



THE FUTURE OF ARLINGTON

The Year 2000 and Beyond



Submitted By
The Commission On Arlington's Future

THE FUTURE
OF
ARLINGTON

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The Commission On Arlington's Future
November 1986



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Mary Margaret Whipple
Chairman, Arlington County Board
1400 North Court House Road
Arlington County, Virginia 22201

November 20, 1986

Dear Mrs. Whipple:

I have the honor to transmit, herewith, the report of the Commission On Arlington's Future which you appointed last February. The report, entitled *THE FUTURE OF ARLINGTON — THE YEAR 2000 AND BEYOND*, contains the Commission's vision of the future of Arlington County, challenges to the attainment of that vision, and recommendations and strategies that could act as leverages in the achievement of the type of community we envision in the year 2000 and beyond. Task Force Reports on Cultural and Recreational Activities; Economic Development; Education; Health, Human Services, and Public Safety; Housing and Neighborhoods; and Physical Environment provide supplemental material and should be read in conjunction with the Commission's report.

More than 100 Arlingtonians from various segments of the community have taken part in the development of the report. Their expertise and commitment have been evident during the nine-month work of the Commission. Further, a draft of the report was presented to a number of community organizations and advisory groups. Many of their suggestions have been incorporated in the final report or in the task force reports. County staff have provided excellent assistance in the collection of information and preparation of reports. Especially, I want to commend Elizabeth Gawron and Helen Guthrie for their work.

All Commission members endorse the general thrust and direction of the report and its recommendations without necessarily agreeing with each and every point made.

The Commission strongly urges the County to arrange to have the challenges, strategies, and recommendations in our report, along with other alternatives suggested by citizens and organizations, re-examined each year through an on-going dialogue about the future of Arlington.

As Chairman of the County Board, you charged the Commission to look at the "human side of Arlington" as the County approaches the year 2000. We have endeavored to do that. It is the Commission's hope that this report will stimulate community interest in planning for and taking actions to bring about the better community Arlington can become by the beginning of the next century. The Commission sees this as just the beginning and not the conclusion of a community process in the years to come.

Sincerely,

Joseph L. Fisher, Chairman
Commission On Arlington's Future

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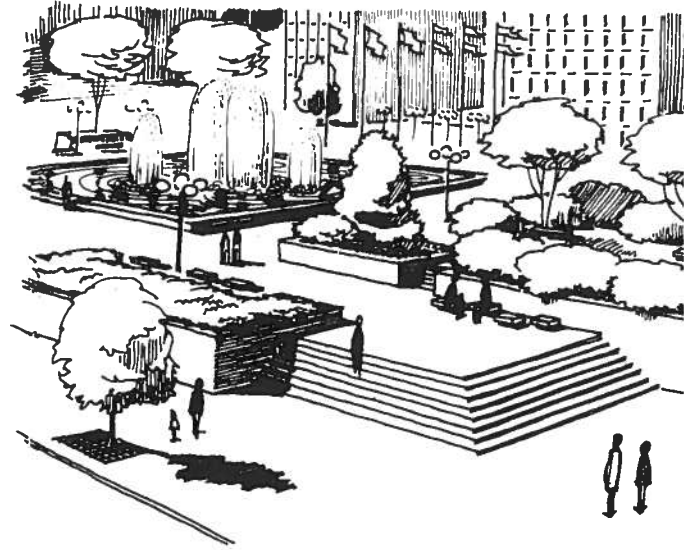
Introduction

The Commission on Arlington's Future was formed in February 1986 to recommend positive responses to challenges and opportunities confronting the County through the year 2000 and beyond. In this report, the Commission aims:

- to present a vision of what we think Arlington ought to be like in the year 2000 (Chapter I);
- to set the scene from which we start (Chapter II);
- to identify challenges to attaining that vision (Chapter III);
- to recommend strategies to make the vision a reality (Chapter IV); and
- to suggest policies, programs and projects for implementing strategies (Chapter V).

Our purpose is to stimulate creative thinking and raise expectations for a bright future rather than to spell out a definitive plan. We deliberately do not attempt to cost out any of these suggestions. Future projects and programs will have to be determined by the County Board as they study feasibilities and costs. Our recommendations in Chapter V present one set of specific steps to move the County toward our vision of Arlington in the year 2000.

These recommendations are, it should be noted, based on the intensive work of six task forces set up to assist the Commission and on comments offered by organizations and individuals who reviewed drafts of this report. The task forces prepared working papers on cultural and recreational activities; economic development; education; health, human services, and public safety; housing and neighborhoods; and the physical environment. These papers, which are available to the public, provide more detail than the Commission's report and will be valuable resources when considering Commission recommendations.



