



ARLINGTON COUNTY, VIRGINIA

**County Board Agenda Item
Meeting of December 11, 2004**

DATE: November 30, 2004

SUBJECT: Dominion Hills Neighborhood Conservation Plan.

C. M. RECOMMENDATIONS:

Adopt the attached resolution to accept the Dominion Hills Neighborhood Conservation Plan with staff comments specified in this report.

ISSUE: None.

SUMMARY: The Dominion Hills Civic Association began work on this plan in 2002. A written survey was distributed to every household in the neighborhood. Neighborhood Conservation (NC) staff worked extensively with volunteer plan writers to complete and review this plan, which was approved by the Association on March 10, 2004. The Neighborhood Conservation Advisory Committee reviewed the plan on May 13, 2004 and recommended it be forwarded to the Planning Commission and County Board for acceptance. Therefore it is recommended that the County Board accept the Plan with staff comments specified in this report.

BACKGROUND: Dominion Hills is nestled in western Arlington County between Wilson Boulevard, McKinley Road, and Interstate 66, with Madison Manor to the west, Westover Village to the north, Bluemont to the east, and Boulevard Manor to the south. It exclusively consists of single-family dwellings, 612 homes in all. Among the features most appreciated by its residents are the natural setting, and the gentle hills and valleys. Neighbors particularly appreciate the proximity to four parks where limitless outdoor activities are available, the quality of their local schools, and their reasonable proximity to commercial areas and facilities. Dominion Hills residents' main goal is to preserve and enhance the quality of life and the natural beauty of the neighborhood.

Written surveys were mailed and hand delivered to 612 homes and a 34 percent response rate was received, which is above the normal 10 percent response rate for most civic associations in Arlington. A draft plan was made available to all interested property owners and notices of the draft plan were advertised in both the Dominion Hills newsletter and via e-mail. Discussions of recommendations were held at several community meetings and County staff comments were incorporated into the plan. In March, 2004, the Dominion Hills Civic Association voted to approve the plan.

County Manager: _____

County Attorney: _____

Staff: Adam Denton, CPHD, ONS

On May 13, 2004, the Neighborhood Conservation Advisory Committee (NCAC) reviewed and approved the Dominion Hills Neighborhood Conservation Plan and recommended that the Planning Commission and the County Board accept this plan.

Staff has provided comments on a number of recommendations to clarify issues and provide additional information. Staff generally supports the Dominion Hills Neighborhood Conservation Plan and recommends County Board acceptance of the plan, subject to staff comments attached to this report.

DISCUSSION: The Dominion Hills Neighborhood Conservation Plan makes 37 recommendations covering a broad spectrum of topics. County staff will work to implement the community projects as initiated by the neighborhood, subject to funding availability and NCAC approval. For non-capital recommendations, NC staff will act as a liaison between the community and other County agencies. To follow are staff comments, identified by Department, on minor sections in the Dominion Hills NC Plan where additional explanation is useful. This memorandum will be printed and bound with the NC Plan when it is published.

FISCAL IMPACT: The acceptance of the Dominion Hills Neighborhood Conservation Plan does not have any immediate fiscal impact upon County operations. If recommendations from this plan requiring funding or staff resources outside of the NC bond allocation are brought forward for implementation, they will each be analyzed as part of the County budget process.

**Motion for
County Board Acceptance of Neighborhood Conservation Plans**

Whereas, the County Board created the Neighborhood Conservation Program in 1964 to encourage neighborhoods to carry out neighborhood improvement plans and provide dedicated funding to implement those plans; and

Whereas, the Neighborhood Conservation Program is a mechanism for improvement and maintenance of areas where residents indicate a desire to achieve an improved neighborhood and fulfill a broader vision of the modern “urban village” through coordination of public and private efforts; and

Whereas, these plans are initiated and prepared by the neighborhoods, who work with the Neighborhood Conservation Advisory Committee and County staff; and

Whereas, Neighborhood Conservation Plans have three purposes:

- 1) To build a neighborhood vision and consensus on issues affecting the neighborhood, to evaluate County service delivery and the state of the neighborhood , and to suggest policies and projects that will improve the neighborhood
- 2) To establish eligibility for Neighborhood Conservation funding
- 3) To provide guidance to the County Board, Commissions, Departments and staff concerning issues in neighborhoods; and

Whereas, the County Board created the Neighborhood Conservation Advisory Committee (NCAC) to guide the Neighborhood Conservation Program, and the NCAC reviewed this new, updated or amended Neighborhood Conservation Plan and recommends plan acceptance; and

Whereas the Planning Commission also recommended acceptance of this plan.

Now, therefore be it resolved that after careful consideration of the recommendations of the Neighborhood Conservation Advisory Committee, the County Board hereby accepts the Dominion Hills Neighborhood Conservation Plan as a statement of the Dominion Hills neighborhood and directs the County Manager to ensure that the recommendations of this plan are considered in decision-making and actions that affect the Dominion Hills neighborhood.

**Dominion Hills Neighborhood Conservation Plan – Final (11/2004)
Inter-departmental Staff Comments on Civic Association Recommendations**

Land Use			
Recomm endation No.	Location in Plan	Civic Association Recommendation	Comment (Department)
2	Page 14	Arlington County should reclassify the Dominion Hills Centre property as “General Commercial.”	Staff concludes that the current General Land Use Plan designation of "Service Commercial" provides for the mixture of retail and service-related businesses the community desires at an appropriate neighborhood scale. The "General Commercial" designation provides for slightly larger scale development, including office. (CPHD)
4	Page 16	The county should evaluate the county-owned, undeveloped properties along Four Mile Run (RPC 12014004, 12014005, 12014006, 12014007, 12014008, 12014009, 12014010, and 12014022) and reclassify them from R-6 to S-3A.	Staff will be reevaluating these parcels as part of a comprehensive review of sites that may have inconsistencies between the GLUP and the underlying zoning districts specifically publicly planned and/or zoned areas of the County or recently acquired properties for public or park purposes. (CPHD)
7	Page 43	The County should not approve pipestem and infill housing developments in the neighborhood, as they are inconsistent with the existing as well as the preferred land use.	Approval of pipestem residential infill lots is no longer allowed administratively as a matter of right. On March 18, 2003, the County Board amended the Zoning Ordinance to allow for the approval of pipestem lots only through Use Permits under the provisions for Unified Residential Development. Such approvals can now only be made by the County Board. Other residential infill development such as the resubdivision of large tracts of land into additional lots can still be done as a matter of right, as long as such approvals do not require any exception or variance to existing applicable Zoning Ordinance or Subdivision Ordinance regulations. Staff routinely encourages owners of such large properties to consider developing such sites as Unified Residential Developments (URD's). URD's allow certain incentives to developers such as more flexibility in site design and lesser development costs, while allowing community participation in the approval of such development. (DES)

Capital Improvements / Beautification			
Recommendation No.	Location in Plan	Civic Association Recommendation	Comment (Department)
8	Page 44	Arlington County should reconfigure the in-street drainage gutters throughout the Dominion Hills neighborhood, particularly those located on Lebanon and Livingston Streets along 9th Street.	Storm sewer projects are expensive types of projects that address drainage issues. Water-Sewer-Streets staff has been looking at drainage issues throughout the County, which includes those issues along North Lebanon Street and North Livingston Street. The County will undertake specific types of drainage projects but the neighborhood should propose projects through the Neighborhood Conservation Program. The request should be specific to remove the valley gutters and install storm sewers. (DES)
9	Page 44	The county should repair extensive cracking and potholes throughout the neighborhood.	The residents of Dominion Hills should develop a list of locations of broken pavement; cracks in concrete gutters including valley gutters that need repair and submit that information to Water Sewer Streets for follow-up. (DES)
10	Page 44	The county should conduct a feasibility study of moving the sewer lines located along the backyards of houses throughout the neighborhood. Depending on the findings and discussion among homeowners on those blocks, Dominion Hills supports the relocation of these sewer lines.	When a property owner wants to add an addition or construct an improvement to their property, they must bear the cost of adjustment and relocation of existing utilities. If a particular section of sanitary sewer line fails or somehow becomes a maintenance problem, engineers routinely evaluate the cost and benefit of repair options, including relocating or replacing the line. However, sanitary sewer lines, which traverse private property, are never relocated at public expense just to free up a backyard for a possible addition. It is inappropriate to spend public funds for a private purpose therefore staff does not recommend that the study be performed. (DES)
11	Page 44	The county should install pedestrian lighting in various points in Dominion Hills, such as along the multi-use trails, the Patrick Henry/10th Road intersection, and the 900 block of Madison, Lebanon near Wilson, Montana from 9th St. towards McKinley, Larrimore,	The neighborhood has been surveyed and staff found that most of it has minimum lighting levels with nearly 95 % of all existing cobra lights working. If any improvements are to be considered for more cobra lights, the following areas may be considered: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • N. Lebanon St. near Wilson Blvd. for

		and the east side of Patrick Henry from Wilson Blvd. to 10th Road.	<p>one block.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • N. Montana St. from 9th St. towards N. McKinley St. • N. Larrimore St. one block at the Cul-De-sac. • East side of N. Patrick Henry Dr. from Wilson Blvd. to 10th Road N. (DES)
12	Page 44	The county should install pedestrian lighting in other parts of the neighborhood as desired and qualified by residents through the established petition process.	The residents of Dominion Hills should develop a list of areas where lighting is desired and work with the Neighborhood Conservation Program and Transportation staff to identify the petitioning process. (DES)
13	Page 44	The undergrounding of utility wires should proceed as resources allow. Burying utilities is encouraged in any new development.	Dominion Hills has over 44,000 feet of street centerline. The general budget estimator for undergrounding along roadways is \$1,500 per foot. Therefore, it could require about \$66 million to underground the utilities. (DES)
14	Page 44	When capital improvements—such as traffic calming, gutter redesign, or installation of neighborhood identification signs—are designed, the county should include beautification planting as an integrated component.	Neighborhood Traffic Calming projects may require capital improvements such as new curb and gutter and the installation of speed and pedestrian signs. Beautification projects and plantings are not generally part of the County NTC program. (DES)

Transportation Management / Pedestrian Safety

Recommendation No.	Location in Plan	Civic Association Recommendation	Comment (Department)
15	Page 45	The county should improve traffic/speed problems—particularly those on Patrick Henry, McKinley/Ohio, Wilson, 10th Road, Livingston, and Larrimore—by utilizing up-to-date traffic-calming measures, such as four-way stop-signs, cross-walks, and other methods that are acceptable to neighborhood residents and aesthetically pleasing. Adoption of traffic-calming measures on certain streets should be made in conjunction with pertinent neighboring communities.	<p>The Arterial Traffic Management (ATM) Study is currently looking at measures that could be used to address traffic concerns, such as speeding problems on roadways such as Patrick Henry Drive, McKinley Road, North Ohio Street, and Wilson Blvd. An expected outcome of the ATM Study is the development of a toolbox of measures that can be applied to arterial streets throughout the County. The study should be completed in early 2005.</p> <p>Neighborhood streets are the focus of the Neighborhood Traffic Calming Program. The neighborhood should communicate the problem streets to the Neighborhood</p>

Transportation Management / Pedestrian Safety

Recommendation No.	Location in Plan	Civic Association Recommendation	Comment (Department)
			<p>Traffic Calming team. NTC staff will collect data on neighborhood streets to serve as a baseline for traffic calming projects. Data will be evaluated and ranked based on neighborhood traffic calming criteria. Traffic calming, or mitigation measures may be appropriate based upon speeds and changes in traffic pattern. (DES)</p> <p>The Police Department will have officers conduct speed enforcement in the areas of Patrick Henry Dr., McKinley Rd./ Ohio Street. As well as the west end of Wilson Blvd. (Police)</p>
16	Page 45	<p>The county should aim to reduce the cut-through traffic on streets such as Larrimore, 10th Road, Madison, and Livingston. The issue of cut-through traffic should be addressed in a community-wide traffic-management plan. The county should ensure that any move to end such excess traffic on particular streets does not result in moving the unwanted traffic to neighboring streets.</p>	<p>The Neighborhood Traffic Calming Program deals primarily with speed, but proposed revisions to the program will also address cut-through traffic. The program emphasis is on street by street rather than neighborhood wide. The neighborhood should identify streets with speeding and cut through issues and communicate those problem streets to the NTC staff for action. NTC staff will collect data on neighborhood streets to serve as a baseline for traffic calming projects. Data will be evaluated and ranked based on neighborhood traffic calming criteria. Traffic calming or mitigation measures may be appropriate based upon speeds and changes in traffic pattern.</p> <p>The neighborhood should communicate the problem streets and addresses where low-hanging vegetation on private property creates blind spots or restrict sight to the Transportation staff for action. (DES)</p>
17	Page 45	<p>The county should regularly cut and maintain all vegetation on county property that obscures drivers' views of roadways and pedestrians.</p>	<p>It is County practice to maintain street trees and other vegetation on County property so that they do not obstruct visibility and safety. Since trees and vegetation can grow quickly, it would be helpful if the community identified specific problems for County attention.</p>

Transportation Management / Pedestrian Safety

Recommendation No.	Location in Plan	Civic Association Recommendation	Comment (Department)
			<p>(DES)</p> <p>Issues with landscape maintenance on County land should be brought to the attention of the Park Service Area Manager for the affected area.</p> <p>10th Rd. N. & Patrick Henry Drive: Pine trees on private property that may have caused a visibility problem have been recently trimmed by the property owner. Staff did not observe any other sight distance problems at this intersection.</p> <p>10th St. N. & Patrick Henry Drive: Pine trees and English Ivy growing on private property may cause a visibility problem at this corner. These plants are the responsibility of the property owner.</p> <p>9th Rd. N. & McKinley Road: Pine trees growing on private property may cause a visibility problem at this corner. These plants are the responsibility of the property owner.</p> <p>N. Larrimore St. & Wilson Blvd: A County contractor trimmed the trees along the north side of Wilson Blvd., east of N. Larrimore St. in the fall. No sight distance problems were observed by staff at this intersection.</p> <p>PRCR currently offers a brochure called “Right Plant Right Place” that is intended to educate property owners on how to select and maintain trees and landscaping on private property so that plants do not obstruct sidewalks or impair vision at intersections. Copies are available from PRCR. (PRCR)</p>
18	Page 45	The county should improve pedestrian safety, particularly along Patrick Henry, Wilson and McKinley/Ohio where traffic moves at excessive speed and crosswalks are needed. Most needed is a traffic-calming	Transportation staff is interested in working with the neighborhood to address pedestrian concerns on Wilson Boulevard and elsewhere in the neighborhood. The neighborhood should work with County staff to ensure that their concerns are raised as part of the

Transportation Management / Pedestrian Safety

Recommendation No.	Location in Plan	Civic Association Recommendation	Comment (Department)
		<p>measure, such as a four-way stop, a crosswalk, or other methods at the intersection of 10th Road and Patrick Henry as well as key crossing points on McKinley/Ohio.</p>	<p>Wilson Boulevard ATM Study.</p> <p>In the past year, bicycle lanes were installed on Patrick Henry Drive and North Ohio Street, and between Wilson Blvd and Washington Boulevard. In addition a speed-sensitive traffic signal has been installed at the crossing of Wilson Boulevard in Bluemont Park. These changes should help to reduce motorist speeding and improve pedestrian crossing safety. Crosswalks were installed last year at 9th Road North and where the Four-Mile Run Trail crosses North Ohio Street on the south side of Interstate 66 bridge.</p> <p>NTC staff will collect data on neighborhood streets to serve as a baseline for traffic calming services. Data will be evaluated and ranked based on neighborhood traffic calming criteria. Traffic calming or mitigation measure may be appropriate based upon speeds and changes in traffic pattern. (DES)</p>
19	Page 45	<p>The county should ensure that the county-wide cycling infrastructure, such as bicycle lanes and consistent street lighting, are implemented within Dominion Hills.</p>	<p>Specific areas regarding bicycle safety and access should be brought to the attention of the Arlington Bicycle Coordinator in the Department of Transportation. (DES)</p>
20	Page 45	<p>The county should implement an ART bus route between Dominion Hills and the East Falls Church metro station.</p>	<p>County staff has proposed additional ART services from Dominion Hills to the East Falls Church Metro Station for implementation in upcoming years. Staff is looking for opportunities to improve transit services for Dominion Hills residents. (DES)</p>
21	Page 45	<p>Metropolitan Transit Authority should ensure that Metrobuses, particularly those that run on Livingston and 10th Road, obey the posted speed limits.</p>	<p>The Transit Coordinator will forward the neighborhood's issues to Metro supervisors. The request will ask that drivers pay more attention to posted speeds signs within the Dominion Hills neighborhood and especially on North Livingston Street and also on 10th Road North. (DES)</p>

Transportation Management / Pedestrian Safety			
Recommendation No.	Location in Plan	Civic Association Recommendation	Comment (Department)
22	Page 45	The county should extend Zone 12 parking to include the section of Arlington Mill Drive from 9th Road to Wilson Boulevard.	Traffic Engineering staff conducted parking surveys on the 5800 block of N. 9th Road, and the 900 block of N. Arlington Mill Drive in May 2003. Based on the survey results, this section of Arlington Mill Drive from 9th Road to Wilson Blvd did not meet the qualifications for residential zone permit parking. In conjunction with the survey, staff contacted the Parks and Recreation Sports Division to request stricter enforcement of possible unauthorized use of the field near the park. (DES)
23	Page 45	The county should create a restricted parking zone on Madison from Wilson to 9th Street. In addition, the county should work to address littering problems along the parking lanes on Madison Street, McKinley Road and Wilson Boulevard.	There is currently a parking strategy underway thought Arlington. Key issues are the revision of the Residential Zone Parking Program and its requirements. The results will be released in January 2005. (DES)
24	Page 45	The county should address the McKinley School parking issue to ensure pedestrian safety as part of the Safe Routes to Schools program and should ensure Dominion Hills Civic Association and Madison Manor Community Association participation in such discussions.	County staff in the past has worked with the administration of Mckinley School to address pedestrian safety concerns. The Department of Transportation continues to address such issues as part of the Safe Routes to Schools program. Staff invites residents, parents and school officials to bring any lingering concerns to the head of the Traffic Engineering Division. (DES)

Parks and Recreation			
Recommendation No.	Location in Plan	Civic Association Recommendation	Comment (Department)
25	Page 46	Dominion Hills Civic Association should continue to maintain and strive to improve the condition of Mace Park. In addition, it should prepare a formal master plan for Mace Park that would ensure that it continues to serve as a public park with a "neighborhood" orientation. The master plan	This property is owned by the CA and the County only has easement rights. (PRCR)

