

# MEMORANDUM

TO: Symmes Advisory Committee

FROM: Public Use Working Group  
Harris Band, Greg Blass, Elisabeth Carr-Jones, Deborah O'Donnell, Steve Frigand, Ellen Kushner, Ann LeRoy, Suzi Lubar, Jim Marzilli, Linda Privitera (Vice Chair), Brian Rehrig (Chair), Sue Sheffler, Denis Sullivan

DATE: May 1, 2002

RE: Progress report

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The Public Use group has been meeting regularly to discuss how we can effectively carry out our charge of aiding the Committee in gathering and sorting information and evaluating potential public uses. We concluded that a useful process would be one that is based on clear criteria, and that forms an objective framework for evaluating potential uses.

The group has designed, tested and refined a set of criteria and a form of evaluation matrix based thereon. Attached is an overview of the process that led us to this recommendation, along with:

- the list of criteria;
- a fill-in-the-blanks spreadsheet using those criteria;
- an example, filled in as if someone had completed the spreadsheet to assess three sample use ideas;
- a proposed set of weightings to be applied to the eventual results.

We look forward to presenting and discussing this work with you at the May 2 meeting of the SAC.

This is a work in process. We are seeking the Committee's endorsement of the approach, thoughts on specific improvements and refinements, and your approval to work toward integrating this tool into the consulting process ahead.

The group is grateful for the excellent contributions of Steve Frigand in facilitating and leading the design of this project.

SACPUWG/bhr

# **Symmes Public Use Criteria Overview:**

## **Purpose of Creating Criteria:**

*To develop a consistent means to evaluate alternative public uses.*

- Generate **objective criteria** to evaluate suggested public uses to shorten our timeframe and minimize our own bias.
- Indicate upfront how selecting public uses will **not be a “popularity contest.”**
- **Shape discussions and outreach** by indicating what evaluation factors are most pertinent.
- **Enhance the conceptualization of top-rated public use alternatives** so that they maximize achievement of Town needs.

## **Results of our Work:**

- A set of three criteria categories: **Need, Fit, and Feasibility**
- A set of **five individual criteria under each of these categories** that were the actual basis for the three groupings. *(15 criteria in all. See attachment.)*
- A set of **simple weightings** for the fifteen criteria
- Increased **confidence in the upcoming evaluation** process due to our methodology of testing the criteria and weightings
- Ideas for **how we might apply the criteria**, with more details to be determined

## **Process Overview:**

Steve Frigand designed and facilitated a series of meetings structured to produce and test evaluation criteria and weightings. Parts of this process enabled us to customize both the tools and the process to reflect new learnings and group preferences. We engaged in several key steps:

- Drew from our group’s Rationale and Public Use Principles to shape criteria.
- Modified the criteria list to be both comprehensive and simple.
- Tested eight potential public uses and tracked our responses on a spreadsheet.
- Tightened the criteria wording; learned the importance of carefully defining each alternative use.
- Engaged in a weighting exercise that combined category weightings with individual criteria weightings.
- Analyzed results and double-checked the weightings through a simpler exercise.
- Chose a simplified weighting scale.

- Discussed the process for implementing this evaluation scheme (more work to do as a committee here).

### **Next Steps:**

- We would welcome reactions and feedback to our criteria and weightings
- We need to fine-tune a process that we will use for the actual evaluation. Our thinking at this point is:
  - That our committee will discuss and sift through public use alternatives that we receive through the town survey and other outreach. We will then use a subset of criteria to eliminate alternatives that are relatively weak in the areas of Need, Fit, and Feasibility
  - Once we reduce the viable alternatives to approximately 8-15 public use alternatives we want to evaluate these semi-finalists more completely. It would help to have a total of 20-30 people involved in this evaluation (*our subcommittee as well as ten to fifteen volunteers from the SAC and other subcommittees*)
  - Members of our committee, as well as any other volunteers, would then research some of the top alternatives to ensure we are informed of other plans in town for similar development, possible costs and other issues.
  - Eventually we see our subcommittee's product as a recommendation to SAC to consider two or three public use alternatives. These alternatives are likely to include a synergistic set of public uses, (*eg. Outdoor pool, hiking trails, and fitness course*) They will include ratings based upon our criteria and weighting. The alternatives will have sufficient depth of offerings to allow for additional public uses if more funding and/or space is available.

