

March 4, 2019

Mike Cantwell  
President, Yorktown Civic Association  
2311 N. George Mason Dr.  
Arlington, VA 22207

Arlington County Board  
2100 Clarendon Blvd. Suite 300  
Arlington, VA 22201

**Subject: Request to modify the charge to the 26<sup>th</sup> North St. and Old Dominion Dr. Master Planning Task Force**

Dear Chairman Dorsey,

The Yorktown Civic Association respectfully asks the Arlington County Board to modify the charge to the 26<sup>th</sup> North St. and Old Dominion Dr. Master Planning Task Force. The enclosed document contains suggested language for the modified charge.

The Yorktown Civic Association believes it is in the best interest of all stakeholders to eliminate the current requirement to retain the one acre leaf storage site at the 26<sup>th</sup> North and Old Dominion Dr. (26<sup>th</sup> and OD) site.

**Background**

The Arlington County government has been collecting and processing leaves since the mid-nineties. The process begins when leaves are collected curbside in the late fall using county owned leaf collection (vacuum) trucks. The leaves are then transported to one of two leaf collection sites. The leaves collected in South Arlington are taken to the Earth Products Yard located at 4300 29th St South, while the leaves collected in North Arlington are taken to the 26<sup>th</sup> and OD site. The trucks offload their leaves and then the leaves are moved by heavy equipment to large leaf piles at each site. The leaves at the Earth Products Yard are then lifted into a large mulching machine and are processed into fine leaf mulch. After the leaves at the Earth Projects Yard are processed into fine mulch, the leaves from the 26<sup>th</sup> and Old Dominion site are transported to the Earth Products Yard and processed into fine mulch. Throughout the year, this fine leaf mulch is used by the county government and county residents. County residents can have leaf mulch delivered for a fee or they can pick up leaf mulch at the Earth Products Yard or the 26<sup>th</sup> and Old Dominion site. Surplus leaf mulch is sold to local landscaping contractors.

The leaf collection and processing program involves approximately 100 county employees, 40 temporary employees, and over 30 pieces of equipment including vacuum trucks, rear loading collection trucks, and loaders. 19 "single use" vacuum trucks are parked at Earth Products Yard.

**Issues**

The current one acre leaf storage site at the 26<sup>th</sup> and OD site and accompanying processing activities (offloading leaves, moving leaves to the leaf pile, compacting of the leaves with heavy equipment, etc.) are incompatible with the Department of Parks and Recreation Strategic Plan and the Arlington Public Spaces Master Plan. Also, the use of 19 "single use" vehicles that remain idle for 10 months of the year is inefficient. The vehicles also require 19 truck parking spaces at the already overcrowded Earth Products Yard.

## Options

1. **Transform the one acre leaf storage site at 26<sup>th</sup> and OD into parkland. Outsource the entire leaf collection to leaf mulch operation for North Arlington to a commercial enterprise.**
  - Other counties/towns (including, but not limited to University City, MO; Glencoe, IL; Ladue, MO; Clayton, MO; Olivette, MO; Richmond Heights, MO) outsource their leaf collection to leaf mulch programs to commercial enterprises.
  - Several commercial enterprises within 20 miles of Arlington are capable of collecting and processing the leaves.
2. **Transform the one acre leaf storage site at 26th and OD into parkland. Contract with three local swim clubs and store the collected leaves in their parking lots.**
  - The average size of a local swim club parking lot is one acre. Most local swim club parking lots are idle between November and February. The arrangement would provide Arlington County with an alternative leaf storage location and provide the local swim clubs with needed income.
3. **Transform the one acre leaf storage site at 26th and OD into parkland. Contract with local golf courses and store the collected leaves on their grounds.**
  - Golf course usage declines between November and February. The arrangement would provide Arlington County with an alternative leaf storage location and provide local golf courses with needed income.
4. **Transform the one acre leaf storage site at 26th and OD into parkland. Enter into cooperative agreements with Regional Parks (Potomac Overlook), National Parks (GW Parkway, Turkey Run, Fort Marcy, Gravelly Point), and/or Federal Lands (Ft. Myer, Arlington National Cemetery, Pentagon).**
  - Regional Parks, National Parks, and Federal Lands also have a need to collect, store, and process leaves. The federal government also has a need for tons of leaf mulch.
5. **Transform the one acre leaf storage site at 26th and OD into parkland. Eliminate leaf collection services for North Arlington. Conduct a marketing campaign to encourage on-site leaf mulching and composting.**
  - North Arlington residents could also contract with private vendors to collect and dispose of their leaves.
6. **Do nothing. Continue to use one acre of the seven acre 26<sup>th</sup> and OD site for leaf storage.**

## Recommendations

The current one acre leaf storage site at the 26th and OD site and accompanying processing activities are incompatible with the Department of Parks and Recreation Strategic Plan and the Arlington Public Spaces Master Plan. The Yorktown Civic Association respectfully asks the Arlington County Board to direct the County Staff to investigate and analyze all options related to the leaf storage site at the 26<sup>th</sup> and OD site. Adding one acre of parkland to this seven acre site aligns with the values of the residents and guests of Arlington County.

Sincerely,



Mike Cantwell  
President, Yorktown Civic Association