Parks and Recreation

Recommendation No.	Location in Plan	Civic Association Recommendation	Comment (Department)
		should address issues related to drainage, grass for the open area, trees and plants, toilet facilities, drinking water, and play equipment.	
28	Page 46	NVPRPA should conduct a usage and access study of the part of Upton Hill Park near Wilson to determine whether the attraction and use of these facilities could be enhanced by providing more convenient access and improved parking facilities or by increasing the area's visibility from Wilson Boulevard.	County staff are working with NVRPA to identify the location for a new trail to link the Upton Hills Park to Bluemont Park and the recently constructed Powhatan Springs Park. (PRCR)
29	Page 46	Dominion Hills endorses the recommendations of the Powhatan Springs Park working group regarding the operations of the skatepark and the construction of a fence on the Wilson side of the park. The community also endorses the group's recommendation to review the operations of the park after six months. The neighborhood further insists that this evaluation involve the active participation of representatives of the civic associations of the surrounding neighborhoods.	<p>The Operations and Management Plan for Powhatan Springs Park has been approved by the County Manager and the executive leadership team of the Department of Parks, Recreation and Cultural Resources (PRCR). In many ways, the plan is the same as that which was proposed by the skatepark operations workgroup. A Park Supervisor will be responsible for the entire park. There will be a fee for both County and non-County skaters at the skatepark. Although there was wide-spread support from the skatepark workgroup, the public forum and from within PRCR for keeping the skatepark free to County residents, the end result is that a fee must be charged to offset the staffing costs. As heard at the larger public forum, skatepark users wanted to be able to skate into the evening hours. The compromise position was to keep the skatepark open until 10:00 p.m., which is also in keeping with the practices at other County facilities.</p> <p>Construction of a fence on the Wilson Boulevard side of Powhatan Springs Park is not supported by PRCR.</p> <p>In lieu of evaluating the park operations after six months as was recommended, PRCR believes a continuous and on-</p>

Parks and Recreation			
Recomm endation No.	Location in Plan	Civic Association Recommendation	Comment (Department)
			going process of evaluating the park better serves park users and neighbors alike. (PRCR)
30	Page 46	County officials should work with the surrounding neighborhood civic associations to evaluate their concerns regarding noise, increased cut-through traffic, and overflow parking after a sufficient period of Powhatan Springs Park operations and, if any undesirable effects or conditions are manifest, to determine any changes needed to ameliorate problems.	Please see the above comment regarding ongoing evaluation of the park. (PRCR)

Safety and Environmental Concerns			
Recomm endation No.	Location in Plan	Civic Association Recommendation	Comment (Department)
34	Page 47	Arlington County Police should work with Dominion Hills to promote establishment of Neighborhood Crime Watch Programs in the community. A police representative should continue to attend civic association and other neighborhood meetings.	The police department will contact the civic association president in an effort to revive the Neighborhood Watch program as well as have officers continue to attend their civic meetings. (Police)



DOMINION HILLS



Neighborhood
Conservation
Plan
September 2004

DOMINION HILLS

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Photographs Unless otherwise stated, all photographs by Kimberly Cody, 2004.

Maps All maps by Dave Jenkins, 2004.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Dominion Hills Civic Association board members were instrumental in completing this Neighborhood Conservation Plan. Thanks to Eric Sildon, the Neighborhood Conservation Plan Committee Chair, for getting the momentum started and sustaining his enthusiasm over a two-year period. Special thanks to Dave Jenkins for his hours of dedication to create a cohesive document and readable maps. Thanks to Laura Bobeczko and Kimberly Cody for seeing the plan to completion. Thanks also to all the neighbors who participated in the process of developing the Plan. This includes the many volunteers who worked on the plan itself, as well as those who filled out the survey, and those who provided ideas, made comments, and gave suggestions.

We are also very appreciative of the staff in the office of Neighborhood Services, particularly Chris Nixon and Adam Denton, who encouraged and supported this work.

Chanya Charles

Dominion Hills Civic Association President

September 2004

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Neighborhood Conservation Plan Committee	iii
--	-----

Acknowledgements	iv
------------------	----

Executive Summary	3
-------------------	---

Chapter 1	5
Introduction & Goals	
Introduction	5
Goals	5

Chapter 2	6
Neighborhood Characteristics	
Geography	7
History	7
Population	9
Amenities	10
Housing & Street Layout	12



Chapter 3	13
Land Use, Zoning, & Development	
Land Use	13
Zoning	15
Development	16

Chapter 4	18
Capital Improvements	
Streets, Gutters, Drains & Sidewalks	18
Sewers	18
Street Lighting	20
Neighborhood Identification & Street Signs	20
General Beautification	21

Chapter 5	22
Transportation Management & Pedestrian Safety	
Traffic Control	23
Pedestrian Safety	24
Bicycle Travel	27
Public Transportation	27
Parking Issues	29



Chapter 6	30
Parks & Recreation	
Mace Park	31
Bon Air Park	33
Upton Hill Regional Park	34
Powhatan Springs Park	34
Multi-Use Trails	36
Private Recreational Facilities	36

Chapter 7	38
Safety & Environmental Concerns	
Safety	39
Environment	39

Chapter 8	44
Schools	

Appendix A	43
Summary of Goals & Recommendations	

Appendix B	49
Dominion Hills History	

Appendix C	65
Upton Hill Regional Park Review of DH Plan	

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Dominion Hills Neighborhood Conservation Plan, which reflects two years of community participation, describes current conditions and proposes 37 recommendations to achieve neighborhood goals. The neighborhood conducted a survey of residents in 2002, and various Plan subcommittees analyzed these results and conducted additional research to develop these goals and recommendations. More than 30 people were involved in writing and vetting drafts of the plan throughout 2003 and 2004.

Dominion Hills is an arrowhead-shaped neighborhood of 612 homes situated in the rolling hills of western Arlington County. The neighborhood's boundaries are marked by Wilson Boulevard on the south, McKinley Road and Ohio Street on the west, and Four Mile Run on the north and east.

Historically, Dominion Hills was home to Algonquians of the Necostin and Dogue tribes. In the 19th and 20th centuries, this area remained largely farmland, with orchards covering much of the neighborhood. Most of the eastern end of Dominion Hills was used for grazing cows from the neighboring Reeves dairy farm. Nearby, the train tracks of the Washington and Old Dominion Railroad followed Four Mile Run through its scenic and winding valley from Alexandria to Falls Church. Mace Properties built the first two parts of the neighborhood between 1945 and 1955. The company's president named the subdivision Dominion Hills.

With few exceptions, Dominion Hills' houses are of three basic styles—two-story, all-brick colonials; two-story colonials with brick on the first floor and siding on the top; and one-story brick rambles. For the most part, the homes are owner-occupied, single-family units. According to the 2000 US census, 1,670 people reside in the neighborhood. The population is fairly stable. More than half of the head-of-households responding to our survey stated that they have lived in the neighborhood for eight or more years. Two thirds of the survey respondents said that they plan to reside in Dominion Hills for at least eight more years.

Neighbors would prefer preserving the low-density, residential character of Dominion Hills. This involves retaining the current zoning and working closely with owners of the Dominion Hills Professional Center and Shopping Centre to upgrade appearance and provide enhanced commercial amenities for residents.

Dominion Hills' infrastructure is in generally good repair. Nonetheless, some components require improvements, both in terms of enhanced functionality and a more pleasing visual appearance. Residents wish to increase the attractiveness of Dominion Hills through installation of gateway signs and through infrastructure improvements such as repair of poorly designed in-street gutters, burial of utility wires, introduction of decorative streetlights, and planting of additional decorative vegetation at major traffic arteries.



1,670

people reside

in the

neighborhood

2000 census figures

Transportation issues are of paramount importance to most Dominion Hills residents. While residents generally acknowledge that the linked issues of speeding and pedestrian safety are of the greatest concern, the neighborhood also has vested interests in ensuring biking safety, enhancing public transportation, and correcting local parking problems. In particular, neighbors would like to decrease excessive speeding and cut-through traffic, increase pedestrian safety, and identify solutions to parking problems in pockets of the community. Residents would also like to collaborate with Arlington County and the Washington Metropolitan Transit Authority to improve bus service and ensure safe driving of buses throughout the neighborhood.

*As of 2000,
Dominion Hills
was home to
approximately 265
school-age
children, most of
whom attend
public school.*

Parks and recreational trails surround Dominion Hills. Along the neighborhood's northern boundary lie Four Mile Run and a series of paved multi-use trails, as well as neighborhood-owned Mace Park and a small piece of county-owned woodland. Bon Air Park is situated along the eastern boundary. Other public parks, Upton Hill and Powhatan Springs Park, as well as the privately owned Dominion Hills Area Recreation Association pool and grounds, border the south. Dominion Hills residents wish to protect the neighborhood amenities—such as access to parks and playgrounds, trails, and open space—and want to preserve and improve Mace Park as a unique recreational facility. Neighbors expressed desire to work closely with the county to address concerns regarding potential noise, crime, and parking issues related to Powhatan Springs Park.

Dominion Hills is a relatively crime-free community, and residents want to ensure that it stays that way. The community would welcome the establishment of an active crime watch program and continued participation by police at neighborhood meetings.

Neighbors have expressed concern about several indigenous environmental issues and wish to ensure that Dominion Hills is as free as possible from intrusive plants and unwanted pests, particularly mosquitoes and rats.

As of 2000, Dominion Hills was home to approximately 265 school-age children, most of whom attend public school. Most residents are pleased with the schools in their area. In our survey, more than 85 percent of residents said that they had no concerns about either of the two neighborhood elementary schools or Swanson Middle School. The few concerns that residents expressed were not related to academic performance. In particular, neighbors wanted to establish strong relationships with local schools to address school route safety and overcrowding issues, and to ensure excellent educational opportunities.

Finally, Dominion Hills' neighbors have expressed a desire to enhance the sense of community through participation in community activities.

Chapter I INTRODUCTION & GOALS

INTRODUCTION

The Dominion Hills Civic Association embarked on an effort to develop a Neighborhood Conservation Plan in January 2002. Based on the experience of numerous other Arlington neighborhoods, we set out to conduct a neighborhood survey as a first step to collect baseline data regarding residents' attitudes on a wide range of issues relating to quality of life. A team of volunteers developed the survey instrument in May, collected results throughout June, and tabulated the results during the remainder of the summer.

The survey was distributed to all 612 households in Dominion Hills. Of those, we received 209 responses, for a 34-percent response rate. Based on comparative information from the Arlington County Office of Neighborhood Services, this is an excellent response rate. We are confident that the response provides a solid representation of the diversity of opinion on issues facing our neighborhood.

The survey also identified an additional 70 neighbors interested in helping to develop the conservation plan. In February 2003, subcommittees were formed to transform the survey results and other research into chapters with goals and recommendations. More than 30 people were involved in writing and vetting original drafts of the plan through 2003 and 2004.

GOALS

Through the conservation plan survey and other research, residents discussed what they liked best about the neighborhood and areas that needed improvement. ¹ Dominion Hills residents support the following goals:

LAND USE, ZONING, & DEVELOPMENT

Preserve the low-density, residential character of the neighborhood. This involves retaining the current zoning and working closely with owners of the Dominion Hills Professional Center and Shopping Centre to upgrade appearance and provide enhanced commercial amenities for residents.

CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS

Increase the attractiveness of Dominion Hills through installation of gateway signs and through infrastructure improvements such as repair of poorly designed in-street gutters, elimination of streetside utility poles, burial of utility wires, introduction of decorative streetlights, and planting of additional decorative vegetation at major traffic arteries.

TRANSPORTATION MANAGEMENT & PEDESTRIAN SAFETY

Investigate with Arlington County staff various traffic-calming measures to substantially decrease excessive speeding and cut-through traffic, increase pedestrian safety, and identify solutions to parking problems in pockets of the neighborhood. Collaborate with Arlington County and the Washington Metropolitan Transit Authority to improve bus service and ensure safe driving of buses throughout the neighborhood.

1. All the goals and recommendations included in this report appear in Appendix A. The Neighborhood Conservation Plan Survey and results are on file with Arlington County.

GEOGRAPHY

Dominion Hills is an arrowhead-shaped neighborhood of 612 homes situated in the rolling hills of western Arlington County. The neighborhood's boundaries are marked by Wilson Boulevard on the south, McKinley Road and Ohio Street on the west, and Four Mile Run on the north and east. The community is readily accessible to downtown Washington via nearby Interstate 66 and is located only a few minutes from major commercial areas at Seven Corners and Ballston. Trees—principally maple, oak, sycamore, and other Eastern hardwoods—line the streets of Dominion Hills and provide a shady canopy that turns crimson and gold in the fall. The greenery is home to raccoons, opossums, foxes, squirrels, chipmunks, bats, rabbits, and a variety of birds, among others.



View of terraced hills looking north from intersection of Patrick Henry Drive & Wilson Boulevard.



View of neighborhood towards N. Longfellow Street from vicinity of 900 block of N. Madison Street. (Source: Dominion Hills Civic Association Files, circa 1950s).

The community is built upon several small, terraced hills drained by Four Mile Run, a tributary of the Potomac. Elevation varies from 410 feet above sea level near Dominion Hills' southwestern corner to 210 feet near where Four Mile Run flows under Wilson Boulevard. Slopes average between 15 and 25 percent throughout about half the neighborhood; elsewhere, grades are less steep. The terrain has a pronounced impact upon street maintenance, storm sewers, lighting, and landscaping, and often contributes to traffic speeding. If left unprotected by ground cover, the area's strongly acidic soil is susceptible to severe erosion along the steeper slopes, according to the county's soil survey of 1999. Metamorphosed sandstone, quartz, and schist dating back 550 million-plus years form the bedrock that underlies the neighborhood.

HISTORY

The history of the Dominion Hills area goes well back to precolonial times. ² When English explorers first came to the area in the early 1600s, they encountered Algonquians of the Necostin and Dogue tribes. Some historians repute that members of the Powhatan Confederacy often gathered at Powhatan Springs, now on the property of the Dominion Hills Area Recreation Association (DHARA), across Wilson Boulevard from Dominion Hills. This area was likely included in one of two land grants awarded by the English Crown in 1669, either to Captain Robert Hewson or to Thomas Lord Culpeper. For the next 200 years, this area remained largely farmland.

2. For a fuller discussion of the neighborhood history, see Appendix B.

**NEIGHBOR
REFLECTIONS**

“We saw the house in the paper, came to the open house, & fell in love with the fireplace. (In 1966), we paid \$24,950 for our home.”

*Mrs. Vernon
(Hope) Dailey,
resident since
1966*

During the Civil War, Union troops occupied the Arlington area for the duration of the conflict. In the immediate neighborhood, Upton’s Hill held special importance because of its location at the intersection of major roads and its height, which afforded excellent views of the countryside for miles around. In the summer of 1861, Confederate soldiers built a set of fortifications on Upton’s Hill. Once the Confederate troops withdrew, in the fall of the same year, Union troops established an observation tower on the hill. The tower was part of a network throughout Northern Virginia that made it possible to relay messages by signal flags from Fairfax Courthouse to Union Army headquarters in Washington. In 1864, President Lincoln reviewed Union troops in the nearby area of Munson Hill.

THE FEBREY-LOTHROP HOUSE



The oldest residence in Dominion Hills is the historic Febrey-Lothrop House, located at 6407 Wilson Boulevard at the intersection with McKinley Road. In the mid-1800s, Nicholas Febrey purchased a large tract of land, including acreage on both sides of Wilson Boulevard west of Four Mile Run, from Rebecca Upton of Upton’s Hill. His son John built the original home, which is now the rear section of the current Colonial Revival house. The Febrey family’s stables were located across McKinley Road, where the Cavalier Club Apartments now stand. After Mr. Febrey died in 1893, Alvin Lothrop of the Woodward and Lothrop Company acquired the property. Around 1900, Lothrop added the shingled façade and balconied porches. The Lothrop family used the property as a farm and summer retreat. During World War II, Trans World Airlines rented the property and used it as the Washington headquarters of its president. The property remained in the Lothrop family until 1950. It is currently privately owned.

In the 19th and early-20th centuries, orchards covered much of the land in present-day Dominion Hills. Much of the eastern end of the neighborhood was used for grazing cows from the nearby Reeves dairy farm; in fact, the Four Mile Run underpass at Wilson was originally built so that these cows could pass from one pasture to another. Nearby, the train tracks of the Washington and Old Dominion Railroad (W&OD) followed Four Mile Run through its scenic and winding valley from Alexandria to Falls Church.

This bucolic countryside began to change during World War II, when developers bought and subdivided the land. Mace Properties built the first two parts of the neighborhood between 1945 and 1955. The company's president, Merwin A. "John" Mace, named the subdivision Dominion Hills. The Dominion Hills Civic Association (DHCA) was established in 1950. By early 1951, the community had 420 homes. Mace Properties loaned the residents, many of whom had young children, two pieces of land for recreational purposes, one of which remains present-day Mace Park.

Since its development, the neighborhood has generally been a peaceful residential community, albeit with some notable exceptions. In August 1967, American Nazi Party leader George Lincoln Rockwell was assassinated in the Dominion Hills Shopping Centre by a former party officer who bore him a grudge. At that time, about 20 "stormtroopers" lived in the Nazi Party barracks at 6150 Wilson, where Upton Hill Regional Park currently is located.

Residents of Dominion Hills have witnessed a great deal of change in the past 25 years. Although both projects were controversial at the time, the construction of I-66 between 1978 and 1982 and the opening of the Metrorail Orange Line in 1986 greatly enhanced the neighborhood's convenient location. This, along with other local and national factors, resulted in a marked rise in Dominion Hills property values over the past two decades. Finally, over the past few years, the neighborhood has experienced a resurgence of community spirit and the revitalization of the civic association.

POPULATION

Some 1,670 people reside in Dominion Hills, according to the 2000 US census. Population density is about 6,300 persons per square mile, some 1,000 persons per square mile less than the county as a whole. The neighborhood is very family oriented, with almost 24 percent of the population under age 17, compared with 16.5 percent for the entire county. Household size averages about 2.7 persons. Over the past decade, the neighborhood has become increasingly diverse, with the non-White and Hispanic portion growing from 7 percent in 1990 to 19 percent in 2000, according to the census. Eighty-six percent of the population of Dominion Hills is native-born.

As property values increased during the 1990s, so too has the affluence of the neighborhood's residents. Median household income grew by 52 percent between 1990 and 2000 to about \$90,000, according to the census; this was some \$27,000 above the Arlington County average. Similarly, about 62 percent of the population age 25 and above holds a bachelor's degree or higher, up from 50 percent in 1990. While approximately one in five workers are government employees, Dominion Hills is home to people from a wide variety of occupations, including architects, computer technicians, crafts people, healthcare workers, law enforcement and security officers, media-employees, stay-at-home parents, and teachers, as well as many retirees.

