



URBAN FORESTRY COMMISSION

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August 29, 2018

The Honorable Katie Cristol, Chair
Arlington County Board
2100 Clarendon Blvd., Suite 300
Arlington, VA 22201

Subject: Upton Hills Park

Dear Chair Cristol:

UFC heard a presentation from NOVA Parks regarding the Upton Hills Regional Park planned enhancements at the December 2017 meeting and in May 2018 members received the tree census report detailing tree impact of the planned construction. We know that the Arlington County Board does not have the final vote on this subject, yet we wish to provide comments as the tree canopy in Arlington will be impacted.

UFC is pleased NOVA Parks has included restoration of one acre of mowed grass to its oak-hickory forest as part of the project and that there are plans to remove invasive plants from all the forested areas. The new ropes course will be built on previously disturbed land and the majority of the land disturbance for all aspects of this project will occur on previously disturbed areas. Much of the project has been planned to avoid damaging Upton Hills natural areas.

Commissioners are concerned with the number of trees being removed for the addition of parking spaces and the driveway. Although NOVA Parks has made improvements to preserve more mature trees, we recommend they work closely with Arlington County Urban Forestry to preserve additional high value trees and the nearby Resource Protection Area. Given that Upton Hills Regional Park is an environmental gem in urbanizing Arlington, it warrants the extra effort in planning and implementation.

UFC also recommends the County Board liaison and colleagues remain involved with the project to capitalize on each opportunity to preserve canopy and enhance the benefits of mature trees. Our experience is that a plan may require tree protection, yet its implementation does not follow the plan and trees are unnecessarily razed. Requesting that NOVA Parks select a contractor with prior experience with Arlington's tree preservation regulations is urged. Thank you for your consideration of this matter.

Sincerely,

Nora Palmatier, Chair
Urban Forestry Commission

Cc: Paul Gilbert, NOVA Parks