**A CROSS-CUTTER:
CHILD CARE SERVICE**

The trend toward increasing numbers of single-parent households and families in which both parents work is expected to continue. Because of that trend, the availability of quality child care service will be important in:

- *attracting and serving resident families with children;*
- *attracting quality teachers and other public employees; and*
- *attracting businesses.*

And, of course, quality child care can add to the educational experience of children.

The provision of child care services through joint public and private action is a goal which serves the needs of residents, is important to maintaining good schools, is part of a business attraction strategy, and benefits children.

As such, efforts to increase the availability of quality child care service should be a priority goal for the future.

While the Commission's priorities are reflected in the description of our vision for Arlington, identification of key challenges, and suggestions for strategies, we do not attempt to rank our more concrete recommendations. Spending priorities are determined by many factors, including community need and desire, implementation feasibilities, and costs. Our recommendations, however, are important as potential community improvements and concrete examples of our vision. They will be found throughout the report, sometimes set out separately to catch the reader's attention. We call these "Zingers".

Readers will also find throughout the report short pieces headed "Cross-cutters." These are examples of recommendations which cut across strategies, advance several goals, or serve multiple purposes. Such recommendations are singled out because they demonstrate the interrelationships among our issue areas and can have a substantial impact. In some cases, our recommendations support the expansion of programs already in existence.

Finally, before turning to our vision of Arlington, we offer one more definition. In this report, "County" refers to the total community of residents, workers, and private and public sectors. References to a component of the County will be specific, such as the County government, County schools, business sector, civic associations, and individual citizen.

Chapter I

Our Vision and Goals for Arlington

Our vision for Arlington in the year 2000 is:

A diverse community of dynamic, secure residential and commercial neighborhoods; a learning, caring, participating community in which each person is important.

In drawing up that vision, we built on two assumptions and three broad concepts that must be presented to understand the goals, strategies, programs, and projects we recommend.

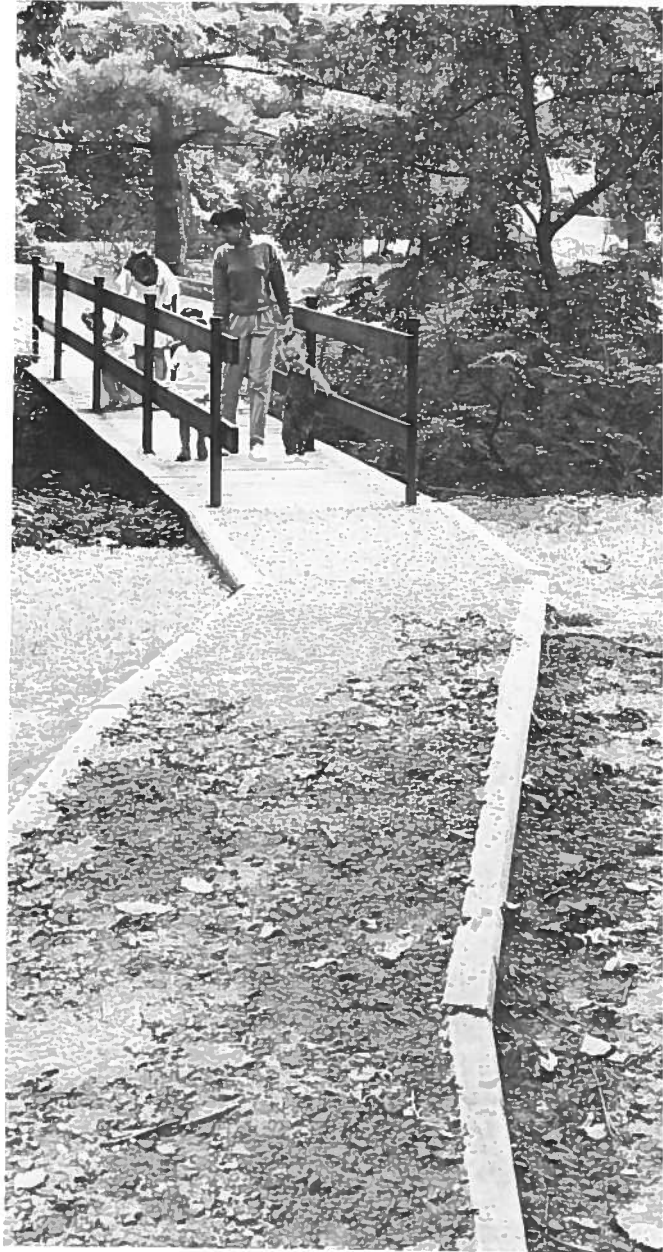
The assumptions are:

- that the vision should be rooted in Arlington's best traditions and current conditions. We do not ask for a quantum jump to some ideal at odds with what Arlington is but, rather, we seek those interventions that will reverse negative trends and allow the County to evolve into a better and more caring community; and
- that the current General Land Use Plan and Transportation Plan, which were adopted after extensive public discussion, will be followed.