**NEIGHBOR
REFLECTIONS**

“It’s a terrific neighborhood. We like the strong sense of community, the excellent schools, the great neighbors, & being close to everything! It’s a wonderful place to raise kids, too.”

*Mark Troppe,
resident since
1990*

The population is fairly stable. More than half of the head-of-households responding to our survey stated that they have lived in the neighborhood for eight or more years. Two thirds of the survey respondents said that they plan to reside in Dominion Hills for at least eight more years.

AMENITIES

The neighborhood has many special features that make it an attractive area for homeowners. When asked to list the three things they liked best about Dominion Hills in our neighborhood conservation survey, residents listed several positive attributes, including:

CLOSENESS TO DC & WORK

This was the most popular amenity cited. The ready access to Interstate 66 and Routes 7 and 50 are important to many residents. In addition, some respondents identified proximity to public transportation as a plus on the basis of the commuter buses that run through the neighborhood on weekdays and the short distance to the metro stops at Ballston and East Falls Church.

GOOD PARKS, TRAILS, & GREEN SPACES

Many respondents see the nearby parks—notably the neighborhood’s own Mace Park—and trails as a clear benefit of life in Dominion Hills, while others cited the neighborhood’s trees and overall greenery as one of the things they liked most about the community.

PROXIMITY TO SHOPPING

The relatively small Dominion Hills Centre along Wilson Boulevard and Livingston Street features fast food eateries, a drycleaner, barber shop, florist, and shoe repair store, among others. Dominion Hills is also near the Westover shopping area—which features several restaurants, a post office, a grocery store, and a handy hardware store—and the large Seven Corners shopping area.

GOOD SCHOOLS

Two elementary schools, Ashlawn and McKinley, and one middle school, Swanson, are situated just outside the Dominion Hills boundaries but within walking distance. Washington-Lee and Yorktown high schools also serve the community.

DOMINION HILLS FACTS AT A GLANCE

LOCATION

Coordinates (neighborhood center):

38° 52' 36" North, 77° 08' 28" West

Distance from neighborhood center to:

Washington, DC: 4.9 miles

Ballston Commons: 1.2 miles

East Falls Church Metro: 0.8 miles

Tysons Corner: 5.0 miles

GEOLOGY

Soil: Predominately Glenelg Urban Group

Bedrock: Mainly Sykesville Formation (Lower Cambrian)

CLIMATE

Average Annual Rainfall: 45"

Mean January temperature: 34° F

Mean July temperature: 78° F

POPULATION

Total: 1,671

Born in the United States: 86%

Ethnic composition

White: 81%

Black or African-American: 1%

Asian or Pacific Islander: 7%

Hispanic (independent of racial identity): 8%

Other: 3%

Education

Percent of total population in school (grades K-12): 6%

Population age 25+ with at least a high school degree: 96%

Population age 25+ with at least a bachelor's degree: 62%

Median income: \$89,551

HOUSING

Housing units: 627 ~~3~~

Owner-occupied: 529

Renter-occupied: 89

Vacant: 9

Population and Housing data from 2000 US Census.

3. We have provided the US Census housing count here because other census-derived figures herein are based on it. However, we believe this figure likely includes a few houses outside of the county-defined boundaries of the neighborhood, as a survey based on aerial photography and a ground-truth assessment both indicate that Dominion Hills has 612 houses.

HOUSING & STREET LAYOUT

With few exceptions, Dominion Hills' 612 houses are of three basic styles. The first houses in the neighborhood—those in the Dominion Hills I and Paisley tracts, built in 1942—are generally two-story, all-brick colonials. In the central part of the neighborhood, developers built more two-story colonials, albeit with brick on the first floor and siding on the top. Several of these houses, built beginning in 1946, still preserve the original siding. Construction during the 1950s filled out the neighborhood. While some of these later homes are colonials, many are one-story brick ramblers and a few are split-levels and other styles. Many of the neighborhood's houses feature additions of various sorts, and some 16 percent of residents surveyed said they plan to construct an addition in the next one to two years.



Representative house types in Dominion Hills: all-brick colonial, brick & siding, & one-story brick rambler.



Sample additions to Dominion Hills homes: all-brick, brick & siding, & one-story brick cape.



For the most part, the houses of Dominion Hills are owner-occupied, single-family units. The 2000 census indicates that 84 percent of the housing is owner-occupied; this represents a five-percentage-point increase from 1990 and is almost double the overall Arlington County figure. The housing stock is in generally good condition, although a number of survey participants noted particular homes that are in disrepair. In addition, about 45 percent of those surveyed express concern that some neighborhood residences house too many people.

Dominion Hills residences are located along some 18 different streets, most of which were developed at the same time as the houses. All are named according to Arlington County street-naming conventions and, as in the rest of the county, often stop at certain points only to pick up again several blocks later. ⁴ Seven cul-de-sacs are located in the neighborhood.

Chapter 3 LAND USE, ZONING, & DEVELOPMENT

Dominion Hills is a predominantly residential suburban neighborhood surrounded by significant open spaces. Ninety-six percent of survey respondents say they favor Dominion Hills staying the way it is, an area of mostly single-family detached homes.⁵ No major or contentious issues regarding current land use or zoning emerged from the survey.

LAND USE

The neighborhood consists of 641 parcels of land—612 occupied by detached single-family homes, three along Wilson Boulevard dedicated to retail/commercial use ⁶, and the remainder undeveloped; the latter includes plots owned privately, or by Arlington County or the Northern Virginia Regional Park Authority (NVRPA). Dominion Hills has no townhouses, apartments, or other multifamily housing units. Similarly, it has no churches, schools, or public or industrial buildings. The neighborhood's park—Mace Park, which consists of six lots that Mace Properties gave to DHCA in 1956 for use as a public playground and recreational area for the residents of Dominion Hills, is classified as public land.

Owners of most of the neighborhood's properties use them in line with their respective land use categories specified in the Arlington County General Land Use Plan (GLUP). However, based on GLUP definitions, the commercial property on which the Dominion Hills Centre is situated might be more appropriately classified as "General Commercial" rather than "Service Commercial" because it contains a mixture of retail and service-related companies.

4. For ease of reading, we have generally deleted the term "North," which properly appears in front of Dominion Hills street names. Similarly, we have used the terms Road, Street, and Drive only when necessary.

5. For many of the questions in our survey, we asked participants to select an answer from a five-point scale including strongly favor, favor, neutral, oppose, and strongly oppose. For ease of presentation, we have combined the responses to the first two and last two categories into "favor" and "oppose," respectively.

6. Including one parcel currently being converted from single-family usage.

The Dominion Hills Centre, located on the southern border of Dominion Hills in the 6000 block of Wilson Boulevard, serves the Dominion Hills and adjoining neighborhoods as well as nearby recreational facilities. DHCA has an established liaison that communicates with the Centre, including on concerns such as maintenance of the Centre and the adjacent property at 6011 Wilson Boulevard.



Dominion Hills Centre, 6000 block of Wilson Boulevard.

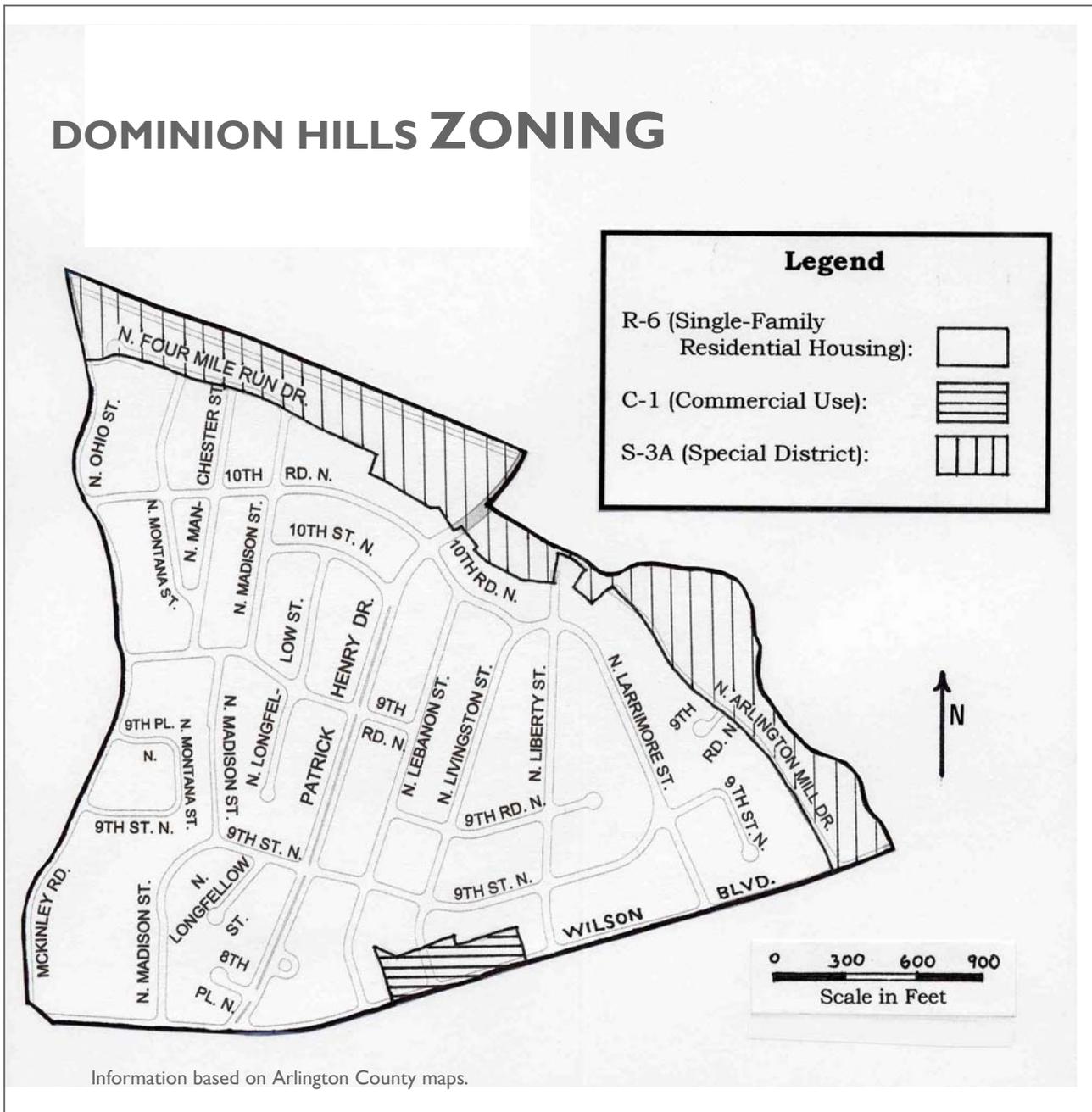
Despite its strategic location, the Centre has not realized its potential as a neighborhood center. A disproportionately large percentage of businesses there do not serve daily community needs. In particular, residents strongly favor a bakery and/or coffee shop establishment that could serve as important anchors in attracting other neighborhood-oriented businesses. According to neighborhood research, local demand would support such an establishment.

Recommendation #1: The residents of Dominion Hills prefer no additional land be used for commercial purposes.

Recommendation #2: Arlington County should reclassify the Dominion Hills Centre property as "General Commercial."

Recommendation #3: The Dominion Hills Civic Association should establish a formal neighborhood committee to address the strategic development of the Dominion Hills Shopping Centre. The committee would support the liaison's regular communication with the Centre by drafting a strategic business plan and working with the Centre, the county, and local businesses to help the Centre move in a direction that better meets community needs.

DOMINION HILLS ZONING



ZONING

Three types of zoning classifications cover the properties in Dominion Hills. The vast majority of parcels—624 of the 641—are properly zoned R-6 for single-family residential housing. Under the Arlington County Zoning Ordinance (ACZO), an R-6 single family dwelling district consists of lots with a minimum average width of 60 feet and a minimum lot area of 6,000 square feet. Of the remainder, three are zoned C-1 for

commercial use, two are S-3A or Special District, and eight parcels owned by Arlington County are currently zoned R-6 ⁷, but should be reconsidered as S-3A. Finally, four are classified as both R-6 and S-3A, depending on the source used ⁸. These should most likely be zoned as S-3A. The ACZO applies the category S-3A to certain undeveloped properties, such as parks, that are used for recreational purposes.

The existing zoning generally corresponds with current usage and the GLUP classifications. The exceptions are selected parcels zoned R-6 that are vacant and undeveloped. Arlington County owns most of these and is unlikely to develop them because of their proximity to Interstate 66 and to Four Mile Run, where Chesapeake Bay Preservation Ordinance building restrictions apply.

Recommendation #4: The county should evaluate the county-owned, undeveloped properties along Four Mile Run (RPC 12014004, 12014005, 12014006, 12014007, 12014008, 12014009, 12014010, and 12014022) and reclassify them from R-6 to S-3A.

DEVELOPMENT

Only one significant opportunity for new development exists in the neighborhood: the essentially undeveloped block of 15 parcels on Wilson Boulevard between McKinley Road and Madison Street.⁹ These parcels—owned by a single individual—total 9.5 acres. Eleven parcels are woodland, and the other four are primarily open space and the site of two houses and some additional facilities. The main house is called the historic Febrey-Lothrop estate—one of the oldest homes in Arlington County, albeit neither identified as an Arlington County landmark nor registered on the National Register of Historic Places.

Because of its size and proximity to Seven Corners, many Dominion Hills residents are concerned about the future of this property. If developed, the property could hold:

- As many as 68 single-family detached houses, based on the current R-6 zoning area requirements of 6,000 square-foot minimum lot sizes.
- Some 95 single-family detached houses, based on GLUP guidelines of one to 10 houses per acre.
- As many as 118 townhouses, based on the R-20 requirement for 3,500 square-foot lots.

Any proposal to construct many more units would require significant zoning and land use changes that the county is unlikely to approve and that most Dominion Hills residents would oppose.

7. The RPCs for these parcels are 12014004, 12014005, 12014006, 12014007, 12014008, 12014009, 12014010, and 12014022.

8. In some cases, the zoning information on the on-line Arlington County Department of Real Estate Assessment Property Identification database is not always consistent with the information provided in the Real Property Identification Map. For example, Mace Park is identified as R-6 in the database but S-3A on the map. The county should resolve such differences.

9. This assumes that the vacant/unused parcels along Four Mile Run that are currently zoned R-6 are correctly zoned S-3A.

Recommendation #5: Since the Febrey-Lothrop estate is privately owned, Dominion Hills residents have only an indirect influence on any development that may occur there. While most prefer it remains as is, if it were to become available for purchase, the neighborhood would encourage the county or the NVRPA to buy it as additional parkland. If development occurs, however, the county should ensure that usage is as consistent as possible with the rest of Dominion Hills—that is, one- and two-story, single-family houses on lots averaging 6,000 to 7,000 square feet.

In the near future, some residents anticipate increasing pressure to convert property along Wilson between Ballston and Seven Corners into commercial and/or retail uses. As the 50-plus-year-old houses in the Dominion Hills stretch of Wilson—particularly the rental ones—continue to age and deteriorate, developers may become more interested in converting them into commercial properties, as they are currently transforming the house at 6011 Wilson. Few property owners will be willing to invest significant resources into residential property on busy, primary arterial streets. However, most neighborhood residents do not find redevelopment on Wilson desirable.

Replacement of existing older homes with new, typically larger, ones is another trend already evident in North Arlington. The residents of Dominion Hills are concerned that such redevelopment occur in a manner consistent with the nature and character of the community. Survey respondents indicated that “mini-mansions,” that cover most of an individual lot are not in keeping with the rest of the neighborhood. Finally, Dominion Hills has no pipestem or infill developments, and residents desire this situation to remain the same.

Recommendation #6: The residents of Dominion Hills are deeply interested in the future development of property in and surrounding the community. Arlington County should not approve construction of housing that exceeds the current height restrictions (35 feet).

Recommendation #7: The county should not approve pipestem and infill housing developments in the neighborhood, as they are inconsistent with the existing as well as the preferred land use.



Chapter 4 CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS



Dominion Hills' infrastructure is in generally good repair. Nonetheless, some components of the infrastructure require improvements, both in terms of enhanced functionality and to create a more pleasing visual appearance.

STREETS, CURBS, GUTTERS, DRAINS, & SIDEWALKS

Although the neighborhood survey results show that a large majority of residents consider the neighborhood's streetside infrastructure to be adequate or very adequate, one major exception exists. At a few intersections, the concrete subsurface was never covered with asphalt, so as to serve as gutters where rain and snow melt are specifically directed. The combination of concrete gutters and the paved streets result in water pools that are slowly ruining the roadway. Many survey respondents specifically cited the in-street drainage gutters where 9th Street crosses Lebanon and Livingston as needing repair. Gouges in the pavement from hundreds of tailpipes and mufflers testify to the difficulties of navigating across this dip, even at speeds below the legal limit. This dip creates unsafe conditions for drivers, passengers, and surrounding property owners.



Drivers must slow to a crawl at the 9th Street—N. Lebanon Street intersection because of the deep dip of the in-street gutter. Numerous gashes in the asphalt from tail pipes & mufflers are evidence of the problems drivers experience here.

Recommendation #8: Arlington County should reconfigure the in-street drainage gutters throughout the Dominion Hills neighborhood, particularly those located on Lebanon and Livingston Streets along 9th Street.

Several survey respondents also called attention to a localized sidewalk problem on the 1000 block of Larrimore. There, a large tree has buckled the sidewalk, making it difficult to walk upon. Finally, empirical observation shows that many streets are extensively cracked and potholes are starting to develop.

Recommendation #9: The county should repair extensive cracking and potholes throughout the neighborhood.



SEWERS

Of significant concern to some residents are the sanitary sewer lines that run through backyards on certain blocks. These lines and the associated right-of-way substantially restrict the ability to build on to the rear of affected homes. Approximately 40 percent of survey respondents support the relocation of the sewer line to the street for easier access for repair, property protection in case of line break, and freeing up their backyard for possible additions. However, some 20 percent oppose such a plan.

STREET LIGHTING

More than two-thirds of Dominion Hills residents considered street lighting to be adequate, according to the survey, but some lighting concerns exist. Particular problem areas cited include the Patrick Henry and 10th Road intersection and the 900 block of N. Madison. Others have expressed concern regarding lighting on trails and at recreational areas.

Residents have also expressed interest in improving the appearance of the neighborhood lighting. More than half of survey respondents support the installation of decorative street lights. Others would like the introduction of modern, cost-effective lighting technologies, such as LED, that would improve illumination while reducing light scatter, power cost, and maintenance. The neighborhood supports the installation or replacement of street lighting by block residents and property owners through the county's established process.

