increased patronage due to a more visible and accessible location and to provide more services/programming to the community and the County as a whole (such as an auditorium with a minimum capacity of 250 occupants and an expanded children’s area).

Phasing: The subcommittee acknowledges any potential land acquisition/lease agreement for the future library location, as well as the associated preparation of that space, will likely not be completed by 2022. Consequently, any phasing plans for the Career Center campus should minimize the impacts of that construction on the public library.

Construction Costs: The subcommittee recognizes it is difficult to project construction costs as those costs increase on a regular basis, and there have been few comparable library construction projects completed in recent years. Below is a cost projection based on Woodrow Wilson Community Library in Fairfax County. Since that library was only 14,500 sf in size, and the Columbia Pike library includes a recommended minimum size of at least 25,000 sf., the

following figures may need to be increased to approximate the true cost for the new Columbia Pike Library construction.

10-year projection of costs for Woodrow Wilson Community Library in Fairfax County
 (applying a 4% annual inflation to their year of completion)

Woodrow Wilson Community Library (Fairfax County): 14,500 sf.											
4% Annual Inflation	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
(\$ Millions)	\$5.7	\$5.9	\$6.2	\$6.4	\$6.7	\$6.9	\$7.2	\$7.5	\$7.8	\$8.1	\$8.4