



October 6, 2021

Honorable Matt de Ferranti, Chair
Arlington County Board
Ellen M. Bozman Government Center
2100 Clarendon Blvd, Suite 300
Arlington, VA 22201

Re: Public Art Master Plan Update

Dear Chair de Ferranti:

The Forestry and Natural Resources Commission (FNRC) would like to express its support of the draft Public Art Master Plan component of the Public Spaces Master Plan. The Commission applauds the guiding principles of the project, including those of creating meaningful connections between people and places important to civil life, drawing on diverse environmental resources, and making public art enriching. The FNRC notes that these principles are consistent with some of the principles of the Biophilic Cities Network, of which Arlington County is a member.

Although Arlington is an urban county containing mostly “built environment,” it also contains rich natural resources such as wooded spaces, wildlife, and streams. It is also bordered by the Potomac River. Promoting public artwork that highlights these natural assets and connects residents to nature is an ideal opportunity not only to achieve the goal of the Public Spaces Master Plan for creating connections between people and places, but also to achieve the county’s goal, as stated in its 2020 “Biophilic City Resolution,” to “further the presence of nature in our buildings, facilities, homes and public spaces” and to incorporate “natural patterns as a tool for improving health and well-being in the built environment.” The FNRC therefore recommends that public art selection criteria include nature-related themes and enriching the connections between people and nature.

In addition, the FNRC also recommends that artwork selection include consideration of the materials used. The FNRC suggests that, whenever feasible, artworks should make use of natural materials, such as responsibly harvested woods or natural stones rather than manufactured materials like aluminum, steel, or concrete. Incorporating natural materials into the works of art intended to connect people to nature would further enhance the biophilic experience.

Thank you for the opportunity to share our suggestions.

Sincerely,



Phil Klingelhofer, Chair
Forestry and Natural Resources Commission

Cc: Members, Arlington County Board
Members, Planning Commission
Mark Schwartz, Arlington County Manager