Recommendation #11: The county should install pedestrian lighting in various points in Dominion Hills, such as along the multi-use trails, the Patrick Henry and 10th Road intersection, the 900 block of Madison, Lebanon near Wilson, Montana from 9th Street towards McKinley, Larrimore, and the east side of Patrick Henry from Wilson to 10th Road.

Recommendation #12: The county should install pedestrian lighting in other parts of the neighborhood as desired and qualified by residents through the established petition process.

NEIGHBORHOOD IDENTIFICATION & STREET SIGNS

In our survey, 81 percent of residents expressed support for installing "Dominion Hills Neighborhood" signs at several entrances to the community. Respondents provided some 35 different suggestions for the sign design. Most suggested locations focused on:

- The intersection of Patrick Henry and Wilson.
- The intersection of Patrick Henry and 10th Road.
- The intersection of Wilson and McKinley.

Other suggestions include:

- Near the Wilson-Larrimore intersection.
- The intersection of Wilson and Arlington Mill Drive.
- The McKinley-10th Road intersection.

In addition, while most respondents noted that street and traffic signs are adequate, some neighbors have requested an upgrade in size and reflectivity in these street signs.

GENERAL BEAUTIFICATION

Most residents expressed some desire to improve the appearance and attractiveness of the Dominion Hills area through infrastructure upgrades, specifically:

- Three-fourths of survey respondents favor elimination of street side utility poles and burial of utility wires. Indeed, a handful of individuals singled out overhead lines as one of the things they would most like to change in the neighborhood.
- Most respondents also favored additional plantings of ornamental vegetation at major traffic arteries.

Recommendation #13: The undergrounding of utility wires should proceed as resources allow. Burying utilities is encouraged in any new development.

Recommendation #14: When capital improvements—such as traffic calming, gutter redesign, or installation of neighborhood identification signs—are designed, the county should include beautification planting as an integrated component.

Three-fourths of survey respondents favor elimination of street side utility poles & burial of utility wires.



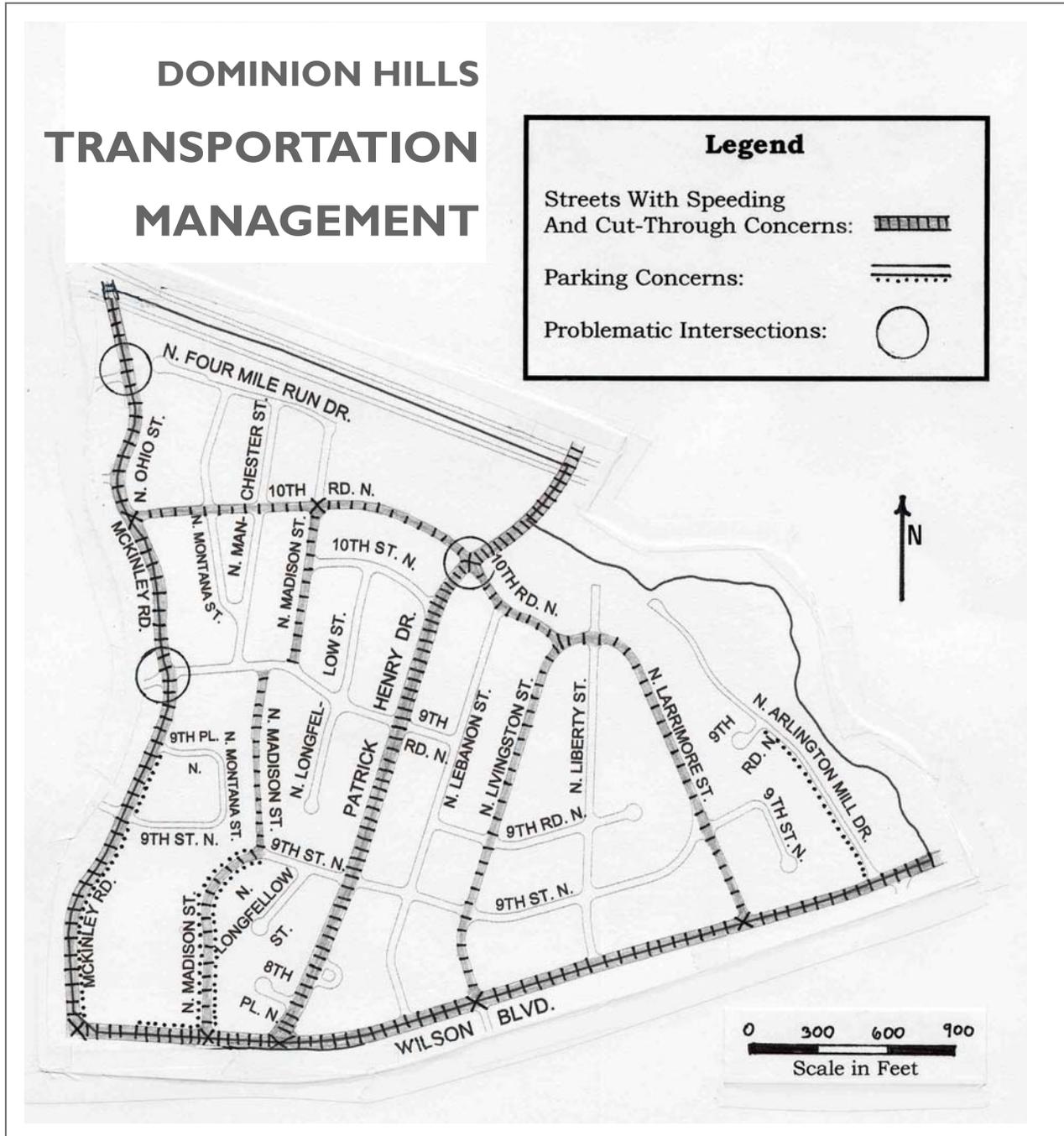
NEIGHBOR REFLECTIONS

“The landscaping included honeysuckle bushes, which Catherine had seen growing wild in Danville. There were no trees, as the land had been a dairy farm & everything was leveled for construction”

Thomas & Catherine Clements, original owners since 1947

Chapter 5 TRANSPORTATION MANAGEMENT & PEDESTRIAN SAFETY

Transportation issues are of paramount importance to most Dominion Hills residents. While residents generally acknowledge that the linked issues of speeding and pedestrian safety are of the greatest concern, the neighborhood also has vested interests in ensuring biking safety, enhancing public transportation, and correcting local parking problems.



TRAFFIC CONTROL

Speeding vehicles on many of the neighborhood's streets greatly detract from the quality of life in Dominion Hills. Indeed, when asked in our survey what three things in the neighborhood are most in need of change, the top two responses were speeding and excessive cut-through traffic. Moreover, most survey respondents agreed that traffic moves at excessive speed.

The neighborhood's most serious speeding problems occur along Patrick Henry Drive and McKinley Road/Ohio Street, both of which the county currently classifies as minor arterial streets. Prior to the building of Interstate 66, the Dominion Hills subdivision was a quiet, almost secluded neighborhood, with the only access to the north consisting of a small bridge on McKinley across Four Mile Run. Patrick Henry served as Dominion Hills' "Main Street" and united the community. Now the Ohio Street and Patrick Henry Drive bridges across Interstate 66 promote fast traffic through Dominion Hills from surrounding areas. Southbound traffic entering the neighborhood is additionally prone to acceleration because of the excessively wide traffic lanes on these bridges and, for the Patrick Henry overpass, because of the steep downgrade in this direction. Similarly, the drop in elevation from Wilson Boulevard tends to accelerate traffic in the opposite direction on both Patrick Henry and McKinley. Indeed, many residents singled out Patrick Henry as a street on which vehicles drive too fast. Others said the same about McKinley/Ohio.

Other streets in the neighborhood have speeding problems of their own. Traffic on the section of Wilson that borders Dominion Hills is often in excess of the posted speed limit, which the county recently lowered to 30 miles per hour. The 150-foot drop in elevation on this stretch of Wilson tends to promote speeding when traveling eastward. In our survey, some people singled out 10th Road—the main east-west transit road in Dominion Hills—as one in which excess speeding is an issue. Finally, residents have identified Larrimore, Livingston, and Madison as streets where excessive speeding is a problem.

Dominion Hills recognizes the existence of many traffic-calming measures that could address the neighborhood's speeding ills. It also recognizes that residents may favor some methods more than others. In our survey, we asked residents to indicate their opinions on various traffic-changing methods. A majority of respondents favor crosswalks, four-way stops, and more aggressive enforcement of traffic laws. Speed humps and additional traffic islands received a more mixed reaction, while more people oppose traffic nubs than favored them. A clear majority opposes the introduction of video surveillance cameras.

Recommendation #15: The county should improve traffic/speed problems—particularly those on Patrick Henry, McKinley/Ohio, Wilson, 10th Road, Livingston, and Larrimore—by utilizing up-to-date traffic-calming measures, such as four-way stop signs, crosswalks, and other methods that are acceptable to neighborhood residents and aesthetically pleasing. Adoption of traffic-calming measures on certain streets should be made in conjunction with pertinent neighboring communities.

Cut-through traffic is another concern to 44 percent of the survey respondents. Streets of concern include Larrimore, 10th Road, Madison, and Livingston.

Recommendation #16: The county should aim to reduce the cut-through traffic on streets such as Larrimore, 10th Road, Madison, and Livingston. The issue of cut-through traffic should be addressed in a communitywide traffic-management plan. The county should ensure that any move to end such excess traffic on particular streets does not result in moving the unwanted traffic to neighboring streets.

Obstructed views also cause traffic problems in the neighborhood. About half of survey respondents agreed that vegetation or structures limit visibility for drivers and pedestrians in certain places. Particular areas cited include 10th Road and Patrick Henry, 10th Street and Patrick Henry, 9th Road and McKinley, and Larrimore and Wilson (where low-hanging vegetation creates a blind spot when turning onto Wilson).

Recommendation #17: The county should regularly cut and maintain all vegetation on county property that obscures drivers' views of roadways and pedestrians.

PEDESTRIAN SAFETY

Dominion Hills would like to stay a neighborhood in which it is safe, pleasant, and desirable to walk, both as a means of traveling to a destination and as an end unto itself. The streets, intersections, and streetscapes could be better designed to welcome pedestrians while still allowing for appropriate automobile traffic.

Dominion Hills already has some assets that support the goals outlined above, including:

- Well-maintained and adequate sidewalks on both sides of virtually every street.
- A number of quiet side streets with little traffic.
- Ready access to several multi-use trails.
- Nearby walking destinations, such as parks, schools, and shopping centers.

The neighborhood also has some characteristics that work against these goals, including:

- Streets and intersections that are wider than necessary for traffic, creating longer crossings for pedestrians and encouraging faster movement of automobile traffic.
- Unpleasant walking conditions on the bridges over Interstate 66 and along Wilson Boulevard.
- Inconsistent street lighting and areas of darkness.
- Lack of or insufficient pedestrian crossings on major roads.

All told, almost half of respondents to the neighborhood survey agreed that “There are pedestrian safety problems in Dominion Hills.” Streets that are particularly dangerous and difficult to cross include:

- Patrick Henry Drive, which bisects the neighborhood and intersects with four streets and two cul-de-sacs. In the survey, a number of people mentioned Patrick Henry Drive as a pedestrian safety problem, and many of these specifically cited the need for a crosswalk at 10th Road. Many students walking to McKinley Elementary School must cross Patrick Henry on sections where no crosswalk is provided. Patrick Henry is also the primary route that Swanson Middle School students from the neighborhood use to cross Interstate 66. The bridge is excessively wide with only a four-foot sidewalk, encouraging speeding and limiting pedestrian capacity. It is especially difficult to traverse during the winter snows, when the bridge sidewalks remain unshovelled for days, forcing students into the streets.
- McKinley Road/Ohio Street, which intersects four streets on the Dominion Hills side, three of which cross into Madison Manor, is similar in nature and traffic to Patrick Henry (albeit without a median). Moreover, the Ohio Street bridge over Interstate 66 suffers from the same inadequacies as the Patrick Henry bridge. While McKinley Road has a pedestrian crosswalk between 9th and 10th Roads directly in front of McKinley Elementary School, residents cite the need for additional safe crossings at 9th Road and where the Four Mile Run Trail crosses Ohio on the south side of the Interstate 66 bridge.
- Wilson Boulevard, which is a pedestrian nightmare, particularly because the sidewalks are immediately adjacent to the fast-moving traffic. The number and locations of crossings are inadequate; the 3,000-foot stretch that borders Dominion Hills offers four crossings: the underpass at the W&OD trail, the signaled crosswalk in front of the Dominion Hills Area Recreation Association (DHARA) pool, and the lights at both Patrick Henry and McKinley.

Recommendation #18: The county should improve pedestrian safety, particularly along Patrick Henry, Wilson, and McKinley/Ohio, where traffic moves at excessive speed and crosswalks are needed. Most needed is a traffic-calming measure, such as a four-way stop, a crosswalk, or other methods at the intersection of 10th Road and Patrick Henry as well as key crossing points on McKinley/Ohio.



10th ROAD & PATRICK HENRY: CROSSROADS OF CONCERN

As is evident throughout this chapter, among the most problematic intersections in Dominion Hills is the one where 10th Road crosses Patrick Henry Drive. Here, median islands do not mark the middle of Patrick Henry as they do elsewhere in the neighborhood. The resulting extra expanse of asphalt, along with the immediate topography, makes crossing Patrick Henry along 10th Road troublesome:

- Speeding is a major issue here as vehicles on Patrick Henry accelerate downhill driving both southbound across the Interstate 66 overpass and northbound headed out of the neighborhood. This often makes crossing along 10th Road difficult for cars and buses. Moreover, trees at the intersection can obstruct visibility for drivers turning off of 10th, and the bend in the Patrick Henry overpass prevents a safe view of approaching vehicles.
- Pedestrians also have a difficult time traversing Patrick Henry at this intersection. Among other issues, no crosswalks are present in that direction. Walking across the full width of the street requires extra time, and pedestrians often find themselves sprinting the final feet as vehicles that were not visible at the start of their crossing speed into view from the north.
- Finally, cyclists routinely cross Patrick Henry here so as to access the entry path to the Four Mile Run Multi-Use Trail at the northwestern corner of the intersection. They, too, have similar crossing concerns.

The totality of these interrelated problems necessitates a multifaceted solution.



BICYCLE TRAVEL

The neighborhood would like to stay one in which it is safe, pleasant, and desirable to bicycle for commuting, carrying out daily activities, and for recreational purposes. The streets, intersections, and off-street facilities could be improved to welcome and integrate bicyclists alongside motorists and pedestrians.

Dominion Hills already has some assets that support the goals outlined above, including:

- Ready access to bike trails.
- Painted bicycle lanes on Patrick Henry Drive and McKinley Street.
- Wide streets that can comfortably accommodate cars and bicycles together.

Indeed, more than three-fourths of survey respondents agreed that the neighborhood has adequate bike trails and lanes.

The neighborhood also has some characteristics that work against these goals, including:

- Narrow travel lanes on Wilson Boulevard.
- Inconsistent street lighting and areas of darkness.
- The rolling terrain.

Recommendation #19: The county should ensure that the countywide cycling infrastructure, such as bicycle lanes and consistent street lighting, are implemented within Dominion Hills.

PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION

While the 2000 US census found about 10 percent of Dominion Hills workers relied on public transportation for their commuting needs, 29 percent of the 340 commuters accounted for in the neighborhood survey report public transportation as their primary means of getting to work. Two thirds of Dominion Hills workers who rely on public transport claim Metrorail as their main means of commuting, according to the survey. And, two thirds of this group report East Falls Church as their primary Metro stop; almost all of the remaining third uses Ballston. In addition, Dominion Hills is generally well served by Metrobus:

- The Wilson-Fairfax Line (Line #1), which runs from the Ballston metro station to Fair Oaks Hospital, stops in several places in Dominion Hills. This bus runs every 15 to 20 minutes during rush hour and every 30 minutes at other times. The #1 has a feeder route that runs on Livingston and 10th Road during the rush hours as well.
- In addition, Lines #2 and #22 make stops at locations fairly close to the neighborhood.

While only about a tenth of Dominion Hills workers accounted for in the survey report taking buses as part of their commute, nearly a quarter of respondents stated that they would commute by public transit if more convenient bus routes were available. Many respondents reported that they were likely to use Arlington Rapid Transit (ART) buses once these started up in Fall 2002. Residents also indicated a desire to discuss the routes with county officials. Among other concerns, some residents see buses as part of the speeding problem in the neighborhood.

Recommendation #20: The county should implement an ART bus route between Dominion Hills and the East Falls Church metro station.

Recommendation #21: Metropolitan Transit Authority should ensure that Metrobuses, particularly those that run on Livingston and 10th Road, obey the posted speed limits.

NEIGHBORHOOD OPPOSITION TO WIDENING INTERSTATE 66

The Dominion Hills neighborhood is bordered on the north by Interstate 66. The completion of this highway in 1983 altered the previously secluded character of the community. The DHCA is opposed to any widening of Interstate 66 because of the negative impact such expansion would have on noise levels, air pollution, water pollution in Four Mile Run, and green space—particularly that of the adjacent trails and Mace Park. Instead, the DHCA supports increased funding for environmentally friendly solutions such as public transportation and telecommuting as a solution to the region's traffic problems. Dominion Hills strongly favors the continued enforcement of the Coleman Decision—the 1977 agreement between the US Department of Transportation, the Commonwealth of Virginia, and the residents of Arlington—which allowed Interstate 66 to be completed through Arlington on the condition that it never exceed two lanes in each direction. DHCA heartily applauds Richmond's recent decision to abandon plans of expanding the highway.

PARKING ISSUES

Vehicular parking in Dominion Hills does not pose a significant problem for most residents. Indeed, three-fourths of survey respondents agreed that they never have difficulty finding parking near their house. However, parking is an issue in a few specific areas.¹⁰

Arlington Mill Drive. Among the more significant parking issues in Dominion Hills is the situation on Arlington Mill Drive. Houses here have no driveways because of the topography, leaving residents without any dedicated off-street parking. Because these homes are directly across from Bon Air Park, the residents must also contend with park visitors for parking. Moreover, the street is narrow, and parking is prohibited on the east side. While Arlington Mill is designated as restricted Zone 12 parking from 9th Road to its cul-de-sac, the section between 9th and Wilson is not restricted.

Recommendation #22: The county should extend Zone 12 parking to include the section of Arlington Mill Drive from 9th Road to Wilson Boulevard.

