FOUR MILE RUN
RESTORATION PROJECT

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October 2014
Arlington and
Alexandria
Virginia

2014 UPDATE

Download the Approved Restoration Master Plan
http://www.novaregion.org/masterplan
History of the Four Mile Run Restoration Project

The first seeds of the Four Mile Run Restoration Project were planted when the Arlington County Board initiated a study of development options for the Arlington County portion of Potomac Yard, known as the “South Tract.” In the process of sharing ideas and information about the stream’s potential, the leaders were emboldened by data suggesting that physical, ecological and aesthetic improvements to the stream corridor need not compromise the level of flood protection called for as part of the flood control project implemented in the 1970s.

At that point, Arlington and Alexandria residents joined together and, through the interest and support of Congressman James Moran, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency awarded a $1 million grant to conduct a joint Arlington-Alexandria study of the corridor, resulting in the development of the Four Mile Run Restoration Master Plan.

Four Mile Run Restoration Master Plan

Adopted by both the Arlington County Board and the Alexandria City Council in March 2006, the Master Plan provides the framework and vision for future changes in the lower Four Mile Run Corridor.

The guiding principles for the project, derived from community and governmental input, encompass eight key focus areas:

- Flood protection
- Environment
- Aesthetics
- Recreation and urban life
- Integration and balance
- Access and connectivity
- Education and interpretation
- Planning horizon

The Master Plan envisions that the Four Mile Run corridor will become a model of urban ecological restoration. Through sensitive and sustainable integration of natural areas with active urban nodes, the Four Mile Run corridor will be a place along which the communities of Arlington County and the City of Alexandria can gather, recreate and celebrate a shared waterfront legacy.
Pedestrian Bridge

While the Four Mile Run Restoration Master Plan establishes a broad vision to fulfill the great potential of the Four Mile Run stream corridor, there are several very specific ideals that came out of the process. In 2009 the City of Alexandria and Arlington County, in partnership with NVRC and Virginia Tech, conducted a national Pedestrian Cyclist Bridge Competition. Since the design competition, Arlington, Alexandria, NVRC and the Department of Transportation work to develop the Scope of Service for the design and engineering. The team of Olin/Buro Happold/Explorations Architecture/ L’Observatoire International was chosen to design the bridge. The proposed Pedestrian –Cyclist Bridge will connect the trail near Eads Street in Arlington to the trail near Commonwealth Avenue in Alexandria, as set forth in the Four Mile Run Restoration Master Plan.

Tidal Corridor Restoration “Plan B”

A consultant team began working on the tidal corridor restoration demonstration project beginning March 2009. The project focused on wetland, stream bank, and riparian restoration and revitalization of the section of Four Mile Run between the Mt. Vernon Avenue bridge to the mouth of Four Mile Run next to Ronald Reagan Washington National Airport.

The project involved the physical naturalization of both sides of the stream from Route 1 to the east, and west of the proposed location of the Eads-Commonwealth Pedestrian-Cyclist Bridge. Areas for tidal wetland bar creation, restoration, and/or revitalization as well as boardwalks and overlooks in the riparian area were identified and designed, along with opportunities for the removal of gabion baskets and other hardened structures. In 2012, and based upon the new USACE interpretations of the regulations because of hurricane Katrina, the Restoration Plans needed to change, and “Plan B” emerged with a more streamlined re-design of the project area. Naturalization of the banks along the corridor, with improved access to the stream continued to be the baseline for design. A more robust reestablishment of the historical wetlands and the introduction of a “living shoreline” completed the designs of the restoration area.

The location of the demonstration project reflects the importance of integrating urban and recreational amenities with in-stream restoration in the upstream tidal reaches.

Restoration Plan B construction will begin Spring 2015 and be completed by December 2016.
Core Projects

The projects that comprise the vision outlined in the restoration plan are estimated to cost approximately $261 million (excluding any work to place power lines underground).

In order to make the $261 million restoration plan cost estimate manageable, the Agency Coordination Group (ACG) reorganized the consultant-prepared cost estimates to coordinate with potential funding sources and schedules. This discrete project cost summary arranges project components by cost and timeframe. The summary also organizes project components by geographic area, upstream to downstream. Individual area projects are further separated into in-stream versus and near-stream activities.

Where the level of planning has occurred to date, the summary also considers construction sequencing.

Project partners have completed or are planning for a variety of core projects such as the Duron Paint Store Properties in Alexandria and planning efforts for Four Mile Run Park development in Arlington. The total of core projects carries an estimated cost of $29.3 million, with each jurisdiction responsible for 31 percent, and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) funding the remaining 38 percent.

For a breakdown of the costs associated with the core project, please refer to the cost estimate table on the following page.

Core Project Components

Stream and wetland restoration in each of the seven project areas.

The Master Plan strives to "reestablish the vegetation that once lined the stream and existed in the lowland wetlands but has since disappeared or been colonized by invasive species." Stream and wetland restoration efforts will be cost shared between the USACE and the localities at 65 and 35 percent, respectively. The core project's in-stream components generally will proceed from upstream (Area 1) to downstream (Area 7). **Currently, Restoration efforts in Area 6 (Sites 1,2, and 3) will be completed by December 2016.**

Urban recreation and gathering features (e.g., ball fields, plazas, canoe launch, etc.).

No specific initiatives have been outlined as of yet; rather, projects will be pursued where funding becomes available either through grants, developer contributions, or other funding. For planning purposes, a general $10 million line item ($5 million per jurisdiction) has been included in the cost estimation spreadsheet for the core projects.

Project Funding

The ACG will continue to seek funding for project planning and implementation, including annually funding Northern Virginia Regional Commission (NVRC) participation, from a variety of public and private sources, including, but not limited to:

- Environmental Protection Agency
- Federal Highways Appropriations
- Development Community
- Virginia Department of Transportation
- Private Foundations/Grant Opportunities

Long-Term Corridor Maintenance

Future maintenance responsibility for structural elements shared between Arlington County and the City of Alexandria will be identified and agreed to between both jurisdictions. These elements include, but are not limited to:

- Nature/Interpretive Center
- Pedestrian-Cyclist Bridges
- In-stream components spanning from Alexandria to Arlington
The basis for the cost estimates come from the Master Plan, adopted in March 2006. Localities continue to find funding sources for these core projects.

### Cost Estimates

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The Four Mile Run Agency Coordination Group (ACG) is a multi-disciplined team representing Arlington County, the City of Alexandria, the Northern Virginia Regional Commission, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, and the two co-chairs of the citizen Joint Task Force. The ACG guides the planning and implementation of restoration projects along the lower Four Mile Run corridor.