# Alternative Public Uses Criteria:

*A successful public use of the Symmes Site would satisfy as many of the following criteria as possible:*

## Need:

- Attracts a broad cross-section of Arlingtonians as users
- Addresses unmet or under-addressed Town needs
- Provides a place for community members to interact
- Serves a significant portion of Arlington's population
- Enhances the user's sense of well-being

## Fit:

- Relates well to, and respects, the abutting neighborhoods
- Takes advantage of the site's geography and views
- Is part of a coherent and complementary mix of uses on the Symmes Site
- Is better suited to this site than to alternative sites in Arlington
- Is synergistic with medical uses

## Feasibility:

- Likely to be financially viable
- Offers a unique development opportunity - *Not likely to be developed by existing institutions (public or private)*
- Is practical given the physical aspects of the site
- Has long-term anticipated usefulness
- Can be constructed quickly

Alternative Public Uses:	1	2	3
	_____	_____	_____
	Score	Score	Score
	HIGH, MEDIUM or LOW	HIGH, MEDIUM or LOW	HIGH, MEDIUM or LOW
<i>A successful public use of the Symmes Site would satisfy as many of the following criteria as possible:</i>			
<b>Need:</b>			
Attracts a broad cross-section of Arlingtonians as users			
Addresses unmet or under-addressed Town needs			
Provides a place for community members to interact			
Serves a significant portion of Arlington's population			
Enhances the user's sense of well-being			
<b>Fit:</b>			
Relates well to, and respects, the abutting neighborhoods			
Takes advantage of the site's geography and views			
Is part of a coherent and complementary mix of uses on the Symmes Site			
Is better suited to this site than to alternative sites in Arlington			
Is synergistic with medical uses			
<b>Feasibility:</b>			
Likely to be financially viable			
Offers a unique development opportunity - <i>Not likely to be developed by existing institutions (public or private)</i>			
Is practical given the physical aspects of the site			
Has long-term anticipated usefulness			
Can be constructed quickly			
<i>S Frigand PubUse Examples Portrait.xls</i> 5/1/2002			

<b>Alternative Public Uses:</b>  <b>Illustration Examples</b> <i>(As if someone just filled out assessments of three alternative uses)</i>  <i>A successful public use of the Symmes Site would satisfy as many of the following criteria as possible:</i>	1	2	3
	Carousel	Bike Path	Chess Tables
	<b>Score</b>	<b>Score</b>	<b>Score</b>
	HIGH, MEDIUM or LOW	HIGH, MEDIUM or LOW	HIGH, MEDIUM or LOW
<b>Need:</b>			
Attracts a broad cross-section of Arlingtonians as users	M	M	L
Addresses unmet or under-addressed Town needs	M	L	M
Provides a place for community members to interact	M	L	M
Serves a significant portion of Arlington's population	M	M	L
Enhances the user's sense of well-being	H	H	H
<b>Fit:</b>			
Relates well to, and respects, the abutting neighborhoods	L	M	H
Takes advantage of the site's geography and views	M	H	L
Is part of a coherent and complementary mix of uses on the Symmes Site	L	M	L
Is better suited to this site than to alternative sites in Arlington	L	L	M
Is synergistic with medical uses	L	L	L
<b>Feasibility:</b>			
Likely to be financially viable	L	L	M
Offers a unique development opportunity - <i>Not likely to be developed by existing institutions (public or private)</i>	H	L	H
Is practical given the physical aspects of the site	M	L	M
Has long-term anticipated usefulness	M	M	M
Can be constructed quickly	M	M	H
<i>S Frigand PubUse Examples Portrait.xls</i> 5/1/2002			

<h1 style="text-align: center;">Alternative Public Uses Criteria:</h1>	
	<b>Weighting</b>
	1, 2, or 3 (3 is Highest)
<p><i>A successful public use of the Symmes Site would satisfy as many of the following criteria as possible:</i></p>	
<b>Need:</b>	
Attracts a broad cross-section of Arlingtonians as users	<b>3</b>
Addresses unmet or under-addressed Town needs	<b>3</b>
Provides a place for community members to interact	<b>3</b>
Serves a significant portion of Arlington's population	<b>3</b>
Enhances the user's sense of well-being	<b>1</b>
<b>Fit:</b>	
Relates well to, and respects, the abutting neighborhoods	<b>3</b>
Takes advantage of the site's geography and views	<b>2</b>
Is part of a coherent and complementary mix of uses on the Symmes Site	<b>2</b>
Is better suited to this site than to alternative sites in Arlington	<b>2</b>
Is synergistic with medical uses	<b>1</b>
<b>Feasibility:</b>	
Likely to be financially viable	<b>2</b>
Offers a unique development opportunity - <i>Not likely to be developed by existing institutions (public or private)</i>	<b>2</b>
Is practical given the physical aspects of the site	<b>2</b>
Has long-term anticipated usefulness	<b>2</b>
Can be constructed quickly	<b>1</b>
<p><i>S Frigand PubUse Crit &amp; Weight.xls</i></p>	<p>5/1/2002</p>