McKinley Road, Madison Street, and Wilson Boulevard. The apartment complexes across from Dominion Hills near the intersection of McKinley and Wilson Boulevard do not have enough parking for their tenants, leading to overflow parking on the 800 and 900 blocks of McKinley, the 800 block of Madison, and the connecting stretch of Wilson. In addition, the practice of jamming as many vehicles in the available space as possible occasionally blocks in or damages residents' cars. Some nonresidents also use this space for street side automotive repair activity. The increased noise, congestion, commotion, and litter reduce the quality of life in these areas. Other nearby Dominion Hills streets, such as the 800 block of Patrick Henry, occasionally experience these overflow problems as well.

Recommendation #23: The county should create a restricted parking zone on Madison from Wilson to 9th Street. In addition, the county should work to address littering problems along the parking lanes on Madison Street, McKinley Road, and Wilson Boulevard.

McKinley Elementary School. This school represents an additional parking concern for both Dominion Hills and Madison Manor because children from both communities attend it. The school has a kindergarten, a pre- and after-school day-care program, an active PTA, and significant daily parental involvement with the school. All of these conditions increase the need for parking.

Recommendation #24: The county should address the McKinley School parking issue to ensure pedestrian safety as part of its Safe Routes to Schools program, and should ensure Dominion Hills Civic Association and Madison Manor Community Association participation in such discussions.

10. In addition to the areas mentioned in this section, insufficient parking is a possible concern associated with Powhatan Springs Park. For a fuller treatment of issues related to this park, see Chapter 6.

FOUR MILE RUN: STREAM UNDER STRESS

Dominion Hills lies completely within the Four Mile Run watershed, one of the most stressed watersheds in Arlington. The quality of this stream and the associated riparian environment is, therefore, of deep concern to neighborhood residents. This 20-mile-long stream flows through Fairfax County and Falls Church and into Arlington, passing along the northern and eastern borders of Dominion Hills in the process; the stream continues through Alexandria, where it empties into the Potomac. The watershed is home to almost 160,000 people. Today almost 70 percent of the stream channels in the Four Mile Run watershed have been filled or replaced by underground storm sewers. Storm runoff continues to contribute to erosion along the stream and to pollution, as litter, fertilizers, pesticides, and other contaminants are carried from lawns and roads into the stream bed. Other sources of pollution are leaking underground storage tanks and dumping along the streambed. Water temperature in Four Mile Run has risen in recent decades, and this former trout stream is no longer capable of supporting a permanent trout population. Dominion Hills supports Arlington County's efforts to develop a regional plan for preservation and enhancement of the stream, and to control development along Four Mile Run in accordance with the Chesapeake Bay Preservation Ordinance and other relevant regulations.

MACE PARK

Mace Park, a 1-acre park held in trust by the DHCA, is located between Liberty Street and the Patrick Henry Street/Interstate 66 bridge embankment. As dictated by the 1956 deed from Mace Properties, the land is held in trust to be used as a public playground and recreational area for residents of the neighborhood. More than half of the area is open field, while the remainder contains a playground, picnic tables, benches, and a community bulletin board. In 2001, DHCA replaced the original play equipment, which had been installed in 1957. This effort has played a large role in rejuvenating the civic association as well as generating increased community involvement in neighborhood activities.

As the informal "Commons" of Dominion Hills, Mace Park is a gathering place for the community. Young children and their parents often congregate at the playground, and residents use the field to picnic, toss a Frisbee, or play pick-up games of soccer or football. The park is also the site of the neighborhood's annual Halloween Parade terminus and of the associated Halloween Festival, which has been held for more than 50 years. In addition, DHCA holds organized neighborhood picnics here.

NEIGHBOR REFLECTIONS

“The neighbors got together for the annual Halloween Parade & Party at Mace Park...it was ideal, very enjoyable raising children in Dominion Hills in the 1960-70s.”
Winter (Punky) & Mary Ann Simpson, residents since 1964

The park facilities are in good condition. Arlington County provides day-to-day upkeep, with DHCA organizing residents to provide special maintenance as needed. While the play equipment is new, survey respondents provided numerous suggestions for improvement of the grounds, including—in order of popularity—more picnic tables, additional playground equipment, restroom facilities, public gardens, and a fence around the play area. Three dozen respondents, however, requested that no changes be made to the park.

Recommendation #25: Dominion Hills Civic Association should continue to maintain and strive to improve the condition of Mace Park. In addition, it should prepare a formal master plan for Mace Park that would ensure that it continues to serve as a public park with a "neighborhood" orientation. The master plan should address issues related to drainage, grass for the open area, trees and plants, toilet facilities, drinking water, and play equipment.



View of Mace Park from Patrick Henry Drive.



Neighborhood clean-up day at Mace Park. (Source: Dominion Hills Civic Association files, Summer 2001).



Halloween sign, Mace Park



Spider's egg eating contest, Halloween Parade & Party at Mace Park (October 2001).

BON AIR PARK

Four Mile Run bisects this 24-acre Arlington County park, with the western section in Dominion Hills and the eastern in Bluemont. Most of the park's facilities—including public restrooms, two playgrounds, a basketball court, lighted tennis courts, and picnic tables and shelters—are in the Bluemont section. The Arlington Memorial Rose Garden, which contains some 3,500 rose bushes, and the showcase Azalea Gardens are also in this section. In addition, a large parking lot for park users is located in the Bluemont section. Most facilities in this section of the park are in good repair and are well-maintained.

The smaller Dominion Hills section is less developed, consisting of a combined portion of the Four Mile Run Trail and the W&OD. At the north end of this section of the park is a multi-use athletic field that is overused, primarily for pick-up soccer games, and requires repair, reseeding, and enhancement. The lack of dedicated off-street parking on the west side of Four Mile Run for field users results in problematic overflow parking onto Arlington Mill Road during periods of peak use. (See Parking Issues in Chapter 4.)

Meanwhile, the lack of efficient means of access hinders Dominion Hills residents' use of the facilities in the Bluemont section. To enter the eastern section from Dominion Hills, individuals must cross Four Mile Run at Wilson Boulevard or use one of two pedestrian bridges at the park's north end. To reach park facilities that lie directly adjacent to Dominion Hills but across the stream, either route is long and roundabout.

While Bon Air Park is generally safe, police have reported gang activity at the picnic shelter and some citizens have noted after-hours loitering and possible drug activity in the parking lot. It is essential that the authorities regularly police the park and prohibit parking or loitering after the park is closed.

Recommendation #26: Arlington County should repair and refurbish the playing field in Bon Air Park at the northern end of Arlington Mill Road and consider possible facility enhancements or additional maintenance that would make this section of the park more attractive and more valuable to the community.

Recommendation #27: The county should improve access to Bon Air Park from the western side of Four Mile Run, possibly by construction of a pedestrian bridge across the stream at a convenient point midway between Wilson and the northern end of the park. Easier access in this area would encourage users of the athletic field to park in the lot on the other side of the park, possibly easing the congestion along Arlington Mill Road.

UPTON HILL REGIONAL PARK

Upton Hill Park, a large urban park operated by the NVPRA, abuts the southern edge of Dominion Hills across Wilson Boulevard. The park has three functional sections:

- A popular area of developed seasonal facilities—including an outdoor swimming pool, a deluxe miniature golf course, a batting cage, and a rental picnic shelter—at the top of the hill that gives the park its name. A large parking lot serves these facilities.
- An attractive stand of urban woodlands, crisscrossed by a network of walking trails, that lies between Livingston Street and a service road running uphill from Wilson to the parking lot.
- A collection of year-round facilities—including a playground, bocce court, horseshoe pit, and shuffle board courts—at the bottom of the slope and near Wilson.

In contrast to the busy hilltop attractions, the facilities near Wilson—the section of the park closest to Dominion Hills—appear to be little used and poorly maintained. The reasons for this under-use may include the somewhat isolated feel of this part of the park, the lack of awareness of these facilities' existence, and/or poor accessibility. Indeed, Wilson presents problems for Dominion Hills pedestrians who want to use this part of the park, since the only marked crossings are the crosswalks at the park entrance and in front of the DHARA several hundred yards away; neither is an attractive option for parents with children.

Recommendation #28: NVPRA should conduct a usage and access study of the part of Upton Hill Park near Wilson to determine whether the attraction and use of these facilities could be enhanced by providing more convenient access and improved parking facilities or by increasing the area's visibility from Wilson Boulevard.

POWHATAN SPRINGS PARK

County officials began construction of Powhatan Springs Park—located across Wilson Boulevard from Dominion Hills between Upton Hill and the DHARA facilities—in late 2003. The 5-acre park, which opened in September 2004, contains:

- A 12,800-square-foot skatepark, intended for both skateboarding and in-line skating.
- An interactive nature area, where fun activities in manmade wetlands help children learn about water flow, collection, and purification.
- A junior-size soccer and lacrosse field for children under age 10.

The planning of this park—especially the inclusion of the skatepark—met with some controversy. Surrounding neighbors questioned the decision to place a skatepark in a residential area and expressed concern about noise, overflow parking, and the potential for vandalism and rowdiness, especially if the park is not fully supervised. A particular concern is the possibility that the skatepark will be lighted and in operation during the evening.



Powhatan Springs Park, view from Wilson Boulevard (September 2004).

In February 2002, the county formed a working group, consisting of three skaters; representatives from the surrounding neighborhoods of Dominion Hills, Bluemont, and Boulevard Manor; and two Arlington County Parks and Recreation Department officials, to assess the future operation of the skatepark. Seven months later, the group made several recommendations, calling for the county to:

- Provide onsite supervision for the park and particularly for the skatepark during periods of heavy use.
- Charge nonresidents of Arlington user fees to help minimize overcrowding.
- Operate the park only during daylight hours.
- Install fencing on the Wilson Boulevard side of the park to discourage crime and use of the facilities after hours.
- Formally review operations after six months to determine if any adjustments should be made.

The working group discussed, but did not make recommendations on, the surrounding neighborhoods' concerns about potential noise, overflow parking, or the potential for increased cut-through traffic of vehicles and skaters.

Recommendation #29: Dominion Hills endorses the recommendations of the Powhatan Springs Park working group regarding the operations of the skatepark and the construction of a fence on the Wilson side of the park. The community also endorses the group's recommendation to review the operations of the park after six months. The neighborhood further insists that this evaluation involve the active participation of representatives of the civic associations of the surrounding neighborhoods.

Recommendation #30: County officials should work with the surrounding neighborhood civic associations to evaluate their concerns regarding noise, increased cut-through traffic, and overflow parking after a sufficient period of Powhatan Springs Park operations and, if any undesirable effects or conditions are manifest, to determine any changes needed to ameliorate problems.

MULTI-USE TRAILS

Dominion Hills' residents enjoy direct and ready access to the Washington Metropolitan Area's network of multi-use trails. About 1 mile of the 45-mile long W&OD Trail runs through the neighborhood, paralleling Interstate 66, to Bon Air Park. This part of the trail is straight and narrow with small or obstructed shoulder areas. The Four Mile Run Trail parallels this section of the W&OD on the south bank of the stream. This trail winds through a small section of county-owned woodland and Mace Park and features large grassy shoulders and wooded buffers on one or both sides. Bike traffic here is both lighter and slower moving, making it a good place for quiet strolls, walks with children, and observing wildlife. The two parallel trails meet up near the Arlington Mill cul-de-sac and run as a single trail through the western section of Bon Air Park.

Although the trails are safe, some areas are isolated, and the multi-use trails in Arlington have been the scene of occasional and sometimes serious criminal incidents. County police and Parks Department rangers patrol the trails by bicycle on a seasonal basis, but the frequency of the patrols could be increased. In addition, increased lighting along the trail would help inhibit unfavorable activity.

Recommendation #31: Dominion Hills echoes the recommendation by the Bluemont Neighborhood urging more frequent, year-round bike patrol policing of neighborhood parks and trails to encourage trail etiquette and to enhance trail and park safety.

PRIVATE RECREATIONAL FACILITIES

DHARA owns an outdoor swimming pool, grounds, and association house on 4 acres at 6000 Wilson Boulevard. While technically just outside the boundaries of Dominion Hills, this facility has been an integral part of the community since the association was founded in 1955. Historic Powhatan Springs and a springhouse are also located near the rear of the property, with the water from the spring flowing into Reeves Run.

The DHARA pool operates in the summer and serves some 550 families largely drawn from Dominion Hills and the surrounding neighborhoods. In addition, the association house functions year-round as the unofficial community house for DHCA, which is not associated with DHARA, and local churches regularly hold meetings in the house.

In recent years, DHARA and Arlington County have discussed the future of the grassy area at the rear of the property. It is unlikely that this area would be subject to development, even by DHARA; almost the entire area falls within the Regional Park Authority for Reeves Run. The county had expressed interest in obtaining a public path right-of-way along the run that would permit access from Ashlawn Elementary School to the natural areas in the new Powhatan Springs Park and in Upton Hill Park (pending similar agreements with adjacent property owners.) Discussions have also taken place on the creation of a multi-use trail from Bluemont Park to Upton Hill to improve access for these parks and to create an open green corridor. DHARA rejected these requests because it would lose use of this area for camping and because of security, liability, and privacy concerns.

Recommendation #32: The Dominion Hills Area Recreation Association (DHARA) has been a major asset to the neighborhood, providing significant recreational opportunities. Dominion Hills supports DHARA in maintaining the integrity of its green space and recreational activities.



Various views of DHARA pool entrance, community house, & lap pool (August 2004).

DHARA also owns the 2-acre Inscoe Tract at 6002 Wilson Boulevard. The Association maintains this property as a buffer to provide privacy for swimming pool operations. The upper part of the property contains an older rental house and grassy yard, while Reeves Run cuts through the wooded lower part. Although no current proposal exists, DHARA has considered selling the property to developers to raise funds. In addition, the county had expressed interest in acquiring the property as an addition to Powhatan Springs Park. DHARA remains concerned that conversion of this land to a public park would result in a loss of privacy and would limit the association's options for future use of the site for its own recreational purposes.

Recommendation #33: Dominion Hills supports preservation of the back portion of the Inscoe tract on the Dominion Hills Area Recreation Association (DHARA) property. The wooded portion surrounding the stream banks should be maintained in its natural state. The community would support the further utilization of the upper part of the property for recreational purposes by DHARA or, if the Association decides to sell the property, by Arlington County.

NEIGHBOR REFLECTIONS

“The neighborhood (in the 1950s) was white collar, mostly military working at the Pentagon & Navy Annex. The wives were mostly stay-at-home mothers. They joined the Powhatan Springs Women’s Club, raised families & supervised the parks.”

Curtis & Jean MacDonald, residents since 1950

Chapter 7 SAFETY & ENVIRONMENTAL CONCERNS

SAFETY

Dominion Hills is a relatively crime-free community. Arlington County police report that only 14 index crimes occurred in the neighborhood during the six-month period of December 2002 to May 2003. ¹¹ As such, the crime rate in the neighborhood is about one quarter that of the county as a whole. That said, almost 30 percent of survey respondents reported that they had experienced at least some problem with crime during the past year; about 10 percent noted a big or very big problem.

The crime rate in the (Dominion Hills) neighborhood is about one quarter that of the county as a whole.

Although Arlington County has an active Neighborhood Crime Watch Program, no Dominion Hills households participate. The few Crime Watch signs in the neighborhood mark old, inactive programs. However, almost one third of those who said that their block had no Crime Watch, or that they were not sure if a program existed, expressed interest in establishing one. The large percentage of respondents who were unsure about the program suggests the need for greater communication about such issues as the ease of starting a Crime Watch, the availability of free police-run security surveys, and the assurance that citizens reporting suspicious activity do not place themselves in criminal or civil jeopardy.

Recommendation #34: Arlington County Police should work with Dominion Hills to promote establishment of Neighborhood Crime Watch Programs in the community. A police representative should continue to attend civic association and other neighborhood meetings.



11. Index crimes are homicide, rape, robbery, aggravated assault, burglary, larceny, and vehicle theft. During the period in question, Dominion Hills experienced one robbery, one burglary, two assaults (on the bike paths), and 10 larcenies (mainly car break-ins in the 900 block of North Madison and North Patrick Henry).

ENVIRONMENT

Residents have expressed concern about several indigenous environmental concerns, including:

- **Mosquitoes.** Almost 90 percent of survey respondents reported at least some problem with mosquitoes, making these insects the neighborhood's top environmental concern. About 40 percent termed these pests a big or very big problem. While the general nuisance of mosquito bites has increased in recent years with the influx of the Asian Tiger Mosquito, of greater concern is infection of the West Nile Virus.
- **Poisonous and Invasive Plants.** A clear majority of survey participants noted at least some problem with invasive plants—such as English ivy or bamboo—and with poison ivy or other poisonous plants. Field observation suggests that such plants are particularly problematic where properties abut the Four Mile Run bike trail or other common or undeveloped space.
- **Rats.** While most of the neighborhood reports no concern about rats, nearly half of respondents noted at least some rat problems. Anecdotal information suggests that rats are most bothersome near Four Mile Run and along the storm sewers that serve as thoroughfares for these unwanted rodents.



Invasive plant overgrowth
along N. Madison Street.

Recommendation #35: The county should strengthen its ongoing efforts to control the spread of West Nile Virus, including bird and mosquito surveillance and application of larvicide. The county should also maintain a regular program to bait the sewers for rats.

Noise remains a localized environmental concern for some. About a quarter of survey respondents cited traffic as a chronic source of noise, and most of these specifically blamed Interstate 66. Indeed, only on Sunday mornings or other times when traffic is light can most Dominion Hills residents enjoy the peals of the Westover Post Office bell tower from across the highway. Of related concern, a minority of residents report that their homes experience excess vibration from buses, delivery trucks, or construction vehicles.

