

Community Center Project Moves Forward

By [David Schultz/The Connection](#)

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THE PLAN for a major mixed-use project in South Arlington moved forward last week after the County Board approved the design of the renovation of the Arlington Mill Community Center.

The renovation project will turn the County-owned property, located on Columbia Pike and Dinwiddie Street, into a gym, a retail center and an apartment complex that will feature below-market-rate housing. It will be the first time that this type of housing will be featured on county-owned land.

“[The project] leverages the value of public land to make [housing] more affordable,” said Housing Commission Chair Melissa Bondi.

The new Arlington Mill will feature 142 market-rate apartments and 61 below-market-rate apartments, which will be partially funded by a \$3 million loan from the County. The project was approved as a part of the County’s ongoing efforts to develop the Columbia Pike corridor in South Arlington.

Citizens who spoke at the County Board’s hearing on the issue were mostly supportive of the project. “The availability of affordable housing space is important in keeping Arlington a diverse, welcoming community,” local activists Charles Rinker said.

But others who live near the Arlington Mill site worried that the design for the new community center, which cuts off access onto Columbia Pike from South Arlington Mill Drive, will create traffic jams in their neighborhood. “I think the traffic flow will be very impaired,” nearby resident Uirsula Alao said.

Ultimately the Board approved the project, which will feature a partnership between the county, private developers and a non-profit affordable housing group, on a unanimous five to zero vote.

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County's [Arlington Mill
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