

AMPUp Advisory Committee

July 24, 2025

Meeting Summary

Attending: Angelique Bradford, Grant Cook, David Fatula, Rebecca Gruber, Lillian Hartman, Ann LeRoyer, Cheryl Miller, Arthur Prokosch, Stephen Revilak, Tristan Roubenoff, Paul Selker.

Staff: Claire Ricker.

Consultants: Steve Kearney (Stantec), Phil Schaeffing (Stantec).

Introductions

Ms. Ricker introduces Dave Fatula. Mr. Fatula is an Arlington business owner who's involved with the Chamber of Commerce. He's interested in filling a vacancy on the committee, so Ms. Ricker invited him to join us tonight.

Review minutes

The committee approved minutes from their April, May, and June 2025 meetings.

Stantec Update

Mr. Schaeffing says that Stantec's main goal for this evening is to discuss preliminary revisions to the 2015 Master Plan's visions and goals, based on public feedback we've gotten so far. He'd like to get general agreement on the preliminary changes so we can move forward with them as a working draft. These can be revised later if needed. The focus should be on big picture ideas and themes, and less on word choice.

Mr. Schaeffing shows the vision and goals statement from the 2015 Master Plan. In public feedback, people really valued the sense of community they feel in Arlington. There's been real interest in housing options, local businesses, and the business districts. He recommends adding “New development and redevelopment that enhances sustainability and resilience.”

Committee members discuss the draft statement. Ms. Bradford appreciates the statement “Arlington will be a welcoming place,” and feels that means “affirming.”

The committee discusses the ordering of bullet points in the vision statement, which was taken from the 2015 Master Plan. The ordering was not intended to convey preference or priority, and committee members discussed whether to state so explicitly. This will deserve additional thought, as some items are more prominent than others, and implementing steps will eventually have to be prioritized.

The discussion moves to individual goals. The first is “Preserve and improve the town's fiscal stability.” Committee members are generally on board with this.

The next area is Land use. Stantec suggests a discussion around “Increase housing variety and non-residential development opportunities” as a potential goal. Several committee members express a desire to include the word “more” in this goal, even though it might be controversial in some quarters.

Committee members discuss Mobility goals. Mobility is an area where the town can influence some things but not others. Ms. Bradford suggests more general wording, like “helping people go where they want to go.” Committee members discuss the role of parking in the mobility section, vs the land use section.

The next section is Housing. Committee members are divided over the use of the phrase “preserving the character”; some note this language has historically been used as a term of exclusion while others feel it reflects what people value about their neighborhoods. Mr. Schaeffing suggests omitting the word “preserve,” as it will likely stand in the way of Arlington becoming a more inclusive community.

Committee members discuss the use of the phrase “affordable housing.” Mr. Cook notes the term has two meanings: housing that is within one's budget, versus housing that is legally restricted to specific income levels. Mr. Schaeffing suggests using the term “attainable housing” instead. Housing is a complex topic, and it's likely that different strategies will be applied in different parts of town.

The discussion moves to economic development. Mr. Schaeffing says that Ninigret Partners has heard a lot of feedback about improving the regulatory environment for businesses, and improving build-out potential. He suggests “create and support the organizational capacity related to economic development” as a goal. Examples of this would include business improvement districts, or organizations that work with specific business districts.

Mr. Revilak says that Arlington has very little land zoned for commercial use. He asks if public input had expressed opinions about building up the existing districts, or expanding the areas where businesses are allowed. Mr. Schaeffing says he's heard that from a few people, but more of the comments centered around the lack of office and industrial spaces.

It's 7:30 pm, and several participants have other commitments this evening. We haven't gotten through the entire set of goals, so we'll continue this discussion at our next meeting.

Outreach Update

Ms. Ricker says that planning staff are holding an outreach meeting with Menotomy Manor residents tonight.

Materials Viewed

Slide presentation from Stantec