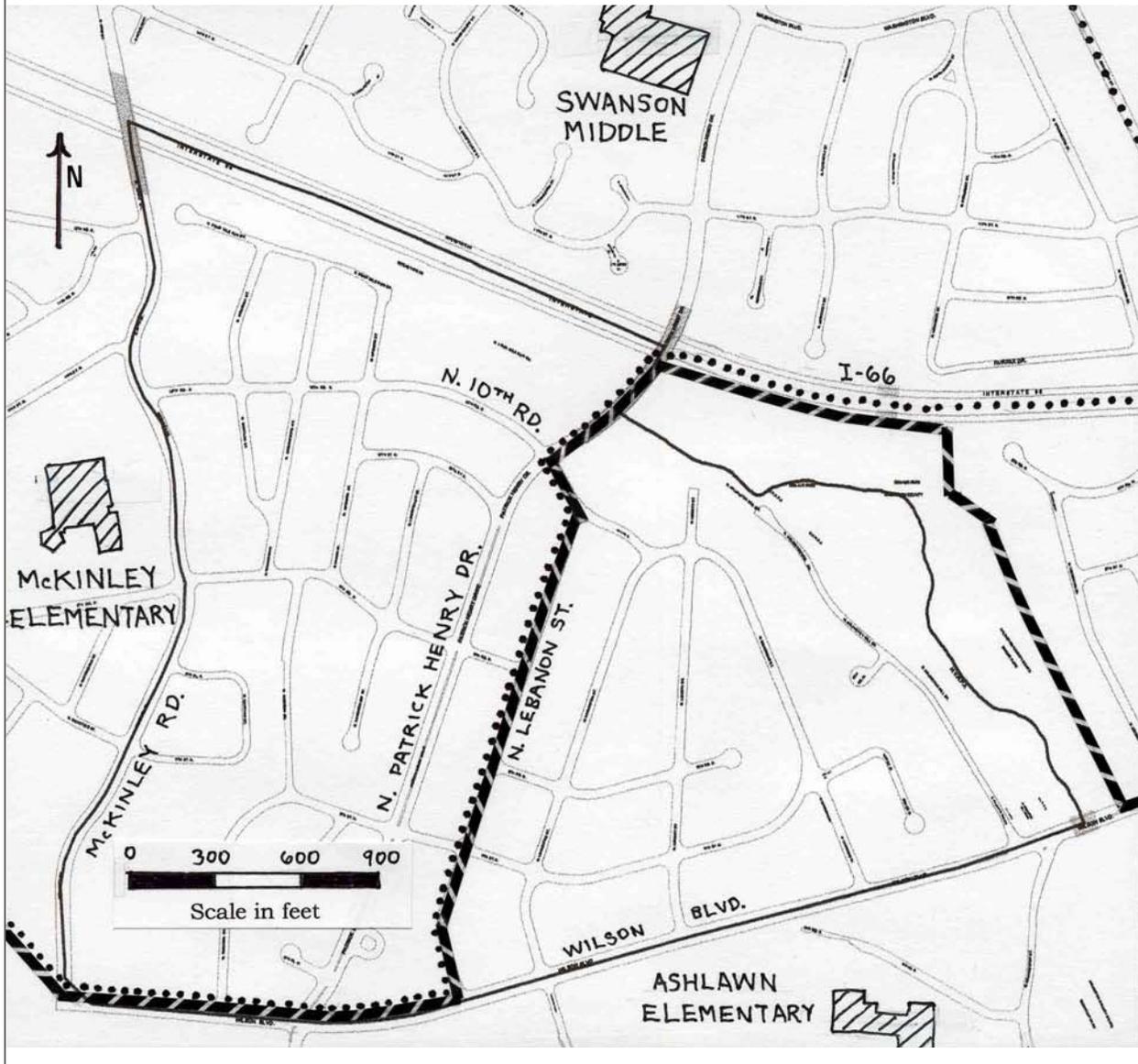
Recommendation #36: The county should provide further measures of noise abatement along Interstate 66, such as higher noise walls and/or increased evergreen and tree screening.

DOMINION HILLS SCHOOLS

Current as of school year 2004-2005.

Note: In September 2004, the Arlington County School Board announced its intent to re-examine school district boundaries in North Arlington & to make any necessary revisions by September 2005.

Legend	
Dominion Hills Civic Association Boundary:	—————
School:	
McKinley & Ashlawn Elementary School District Boundary:	
Yorktown & Washington-Lee High School District Boundary:



Chapter 8 SCHOOLS

As of 2000, 265 children ages 5 to 17 resided in Dominion Hills, according to the US Census. In our survey, almost 90 percent of parents with school-age children reported that their children attended public school, and most of the remainder said that they attended private school. Of the students covered in the survey, 56 percent were in elementary school, 26 percent in middle school, and 17 percent in high school.

The vast majority of Dominion Hills' elementary students go to McKinley or Ashlawn Elementary Schools. Both are just across major thoroughfares from the neighborhood: McKinley on the west side of McKinley Road, and Ashlawn just south of Wilson. The boundary between the two schools' districts currently cuts through the eastern quarter of Dominion Hills, running north from Wilson along Lebanon, then west for a block on North 10th Road, then north again on Patrick Henry to Interstate 66. Residents living east of this boundary send their children to Ashlawn; those to the west send them to McKinley. Over 60 percent of the grade-school students accounted for in the survey go to McKinley.

While the middle school is also conveniently located to Dominion Hills, the two high schools are beyond routine walking distance. The neighborhood lies entirely within the district boundaries for Swanson Middle School—located about one fifth of a mile north of the Dominion Hills border on Patrick Henry Drive and Washington Boulevard—and almost all the neighborhood's middle school students go there. For high school, most neighborhood students attend Washington-Lee or Yorktown High Schools; in Dominion Hills, the boundary between the two districts follows the Ashlawn/McKinley split.

Most Dominion Hills residents are pleased with the schools in their area. In our neighborhood survey, more than 85 percent of residents said that they had no concerns about either of the two elementary schools or Swanson Middle School. The few concerns that they expressed were not related to academic performance:

- Some residents expressed concern about traffic related to parents dropping off or picking up children and violating parking and traffic laws in the process. They cited in particular cars making U-turns, parking too close to corners, and parking in front of fire hydrants and in fire lanes. (See Parking Issues in Chapter 5.) A few residents also expressed concern about students littering in local neighborhoods.
- Other Dominion Hills citizens have expressed unease about any changes in the school district boundaries, particularly for middle school. Since virtually all of Dominion Hills is within the walking zone for Swanson, residents would strongly oppose any change in the current districting, such as having the children who live in the southern part of the neighborhood go to Kenmore Middle School so as to relieve overcrowding at Swanson and Williamsburg.
- DHCA has been involved over the past year in supporting the proposed renovation and addition to increase capacity at Swanson. Although a few Dominion Hills residents were directly involved in the project's planning and design stages, DHCA would have welcomed an opportunity to be formally involved early in the process.

Recommendation #37: School district officials should formally consult the Dominion Hills Civic Association early, if and when they contemplate any future changes to Swanson, McKinley, or Ashlawn.

Appendix A SUMMARY OF GOALS & RECOMMENDATIONS

LAND USE

Goal: Preserve the low-density, residential character of the neighborhood. This involves retaining the current zoning and working closely with owners of the Dominion Hills Professional Center and Dominion Hills Centre to upgrade appearance and provide enhanced commercial amenities for residents.

Recommendation #1: The residents of Dominion Hills prefer no additional land be used for commercial purposes.

Recommendation #2: Arlington County should reclassify the Dominion Hills Centre property as “General Commercial.”

Recommendation #3: The Dominion Hills Civic Association should establish a formal neighborhood committee to address the strategic development of the Dominion Hills Shopping Centre. The committee would support the liaison’s regular communication with the Centre by drafting a strategic business plan and working with the Centre, the county, and local businesses to help the Centre move in a direction that better meets community needs.

Recommendation #4: The county should evaluate the county-owned, undeveloped properties along Four Mile Run (RPC 12014004, 12014005, 12014006, 12014007, 12014008, 12014009, 12014010, and 12014022) and reclassify them from R-6 to S-3A.

Recommendation #5: Since the Febrey-Lothrop estate is privately owned, Dominion Hills residents have only an indirect influence on any development that may occur there. While most prefer it remains as is, if it were to become available for purchase, the neighborhood would encourage the county or the NVRPA to buy it as additional parkland. If development occurs, however, the county should ensure that usage is as consistent as possible with the rest of Dominion Hills—that is, one- and two-story, single-family houses on lots averaging 6,000 to 7,000 square feet.

Recommendation #6: The residents of Dominion Hills are deeply interested in the future development of property in and surrounding the community. Arlington County should not approve construction of housing that exceeds the current height restrictions (35 feet).

Recommendation #7: The county should not approve pipestem and infill housing developments in the neighborhood, as they are inconsistent with the existing as well as the preferred land use.

CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS

Goal: Increase the attractiveness of Dominion Hills through installation of gateway signs and through infrastructure improvements such as repair of poorly designed in-street gutters, elimination of street side utility poles, burial of utility wires, introduction of decorative streetlights, and planting of additional decorative vegetation at major traffic arteries.

Recommendation #8: Arlington County should reconfigure the in-street drainage gutters throughout the Dominion Hills neighborhood, particularly those located on Lebanon and Livingston Streets along 9th Street.

Recommendation #9: The county should repair extensive cracking and potholes throughout the neighborhood.

Recommendation #10: The county should conduct a feasibility study of moving the sewer lines located along the backyards of houses throughout the neighborhood. Depending on the findings and discussion among homeowners on those blocks, Dominion Hills supports the relocation of these sewer lines.

Recommendation #11: The county should install pedestrian lighting in various points in Dominion Hills, such as along the multi-use trails, the Patrick Henry and 10th Road intersection, the 900 block of Madison, Lebanon near Wilson, Montana from 9th Street towards McKinley, Larrimore, and the east side of Patrick Henry from Wilson to 10th Road.

Recommendation #12: The county should install pedestrian lighting in other parts of the neighborhood as desired and qualified by residents through the established petition process.

Recommendation #13: The undergrounding of utility wires should proceed as resources allow. Burying utilities is encouraged in any new development.

Recommendation #14: When capital improvements—such as traffic calming, gutter redesign, or installation of neighborhood identification signs—are designed, the county should include beautification planting as an integrated component.

TRANSPORTATION MANAGEMENT & PEDESTRIAN SAFETY

Goal: Investigate with Arlington county staff various traffic-calming measures to substantially decrease excessive speeding and cut-through traffic, increase pedestrian safety, and identify solutions to parking problems in pockets of the neighborhood. Collaborate with Arlington County and the Washington Metropolitan Transit Authority to improve bus service and ensure safe driving of buses throughout the neighborhood.

Recommendation #15: The county should improve traffic/speed problems—particularly those on Patrick Henry, McKinley/Ohio, Wilson, 10th Road, Livingston, and Larrimore—by utilizing up-to-date traffic-calming measures, such as four-way stop signs, crosswalks, and other methods that are acceptable to neighborhood residents and aesthetically pleasing. Adoption of traffic-calming measures on certain streets should be made in conjunction with pertinent neighboring communities.

Recommendation #16: The county should aim to reduce the cut-through traffic on streets such as Larrimore, 10th Road, Madison, and Livingston. The issue of cut-through traffic should be addressed in a communitywide traffic-management plan. The county should ensure that any move to end such excess traffic on particular streets does not result in moving the unwanted traffic to neighboring streets.

Recommendation #17: The county should regularly cut and maintain all vegetation on county property that obscures drivers' views of roadways and pedestrians.

Recommendation #18: The county should improve pedestrian safety, particularly along Patrick Henry, Wilson, and McKinley/Ohio, where traffic moves at excessive speed and crosswalks are needed. Most needed is a traffic-calming measure, such as a four-way stop, a crosswalk, or other methods at the intersection of 10th Road and Patrick Henry as well as key crossing points on McKinley/Ohio.

Recommendation #19: The county should ensure that the countywide cycling infrastructure, such as bicycle lanes and consistent street lighting, are implemented within Dominion Hills.

Recommendation #20: The county should implement an ART bus route between Dominion Hills and the East Falls Church metro station.

Recommendation #21: Metropolitan Transit Authority should ensure that Metrobuses, particularly those that run on Livingston and 10th Road, obey the posted speed limits.

Recommendation #22: The county should extend Zone 12 parking to include the section of Arlington Mill Drive from 9th Road to Wilson Boulevard.

Recommendation #23: The county should create a restricted parking zone on Madison from Wilson to 9th Street. In addition, the county should work to address littering problems along the parking lanes on Madison Street, McKinley Road, and Wilson Boulevard.

Recommendation #24: The county should address the McKinley School parking issue to ensure pedestrian safety as part of its Safe Routes to Schools program, and should ensure Dominion Hills Civic Association and Madison Manor Community Association participation in such discussions.

PARKS & RECREATION

Goal: Protect neighborhood amenities such as access to parks and playgrounds, trails, and open space. Continue to preserve and improve Mace Park as a unique recreational facility for Dominion Hills residents. Work closely with the county to address concerns regarding potential noise, crime, and parking issues related to Powhatan Springs Park.

Recommendation #25: Dominion Hills Civic Association should continue to maintain and strive to improve the condition of Mace Park. In addition, it should prepare a formal master plan for Mace Park that would ensure that it continues to serve as a public park with a "neighborhood" orientation. The master plan should address issues related to drainage, grass for the open area, trees and plants, toilet facilities, drinking water, and play equipment.

Recommendation #26: Arlington County should repair and refurbish the playing field in Bon Air Park at the northern end of Arlington Mill Road and consider possible facility enhancements or additional maintenance that would make this section of the park more attractive and more valuable to the community.

Recommendation #27: The county should improve access to Bon Air Park from the western side of Four Mile Run, possibly by construction of a pedestrian bridge across the stream at a convenient point midway between Wilson and the northern end of the park. Easier access in this area would encourage users of the athletic field to park in the lot on the other side of the park, possibly easing the congestion along Arlington Mill Road.

Recommendation #28: NVPRA should conduct a usage and access study of the part of Upton Hill Park near Wilson to determine whether the attraction and use of these facilities could be enhanced by providing more convenient access and improved parking facilities or by increasing the area's visibility from Wilson Boulevard.

Recommendation #29: Dominion Hills endorses the recommendations of the Powhatan Springs Park working group regarding the operations of the skatepark and the construction of a fence on the Wilson side of the park. The community also endorses the group's recommendation to review the operations of the park after six months. The neighborhood further insists that this evaluation involve the active participation of representatives of the civic associations of the surrounding neighborhoods.

Recommendation #30: County officials should work with the surrounding neighborhood civic associations to evaluate their concerns regarding noise, increased cut-through traffic, and overflow parking after a sufficient period of Powhatan Springs Park operations and, if any undesirable effects or conditions are manifest, to determine any changes needed to ameliorate problems.

Recommendation #31: Dominion Hills echoes the recommendation by the Bluemont Neighborhood urging more frequent, year-round bike patrol policing of neighborhood parks and trails to encourage trail etiquette and to enhance trail and park safety.

Recommendation #32: The Dominion Hills Area Recreation Association (DHARA) has been a major asset to the neighborhood, providing significant recreational opportunities. Dominion Hills supports DHARA in maintaining the integrity of its green space and recreational activities.

Recommendation #33: Dominion Hills supports preservation of the back portion of the Inscoe tract on the Dominion Hills Area Recreation Association (DHARA) property. The wooded portion surrounding the stream banks should be maintained in its natural state. The community would support the further utilization of the upper part of the property for recreational purposes by DHARA or, if the Association decides to sell the property, by Arlington County.

SAFETY

Goal: Ensure that the neighborhood is as free as possible from crime.

Recommendation #34: Arlington County Police should work with Dominion Hills to promote establishment of Neighborhood Crime Watch Programs in the community. A police representative should continue to attend Civic Association and other neighborhood meetings.

ENVIRONMENT

Goal: Ensure that the neighborhood is as free as possible from intrusive plants and unwanted pests, particularly mosquitoes and rats.

Recommendation #35: The county should strengthen its ongoing efforts to control the spread of West Nile Virus, including bird and mosquito surveillance and application of larvicide. The county should also maintain a regular program to bait the sewers for rats.

Recommendation #36: The county should provide further measures of noise abatement along Interstate 66, such as higher noise walls and/or increased evergreen and tree screening.

NEIGHBOR
REFLECTIONS

*“Dominion Hills
is cool.”*

*Jeremy Jenkins,
10-years old &
lifetime Dominion
Hills resident*

SCHOOLS

Goal: Establish strong relationships with local schools to address school route safety and overcrowding issues, and to ensure excellent educational opportunities.

Recommendation #37: School district officials should formally consult the Dominion Hills Civic Association early, if and when they contemplate any future changes to Swanson, McKinley, or Ashlawn.

SENSE OF COMMUNITY

Goal: Enhance the sense of community through participation in community activities.



Appendix B DOMINION HILLS HISTORY

Looking out the window of a house in present-day Dominion Hills, it is hard to imagine that this community was once entirely forest only a few hundred years ago. Following English colonization, the area became primarily farmland, pastures, and orchards, and it remained in this state well into the 1940s. But, in only a few short years, Dominion Hills was transformed into a modern neighborhood that has continued to grow with the times.

EARLY HISTORY

When English explorers first came to what is now Arlington County, the Native American inhabitants of the area were Algonquians of the Necostin and Dogue tribes. Both tribes were part of the Powhatan chiefdom, which in earlier times had gathered most of the Native Americans living in the Virginia Tidewater and the Virginia Piedmont into a loose alliance. Powhatan Springs, located on the rear of the property now owned by the Dominion Hills Area Recreation Association (DHARA), was a landmark and gathering place for these tribes. The springs served as a campsite for these Native Americans en route to and from the hunting grounds of the headwaters of the Potomac and its tributaries, and Chief Powhatan held council near these springs. Captain John Smith's map of 1612 fixes the northern boundary of the Confederacy of Powhatan in the vicinity of Powhatan Springs. Archeologists and others have uncovered artifacts—including fragments of vessels and quartz implements for stone carving—nearby, indicating the former presence of an Indian soapstone workshop at the springs. During the French and Indian War, the remnants of the Virginia Line under George Washington, returning from Braddock's Defeat in 1754, refreshed themselves and then disbanded near these same springs.

This vicinity was likely included in one of two early land grants from the English Crown in 1669, either to Captain Robert Hewson or to Thomas Lord Culpeper. It is difficult to determine whether the Dominion Hills neighborhood is within the boundaries of the Hewson patent or the Culpeper patent. Many land grants were conditioned on the "seating" of settlers, resulting in few settlers actually owning the land on which they lived. As a condition of the land grant, which called for the "seating" of 120 settlers in Virginia, John Alexander sought tenants to settle on the land. During this period, yeoman farmers cultivated the land, growing much of the grain that was shipped to Europe and the West Indies. What is now Arlington County was then part of Fairfax County. This area remained largely farmland and would be referred to as "the country part of the county" for years to come.

With the ratification of the US Constitution in June 1788, the area that is now Dominion Hills, along with the rest of today's Arlington County, was within the 10 mile by 10 mile square area designated as the site of the nation's capital city. A 1791 Presidential proclamation directed a survey of the area, and marker stones were set at 1-mile intervals along the boundaries. However, Congress stipulated that the federal government had to remain in Philadelphia for 10 years, so it was not until late 1800 that Congress and the principal governmental offices moved to the District of Columbia. The District was divided into counties, and the portion of Fairfax County that Virginia had ceded was redesignated Alexandria County. The town of Alexandria continued to be the seat of local government, and in 1847, the United States Government returned Alexandria County to Virginia.