The three broad concepts are neighborhood, development, and access.

"Neighborhood," encompasses both the purely residential areas of the County, in which homeowners trim lawns, take elevators to apartments, go to PTA meetings, and walk to shops, and mixed-use areas such as Crystal City, where an extensive daytime community works, dines, shops, and meets with friends. We consciously resist the traditional approach of considering the goal of neighborhood policy as meeting the needs of only single-family-home residents, and garden and high-rise residents, while ignoring the existence of those who work in Arlington during the day. We have tried to integrate all elements of community life into a broader concept of "neighborhood." We do so for three reasons.

- Garden and high-rise apartments are just as much residential neighborhoods as are neighborhoods of single-family detached houses.





- The quality of life is as important to commercial neighborhoods as it is to residential neighborhoods.
- Most Arlington neighborhoods embrace some of each of these elements. Residents want the convenience of nearby shopping facilities; local businesses need employees and customers who live nearby.

An Arlington citizen is affected by, and therefore has an important stake in, how a series of different kinds and sizes of neighborhoods develop. Closest to home, the immediate neighborhood can include a school, a park, a food market, a hardware store, or a restaurant. At a broader level, the multi-community neighborhood can include a library, a shopping center, larger parks, a swimming pool, or a secondary school. And at the county-wide level, the commercial neighborhood, such as the Rosslyn-Ballston Corridor and Crystal City-Pentagon City, can offer employment opportunities, cultural and recreational amenities, and a broader array of shopping options. These commercial neighborhoods also generate tax revenues that help pay for desired public services and help keep residential property tax rates down.

Because the fate of residential and commercial neighborhoods and the County's overall quality of life are so entwined, a comprehensive approach to managing change demands that the needs of residents, businesses, and workers be considered concurrently rather than separately.

"Development" encompasses, yet goes beyond, economic growth and job creation. Development is a dynamic concept that includes the preservation and enhancement of neighborhoods and the environment, access to needed services, e.g. education, health care, public safety, and the capacity of communities to identify problems, set goals, and implement strategies to attain their goals. Development, then, is a comprehensive approach to managing change to achieve desirable ends. Recognizing that Arlington is undergoing change, we must highlight the need for this comprehensive approach to preparing for the future. The contest between homeowners and real estate developers, between residential folks and business people, has run its course and is no longer helpful.

"Access" encompasses a range of attributes that the Arlington of our vision should possess in the year 2000. These attributes include access by all citizens to:

- high quality, lifelong education, for preschoolers through adults;
- decent, affordable housing — whether owned or rented, house or apartment — for a wide variety of living arrange-

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- ments and economic levels, e.g. families with children, single persons, young professionals, retired people, diverse ethnic populations;
- a mix of jobs under attractive working conditions and employment opportunities for various skill levels;
 - needed private services and a broad range of shopping facilities;
 - affordable, high quality health and social services;
 - a secure and safe community;
 - an environment with clean water, unpolluted air, low noise levels; and free from toxic substances;
 - a full range of cultural, recreational, and entertainment opportunities, e.g. good restaurants, music, theaters, tennis courts; and
 - affordable, convenient transportation, increasingly by foot, bicycle, and public transit, and less by private auto.



A VISION OF CLARENDON IN THE YEAR 2000

As the dispersal of the Washington metropolitan area continues to lengthen the journey to work and to shop, Clarendon is an all-purpose community that reduces the necessity of moving about in the metropolis.

Flanked on the east by the County government center and on the west by a university center, Clarendon provides quiet residential neighborhoods within walking distance of offices, stores, restaurants, recreation, and continuing education. Yet it also is a community of cosmopolitan and international interests and activities closely tied to Washington by Metrorail and motorways and to the world by telecommunications and a nearby airport.

The centerpiece of Clarendon's identity is a five-acre park, part of which is an oriental garden, a green oasis on the Metrorail's Orange Line at the terminus of Fairfax Drive and Clarendon Circle, bounded by Wilson Boulevard and Kirkwood Road. The village green is an inviting link between the office and commercial center of Clarendon and the research and educational functions at Virginia Square. Whatever unattractive streetscapes existed in 1986 have given way to tree-lined boulevards, landscaped pedestrian walkways, well-designed street hardware, and refurbished storefronts.

The concept of a compact all-purpose community in a pedestrian-scale environment was conceived in the Clarendon sector plan brought to fruition by a cooperative effort of the County government, civic groups, individuals, residents, and business leaders under the banner of the Clarendon Alliance. The goal was to develop a community differing from other neighborhoods served by a Metro — a community supplying residents and businesses the entire range of facilities and services responding to twenty-first century lifestyles. Clarendon is at once Arlington's neighborhood and a global village.