THE CIVIL WAR

According to local historians, few places in the country were as disrupted by the Civil War as was the northern part of Alexandria County, and none suffered for a longer period. Union troops occupied the county for the duration of the war. The Union constructed 22 forts and batteries in the county; these were part of the larger series of fortifications, known as the Defenses of Washington, that ringed the city. An elaborate network of trenches, artillery positions, depots, military roads, and railroads connected the forts. As many as 10,000 soldiers were garrisoned in the county's forts, and periodically this number increased by many times as the county became the staging area for Union field armies starting or returning from campaigns to the south or west. Consequently, the county's homes, farms, fields, and, particularly, its forests were systematically destroyed, and residents dependent on the agricultural economy struggled to survive.

To some extent, geography determined the occupation, as Union troops could not fully protect the capital without occupying the Arlington heights across from Washington. Upton's Hill—just across today's Wilson Boulevard from Dominion Hills—held special importance because of its height, which afforded excellent views of the countryside for miles around, and its location at the intersection of major roads. In the summer of 1861, Confederate soldiers built a set of fortifications on Upton's Hill. Once the Confederate troops withdrew, in the fall of the same year, Union troops took over these fortifications and also constructed an observation tower onto the side of Congressman Upton's home on Upton's Hill. These same troops also constructed Fort Ramsay a short distance westward across the county line. The tower was part of a network throughout Northern Virginia that made it possible to relay messages by signal flags from Fairfax Courthouse to Union Army headquarters in Washington. In 1862, future president Rutherford B. Hayes, then a lieutenant colonel with the 23rd Ohio, was stationed at Upton's Hill. President Lincoln was also nearby when he reviewed Union troops prior to the campaign of 1864 at Munson Hill.

In 1861, federal troops seized the part of the Alexandria, Loudoun, & Hampshire Railroad that paralleled Four Mile Run near present-day Dominion Hills. The Union used the line to supply troops prior to the First and Second Bull Run campaigns. At one point, only the route between Vienna and Alexandria was intact. During this time, trains drew water from Four Mile Run, and engineers frequently complained that the soap from thousands of soldiers washing their clothes in the stream caused their boilers to foam.

THE CHANGING LANDSCAPE

Between the Civil War and the broad development of the immediate region in the mid-1900s, the Dominion Hills area remained largely rural. Over time, as the county's rail and road system expanded, a number of distinct local communities began to emerge along these lines of transportation. Several of these communities were situated just outside the Dominion Hills boundaries.

RURAL ROOTS

In the late 1800s and early 1900s, local farmers used the land on which Dominion Hills is now situated. Indeed, much of the neighborhood was covered with orchards (reputedly apple or peach orchards). At the eastern end of the community, dairy cows from the nearby Reeves farm grazed. The Four Mile Run underpass at Wilson Boulevard between Bon Air and Bluemont Parks was originally built so that these cows could pass from one pasture to another.

The Reeves farm was the largest such enterprise in the immediate area. This historic farm was located just across Wilson Boulevard from present-day Dominion Hills. In 1863, a young Confederate soldier, William H. Torreyson, had purchased 160 acres of land here, where he and his new wife started a dairy farm. One of the Torreyson's three children, Lucy, married a George Reeves from southern Maryland. In 1902, Mr. Torreyson deeded to Lucy 77.5 acres, on which Mr. Reeves established his own dairy farm. This farm extended from Wilson on the north to beyond today's Route 50 to the south and west to Seven Corners. The Reeves' son, Nelson, continued the operation of the farm until July 1955, about the time that tank trucks replaced milk cans. This was the last dairy farm in Arlington County. ¹²

Prior to the 1940s, the only residence within the current bounds of Dominion Hills was the Febrey-Lothrop House, located at 6407 Wilson Boulevard near its intersection with McKinley Road. The Febrey family were major landowners who settled the section of Arlington near Falls Church. In the mid-19th century, Nicholas Febrey had purchased a large tract of land, including acreage on both sides of Wilson Boulevard west of Four Mile Run, from Rebecca A. Upton of Upton's Hill. Nicholas's son, John, who had a successful local real estate business, built a home on the crest of the hill on the north side of Wilson Boulevard. This is the older rear section of the current house. The Febrey family's stables were located across McKinley Road from the mansion, where the Cavalier Club Apartments now stand. After Febrey died in 1893, Alvin Lothrop of the Woodward and Lothrop Company acquired the property. Around 1900, Lothrop added the shingled façade and balconied porches. The Lothrop family, which used the property as a farm and summer retreat, retained it until 1950. ¹³

TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENTS

Along the northern and eastern edges of today's neighborhood ran the Washington and Old Dominion (W&OD) Railroad. The W&OD had begun in 1853 as the Alexandria, Loudoun, and Hampshire Railroad. After the Civil War, this line had begun a series of reorganizations and name changes, culminating in its becoming the W&OD in 1911. At first this line ran from Alexandria to Leesburg and Bluemont. By the turn of the century, a branch of the Southern Railway led to Bluemont; this branch became part of the W&OD system in 1912.

By 1910, the county's population had increased to 10,200, and the Great Falls and Old Dominion Railway was running electric trolleys from Georgetown and Rosslyn to Great Falls. By this point, the Southern Railway's steam line was running trains from Washington's Union Station to Alexandria, Glen Carlyn, Falls Church, and Vienna. An advertisement for the successor W&OD line promised that the railroad offered "standard rail service to the people of Arlington County" through "Washington's most beautiful suburban territory." The W&OD was one of the few steam railroads to become an interurban electric line; the

12. During the mid-20th century, most of the former Reeves farm property was sold primarily for residential construction in Boulevard Manor and Spy Hill. In 1954, the Reeves sold 20 acres to Arlington County to establish Bluemont Park. Additional land went into the Four Mile Run Park System, and other parcels were set aside for a school and church. Both Ashlawn Elementary School and Kenmore Middle School are located on Reeves' former property.

13. During World War II, the property was rented to Trans World Airlines and used as a Washington headquarters by the company's president.

entire line was electrified by 1916. This same year, the company published a brochure promoting the cooling breezes and the quality and abundance of the meals provided by the hosts of the many boarding houses along the line. During the Depression, the railroad was forced into receivership. By 1951, with the growing popularity of transit buses and personal automobiles, the railroad ended all passenger service and scrapped its passenger cars. ¹⁴

The electric trolley had an even greater impact on Arlington than did the railroads. Trolleys were a rapid and relatively inexpensive means of moving people and light freight between urban centers on regular schedules. With an interurban line in place between Washington and Alexandria by 1896, and others running from Rosslyn to Falls Church and to Nauck by 1898, the trolley network grew at a rapid rate. Beginning in 1912, W&OD Railway electric trolleys were operating on the same tracks as did the earlier Southern Railway steam trains. Two separate railroads, the Washington, Arlington and Falls Church Railway (WA&FC) and the Washington-Virginia Railway, incorporated by the 1920s into a single system running trolleys from downtown Washington and Rosslyn to Alexandria, Mount Vernon, Nauck, Falls Church, Vienna, and Fairfax. The last remnant of this complex interurban trolley system was named the Arlington and Fairfax Railroad. When this trolley line closed during the Depression, its route to Fairfax became Fairfax Drive in Arlington. Metrorail's Orange Line closely follows the route of this line between Rosslyn and Falls Church.

In the area of Dominion Hills, the WA&FC Line ran in the present path of I-66, a short distance north of the tracks of the Southern Railway's Bluemont Branch, which later became a part of the W&OD. When the W&OD was fully electrified between Georgetown, Rosslyn, and Bluemont in 1912, its electric trolleys became the competitors of the WA&FC and the WA&FC's successors. The nearby WA&FC trolley station was named Upton.

During this time, the county made improvements to the area's street infrastructure as well. In 1909, for example, the stretch of Wilson Boulevard between Ft. Myer Drive and North Barton Street became the first road in the county to be given a hard surface. According to early maps, Wilson originally had a jag in the vicinity of Dominion Hills so as to allow travelers to avoid a steep climb. Traveling west from the Four Mile Run underpass, the road turned south of its current course along what is now Manchester Street, then west on the current 8th Road in front of the location of Ashlawn Elementary School, and back onto the existing right-of-way. This longer, but less steep route allowed horse-drawn wagons and traps, as well as low-powered cars and trucks, to climb the hill. Today, remnants of the former route are visible surrounding Ashlawn. It is reported that President Woodrow Wilson, for whom the street is named, occasionally would drive this route from Washington to get Powhatan Springs water.

14. The rail right-of-way was later transformed into the popular W&OD multi-use trail. For more information, see Chapter 6, Parks & Recreation.

PREWAR RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT

As the transportation network expanded, real estate developers began to promote new subdivisions for residents who commuted to work in Washington. This proved to be a strong catalyst for development of true suburban communities in Arlington.

Developers had constructed summer homes and cottages along Wilson Boulevard and McKinley Road in the 1880s and 1890s. The area along McKinley was generally known as “Fostoria,” after the Fostoria Station of the W&OD near McKinley Road and Four Mile Run. Located west of present-day Westover, remnants of the Fostoria commercial district can still be found in the residences along North McKinley Street.

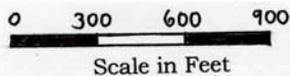
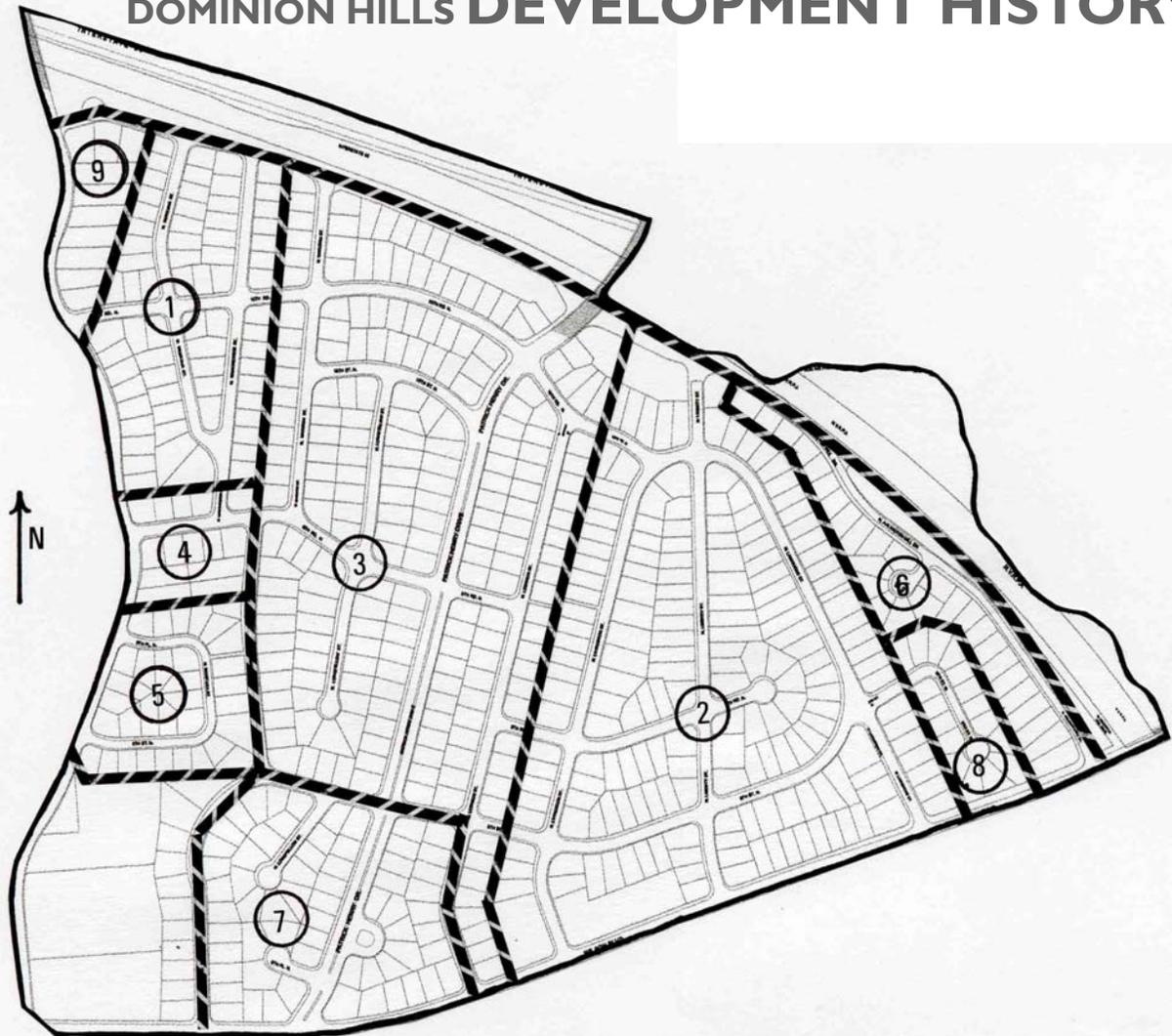
By 1920, the area around Dominion Hills was known as the Powhatan Springs neighborhood. Since the mid-1800s, the Harper Company had bottled the fine waters of Powhatan Springs and distributed them daily throughout the District of Columbia, including to the White House. The historic building associated with the springs, now the DHARA recreational hall, likely dates to the turn of the 20th century and had originally been a roadhouse. Guests could take meals and then spend the night in the second-story sleeping lofts on each side of the great room. A period advertisement noted that “the Lodge, of the English Cottage Type, with its large central Salon inviting relaxation and rest, is very attractive in appearance, appointments and cuisine.”¹⁵ During Prohibition, the building reportedly was used as a speakeasy and was rumored to shelter a house of ill repute and a dance hall before it was purchased for use as a family residence.

TOWARD A MODERN NEIGHBORHOOD

During World War II, the population of the county—which had been renamed Arlington in 1920—burgeoned as military personnel and civilian workers supporting the war effort flooded the region. The Pentagon alone employed more than 36,000 civilian workers when it opened in 1943. Rapid population growth, an expanding federal work force, the increasing popularity and greater availability of automobiles, and an active county government all made Dominion Hills attractive for residential development.

15. The inn’s hostess, Elizabeth Anne Ford, offered luncheons, teas, and dinners daily from noon (1:00PM on Sundays) to 8:30PM. According to an advertisement, the lodge could be reserved “by appointment for special luncheons, bridge parties, afternoon teas, dinner dances, church organizations, social clubs, school and lodge meetings.”

DOMINION HILLS DEVELOPMENT HISTORY



Legend

Subdivision Boundary: 

Subdivisions and Date of Plat

1. Paisley, January 1942
2. Dominion Hills Section One, April 1942
3. Dominion Hills Section Two, April 1946
4. C. F. Woodroe's Addition to Paisley, May 1950
5. Dominion Hills Section Three, June 17, 1952
6. Dominion Hills Park, June 30, 1952
7. Cresthill, August 1952
8. Berkey's Addition to Dominion Hills, Date Unknown
9. Gott Tract, Date Unknown

Riding on the W&OD through Arlington in 1948, a writer for *Trains* magazine described the area's building boom:

“As we clank along through Arlington County, we become aware of the tremendous urbanization that is spreading out from the Nation's Capital. Little hamlets which formerly were separate communities are now merging into one large city; indeed, a city charter is now being mentioned for all of Arlington County. It is hard to distinguish between the various separate parts of Arlington as we wind our way cautiously across highways and through the maze of wartime and post-war apartment developments. New houses and apartments under construction reflect the fact that Washington is continuing to spill over into the suburbs.”

What is now known as Dominion Hills was originally nine separate parcels of land. All of these were open land until the 1940s or 1950s, when they were platted and subdivided for residential development. The nine open tracts were:

- The Paisley Tract, platted in January 1942.
- Dominion Hills, Section 1, platted in April 1942.
- Dominion Hills, Section 2, platted in April 1946.
- C.F. Woodroe's addition to Paisley, platted in May 1950.
- Dominion Hills, Section 3, platted June 17, 1952.
- The Dominion Hills Park Tract, platted June 30, 1952. This tract was a resubdivision of parts of lots 1 to 7 of Kearney's Addition to Dominion Hills.
- The Cresthill Tract, platted in August 1952. This 16-acre tract was situated between Wilson Boulevard and 9th Street.
- A tract belonging to the Richard Gott family, major local landowners that once owned approximately two-thirds of what is now Madison Manor. Research has not yielded when this tract was platted.
- Berkey's Addition to Dominion Hills, Section 1, also platted at an unknown date.

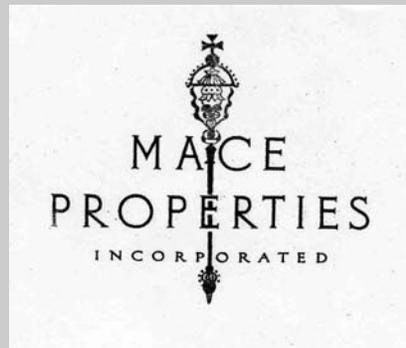
Mace Properties built the first two sections of Dominion Hills—Dominion Hills 1 and 2—between 1945 and 1955.¹⁶ Company President Merwin A. Mace gave the neighborhood its name. The Arlington Homes Corporation, a division of Mace Properties, owned the subdivided lots in these two sections and sold the new houses to the neighborhood's original owners. Correspondence between Mace Properties and the Dominion Hills Civic Association from the mid-1950s indicates that Mr. Mace encountered

16. Not a great deal is known about the other developers who worked elsewhere in Dominion Hills.

some difficulties when building the first section of Dominion Hills. He wrote that his company was “nicely turned around by two government agencies having control of material prices and labor wage scales,” and that, as a result, it cost his company over “\$100,000 to deliver homes to people who, in at least fifty percent of the cases, didn’t even have signed contracts...”

MERWIN MACE, MAIN DEVELOPER OF DOMINION HILLS

Merwin A. “John” Mace was president of the company that built the first parts of Dominion Hills. Mr. Mace was a native of Minneapolis who came to the area to attend the George Washington University Law School. He turned instead to construction and, by the late 1930s, his company, Mace Properties, had begun building developments in the area, including the Westover Apartments. By 1955, his company, headquartered on North Monroe Street, was a substantial family concern, billing itself as a building, contracting, and property management firm. The company’s divisions included Pollard Gardens; Westover, Inc.; Mace Management; and Arlington Homes. In addition to Dominion Hills, Mace Properties built the Westover subdivision, Heritage Hills in Annandale, the Virginia Square Shopping Center in Arlington, Pollard Gardens in Virginia Square, and the Mace Building, an office building at 3865 Wilson Boulevard. The latter two were demolished in the late 1990s to make way for higher density residential and commercial development. In 1967, Mr. Mace retired and moved to Mexico, where he died two years later.



The Deed of Dedication and Resubdivision for the Dominion Hills Section 2 tract, dated May 1946, reveals some of the limitations placed on residences built in the new community. Homes had to cost a minimum of \$6,000. The Deed prohibited construction of garages or outbuildings for use as temporary residences, and it permitted no metal garages. No “noxious or offensive trades” were allowed, nor could residents do anything on their lots deemed a “nuisance or annoyance” to the neighborhood. The Deed also prohibited board fences, except for 3-foot high picket fences. And finally, as was then the standard practice in many parts of the country, the land could not be sold to anyone who was not “a member of the Caucasian Race.”

Mace Properties built many of the neighborhood's model homes on corner lots, likely because of their prominent locations. A number of the corner properties consisted of two or three lots, making them more spacious settings for these modest homes. One documented model home, built in 1945, is located at 868 North Larrimore Street in the first section of Dominion Hills. Another such home is located at 989 Patrick Henry Drive in the second section of the neighborhood.

Some original homeowners have shared early recollections of the neighborhood. One couple remembered that, when they first visited a model here, it was not yet finished and had only subflooring. They later visited another model that had been furnished by the Barnes & Kimel furniture store in Clarendon. They did not remember being given any design options when they purchased their home in the neighborhood's second section. After the war, people were putting up homes so quickly and people were so desperate for housing that they usually bought their houses "as-is." The young neighborhood had few trees, as most had been cut down prior to development. Mace Properties added some landscaping with the finished homes in the first two sections.

FAMOUS RESIDENTS OF DOMINION HILLS

During the 1950s, a few nationally famous personalities called Dominion Hills home. Actors Warren Beatty and Shirley MacLaine grew up in Dominion Hills. They lived at 930 North Liberty Street, and their father Ira Beatty (original spelling of the family name) was a realtor. Actress Audrey Meadows, best known for her portrayal of Alice Kramden in "The Honeymooners," lived in the Febrey-Lothrop House around this time.

NEIGHBORHOOD ENHANCEMENTS

During the early years, residents of the new community, which numbered 420 houses by early 1951, began working to improve the quality of life in Dominion Hills so as to turn it into a more established neighborhood. This included organization of a civic association and development of recreational facilities. In addition, to better serve the growing population, the county stepped up school construction around the area, and developers built a few commercial facilities within the neighborhood's boundaries.

DOMINION HILLS CIVIC ASSOCIATION

The neighborhood adopted a constitution and by-laws for a civic association in November 1950. This association was first known as the Dominion Hills-Paisley Forest Civic Association, but in May 1956, the membership changed its name to the Dominion Hills Civic Association (DHCA), reflecting the fact that the entire neighborhood was now known as Dominion Hills. From its inception, membership dues were \$1.00 per family, and members of the board of directors conducted door-to-door membership drives.

In these early years, the Association sponsored Halloween campfires and parties, Christmas decoration judging, and annual summer picnics at the Bon Air Park picnic grounds. In the 1960s, it even sponsored a Cub Scout unit, Pack #640.

In addition to the civic association, residents started two other neighborhood social organizations in the 1950s:

- The Powhatan Springs Woman’s Club provided a social and educational outlet for women in the neighborhood.
- The Dominion Hills Extension Club, no longer in existence, was a homemakers’ group for women. Its activities included ceramics, decoupage, and other crafts, and club members also put together a cookbook.

DOMINION HILLS AREA RECREATION ASSOCIATION

To provide a healthy and constructive summer activity for their children, Dominion Hills residents established the Dominion Hills Area Recreation Association in 1954. DHARA grew out of DHCA, which initiated the recreational association at its December 1954 meeting. DHARA easily met the set goal of 400 families needed to purchase the Powhatan Springs Estate—the old roadhouse just across Wilson from Dominion Hills—and in January 1955 bought the property for \$37,000 with the intent of constructing a community swimming pool.



Rear elevation of community house prior to pool construction, DHARA. (Source: Dominion Hills Civic Association files, 1955).



Groundbreaking of pool construction, DHARA. (Source: Dominion Hills Civic Association files, 1955).

The Washington firm of McGaughan and Johnson prepared the master plan for the new recreation area in early 1955. This plan included a new main entrance from Wilson Boulevard, a 100-car parking lot, minor clubhouse alterations, a 40 foot by 120 foot swimming pool with a concrete sun deck, new bathhouse facilities, and a lawn recreation area for softball, badminton, and volleyball. It also called for a 1,000-seat outdoor amphitheater and a 5,000-square-foot children’s play area, which included a 30-foot diameter fountain

spray; these were never realized. The pool opened in 1956 and has since become a neighborhood institution in the summer months. The Powhatan Springs Woman's Club restored the spring and spring house on the property in 1975.

MACE PARK

The young families in the developing neighborhood were also interested in a playground. Accordingly, Mace Properties loaned the residents two pieces of land for recreational purposes. The first site—a one-block square at Wilson Boulevard and Livingston Street—was designated for young children. In 1956, Mr. Mace reassigned this site for residential and commercial development. The company developed the second site, two acres located along Four Mile Run east of Patrick Henry Drive, as a field for softball, basketball, volleyball, and horseshoe pitching. To this site, which is present-day Mace Park, Mace's company moved the playground equipment from the Wilson/Livingston playground.

Mr. Mace paid for everything associated with the creation of this neighborhood park except for the title transfer. According to parkland's deed of gift, dated August 1, 1956, three trustees were to hold title to the park for DHCA. As such, the civic association elected the park's first trustees at its September 1956 meeting. Interestingly, a stipulation in the deed of gift states that the property will revert to Arlington Hospital (now the Virginia Hospital Center—Arlington) if it ceases to be used for recreational purposes.

The neighborhood formally dedicated Mace Park on June 1, 1957. The Scott Whitner Orchestra provided the music, and Cub Pack #640 presented the colors. A picnic followed. Major expenditures for the playground that year included \$212 for asphalt and \$325 for a drinking fountain. Access to the park was via foot bridges from Liberty Street and Patrick Henry Drive, as well as via two paths between Dominion Hills and Westover. DHCA staged paper drives to finance park improvements, and neighborhood residents received 5 cents in "Playground Gold" for every 50 pounds of paper contributed; they could redeem these coupons at local businesses in Westover.¹⁷ By 1960, the park contained a softball diamond, a basketball court, seesaws, swings, trapeze bars, a horizontal ladder, a merry-go-round, two picnic tables under a large shade tree, and a water fountain. (See Chapter 6: Parks and Recreation.)

NEW SCHOOLS

Along with the growth of Dominion Hills and neighboring communities came the need for additional schools. Accordingly, in the early 1950s, the county built the two elementary schools that serve Dominion Hills: McKinley in 1951, and Ashlawn in 1956. Both are just outside the neighborhood's boundaries. Two secondary schools that serve Dominion Hills, Washington-Lee High School and Swanson Middle School had been built earlier, in 1924 and 1939, respectively. The other public high school that neighborhood students attend, Yorktown, started in 1950 as an elementary school and was expanded into a high school in 1960. (See Chapter 8: Schools.)

17. I-66 construction later obliterated these paths.

The 1950s was the most intense period of school construction in the county, which built 20 new schools and expanded or renovated 30 more during this time. Baby boom children helped swell Arlington's population by 181 percent between 1947 and 1960. By 1951, almost half of the pupils in average daily attendance were the children of parents who had come to Arlington after 1939 to work for the federal government. This growth continued into the 1960s, but at a slower pace.

COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENT

In the 1960s, developers constructed two commercial buildings in the neighborhood. Both are on Wilson Boulevard. A private company built the Dominion Hills Shopping Centre at 6013-6035 Wilson; construction occurred in two phases during 1962 and 1963. In 1966, Better Homes Realty built the Dominion Hills Professional Center at 6045 Wilson Boulevard. Both properties have housed a variety of local businesses over the years.

1967 ASSASSINATION PUTS

DOMINION HILLS IN THE NATIONAL NEWS

The 1967 killing of George Lincoln Rockwell, charismatic leader of the American Nazi Party, thrust Dominion Hills into the national spotlight. At that time, Rockwell's Nazi Party barracks was located at 6150 Wilson Boulevard, where Upton Hill Regional Park now stands. About 20 of his well-armed "stormtroopers" lived in the barracks, a three-story house complete with wraparound porch and a large Nazi flag draped over the doorway. On August 25, 1967, Rockwell was doing his laundry at the now-defunct Econ-o-Wash Laundromat in the Dominion Hills Shopping Centre. As he returned to his car to drive across Wilson to retrieve bleach at the barracks, a former party office who bore him a grudge opened fire from the roof of the shopping center and gunned him down.

Rockwell had started the American Nazi Party in 1959 with a few followers. In the early 1960s, he and his party received national attention as they harassed civil rights demonstrations in Washington. In 1965, he ran unsuccessfully for governor of Virginia as the White Constitutional candidate. Although the party did not entirely die with Rockwell, his murder left the party leaderless, and its dwindling membership (of about 100, according to FBI estimates at the time) reduced its activity accordingly. By the late 1970s, the party had largely faded away, but Arlington residents still had to endure the occasional appearance, including their Nazi and American flag-wielding march in a Bicentennial parade on July 3, 1976.

RECENT YEARS

In the past 25 years, Dominion Hills has witnessed many changes. Transportation developments have reworked the face of the neighborhood while revising the residents' commuting patterns. Broader commuting patterns have increased the value of real estate, which in turn has affected the remodeling and expansion of housing. Meanwhile, old neighbors have moved on, and new ones have arrived, changing the demographic mix of the neighborhood. Throughout, Dominion Hills has remained a strong community evolving with the times.

THE CONSTRUCTION OF I-66 & METRO

In 1978, after various court challenges, construction began on I-66. In conjunction with this project, Patrick Henry Drive was extended across Four Mile Run in 1981, turning the street into a major traffic artery and introducing a speeding problem into the neighborhood. (See Chapter 5: Transportation Management and Pedestrian Safety.) In December 1982, the final stretch of I-66 inside the beltway opened to traffic. The Metrorail Orange Line, located in the I-66 median strip, opened in June 1986.

Bitterly opposed by many Arlington residents and almost all of its elected officials, the 10-mile stretch of highway inside the beltway was, to some, "a monument to the highway department's insensitivity and recklessness." Residents expressed concern about the loss of homes, as well as about noise, congestion, pollution, and the destruction of natural features. Environmentalists decried what they saw as an over-emphasis on the automobile over mass transit. One Dominion Hills couple, then living on McKinley Road, sued the Virginia Department of Highways and Transportation for alleged "structural damage" done to their home during the construction. A newspaper article published on the day the road opened summed up the road's price: 1,054 land parcels acquired, 517 buildings destroyed, four public hearings, at least four separate court actions, and an actual construction cost of \$275 million.

But, many Arlingtonians welcomed the highway for the relief it promised from congestion on local roads and for the time it would save commuters. Others who lived west of Arlington saw it as a much-needed commuter artery, long-delayed by unnecessary squabbling. And, along with the road had come the Metro, which offered mass transit for thousands, including many Dominion Hills residents.

BOOMING PROPERTY VALUES

In the past two decades, Dominion Hills residents have seen their property values increase markedly, often tripling or more. This has resulted from the general trend in real estate values experienced by much of the Boston-Richmond corridor and from the neighborhood's convenient location to aforementioned transport routes and commuter lines. Moreover, as development to the west of the Beltway has created clogged traffic arteries and burdensome commutes, the more convenient communities of North Arlington have experienced an even greater real estate renaissance. Along with this trend, many residents have invested in additions or other renovations in the past several years, increasing housing values even more.

CHANGING DEMOGRAPHICS

The last 25 years have also seen many of the community's original homeowners move on as they have gotten older. For a time, after the families of these original owners grew up, the number of children in the neighborhood had declined. But, with the influx of new young families in recent years, that has reversed. These trends were evident in the broader region, as the 1970s and 1980s had seen a marked decline in the area's school population, while the 1990s saw a "second baby boom."

Additionally, the neighborhood's racial and ethnic composition has changed. From an essentially all-white neighborhood at its inception, Dominion Hills has in recent decades welcomed a more diverse mix of racial and ethnic residents. Indeed, US Census data shows a sizable growth in the neighborhood's Asian and Hispanic populations since 1990. (See Chapter 2: Neighborhood Characteristics.)

A THRIVING COMMUNITY SPIRIT

Over the past few years, Dominion Hills has remained a vibrant community with an active citizenry. For example, after several periods in which the civic association languished or became inactive, in recent years, neighbors have revitalized DHCA. The Association has reinstated the annual summer picnic at Mace Park and started new traditions such as an Easter egg hunt and an annual neighborhood yard sale. Meanwhile, recent developments have brightened Mace Park. After the park's condition deteriorated in the late 1980s and early 1990s, DHCA members began looking into transferring the park's title to Arlington County, largely in an attempt to receive new play equipment for the park. In 2000, however, a group of neighborhood families began a much-needed renovation project, introducing new playground equipment purchased with funds from local business and resident donations, as well as from two grants by Arlington County's Small Parks Program. Fully revitalized, the park again serves as the informal meeting place in Dominion Hills.

Dominion Hills faces many challenges, as is evident elsewhere in this report. But, the community spirit and the commitment of its residents ensures that the neighborhood will survive well into the future.



SOURCES

Research for this neighborhood history was conducted primarily at the Arlington County Department of Public Works, the Arlington County Historic Preservation Program Office, the Arlington Historical Society Library and Museum at the Hume School, and the Virginia Room at the Arlington Central Library. Also utilized were the files of the Arlington Heritage Alliance, the records of the Dominion Hills Civic Association, and the personal files of Laura L. Bobeczko.

WEBSITES

Arlington County Bicentennial Program www.co.arlington.va.us/lib/history/bicentennial

Arlington Historical Society www.arlingtonhistoricalsociety.org

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“W&OD Railroad Has 82 Year History.” *The Virginian*, March 26, 1965.

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Dominion Hills Draft Neighborhood Conservation Plan, 1985.

Donaldson Run Neighborhood Conservation Plan, 2000.

Madison Manor Neighborhood Conservation Plan, 2000.

Westover Neighborhood Conservation Plan, 1991.

Williamsburg Neighborhood Conservation Plan, 1999.

UPTON HILL REGIONAL PARK REVIEW OF DOMINION HILLS PLAN

Memorandum

June 22, 2004

To: Adam Denton, Neighborhood Planning

From: Julie Kutruff, Manager Upton Hill Regional Park

Re: Dominion Hills Neighborhood Conservation Plan

Thank you for forwarding a copy of Dominion Hills Neighborhood Conservation Plan and giving me a chance to review it and make comments.

Traffic Calming on Wilson Blvd.

We would also support any efforts to calm or slow traffic on Wilson Blvd as the speed coming down the hill in front of the park is a concern. The light at Patrick Henry and Wilson is a bit of a dangerous intersection as cars and trucks routinely run the light at this intersection. This was not addressed in the plan but is a concern that I think should also be considered.

Access to the Lower Park Along Wilson Blvd.

We would support an additional crossing on Wilson Blvd to enter the park near the service entrance of the park. Many people make their own crossing at this point and due to traffic speed on Wilson Boulevard, it would be safer to have a designated crossing and/or a crossing light with a button for pedestrians, like the one at Dominion Hills Swimming Pool/Ashlawn School.

Efforts are underway to look at ways to improve the entrance of Upton Hill, which will include but may not be limited to the addition of new signage. In addition, a new access point will be created into Upton Hill with the creation of a connector trail from the W&OD to Upton Hill, which will pass along the edge of Ashlawn School, Powhatan Park, and into Upton Hill at the corner of North Livingston. This new bike path will terminate at the edge of the park's service drive. A copy of the bike path plans for Upton Hill is available for review by appointment at my office and/or the proposed pathway is shown on our new park map found on the back of the park brochure available in the pool lobby or on the NVRPA website: www.nvrpa.org.

It is unlikely with Upton's full-time staff of 2 that we will be able to run the park and create a usage/access study of the lower park as suggested in the plan. The playground equipment was added to the park 4 years ago in an attempt to draw more people to this area and while there may be more use of the area than before, it still is an under utilized area. This season we paid a cartographer to update the park's map that is on the back of all of our brochures distributed to the public. This map accurately shows all of the facilities (including what is at the lower park) and the trails. We did this in an attempt to create awareness that there is more to the park than just the pool, golf and batting cage and to encourage folks to explore the rest of the park. A new bird list for the park was recently printed to encourage birders and others to explore the rest of the park in search of birds in the park. We have also allowed a volunteer to place a geocache at the park that takes all participants through the lower park and we have added signage for the Bocce Court and Horseshoe Pit at these locations and at mini golf where one goes

to borrow the equipment. In our new budget year (begins July 1st) we will be adding a sign at the edge of our parking lot directing patrons to the playground. Unfortunately, there is not money in the budget for expanding parking to this area at this time.

On a periodic basis, we remove the underbrush along Wilson to improve sight access as requested by the Arlington County Police Department but short of removing mature trees, there is not much additional work we can do to open up this area to create better visibility. Removal of any mature trees along this edge would also necessitate a new strategy for park security as we have had a problem in the past where gaps existed in the tree line from cars driving into the park and accessing our facilities at night. We solved this problem by placing large boulders in the gaps between the trees.

We are working on continuing to improve the area and currently have 2 Eagle Scouts doing landscape projects along the playground. The trail along the edge of the playground was improved last fall and a path was extended from the entrance road down to the edge of the bocce court.

Other Comments:

We are aggressively working to combat invasive plant species at Upton Hill and have made a lot of progress over the last few years. Over the last year we had a graduate student from George Mason University conducting an invasive plant study in the park and we are awaiting her study results once here thesis is complete. We encouraged to see that Dominion Hills is actively working to control invasive plants around the neighborhood.

In regards to the history section of the document I have three small suggestions.

1. Page 37 in regards to Nicholas Febrey purchasing land from Rebecca Upton. I would change that to Rebecca A. Upton. Rebecca A. (the mother of Charles H. Upton) who lived at Upton Hill was the grandmother of Rebecca E. Upton (later Rebecca Throckmorton) who also lived at Upton Hill. I would add this initial to avoid confusion as to which woman you are referring to.
2. In the civil war section, it would be more accurate to include that the tower built on Upton Hill was actually built on to the side of Congressman Upton's House.
3. In more than one place apple orchards are mentioned in the area but I have letters and documentation of peach orchards on Upton Hill and the surrounding area as well so it may be best to simply say orchards?

On page 10, Recommendation #5, it is recommended that should the Febrey-Lothrop Estate become available that the neighborhood might encourage Arlington County or NVRPA to purchase this 9.5 acre parcel. As the manager of Upton Hill I am not responsible for land acquisition but see the value in this land being preserved from development. Therefore I am forwarding a copy of this conservation plan to Mr. Gary Fenton, Executive Director of NVRPA so that he can have this on his radar screen as a potential piece of land that might be recommended to NVRPA and it will give him an opportunity to send additional comments in necessary.