

March 7, 2026

The Honorable Matt de Ferranti
Chair
Arlington County Board
2100 Clarendon Boulevard
Arlington, Virginia 22201

RE: Fiscal Year (FY) 2027 Proposed Budget – Cherrydale Library

Dear Chair de Ferranti:

We write in our capacity as the civic association presidents representing a number of diverse neighborhoods served by Cherrydale Library. (See attached service area.) We are asking the Board to reject the County Manager’s recommendation to close our library, as proposed in his FY 2027 budget. Libraries are not nice-to-have amenities, they are needs. The Cherrydale Library is not surplus or replaceable.

We learned that the Cherrydale Library’s existence was on the line on February 21st, when the County Manager presented his FY 2027 budget proposals and highlighted closing this facility as one of only two “service and program” recommended reductions. Not only were none of our affected neighborhoods consulted, but the announcement came 22 days after the County closed its public engagement survey requesting citizen input on how the County’s budget should be balanced. None of the questions in the survey indicated that the County Manager had identified that closing the Cherrydale library was an option. In fact, libraries are referenced in the survey only in terms of delaying building new ones.

Without meaningful public engagement, the County Manager justifies closing the Cherrydale Library because it is near the Central Library, that it is an “aging facility,” and that it is not Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)-accessible. These justifications are without context and merit.

- Proximity to the Central Library: Proximity is not the issue. The fact is that the Central Library and the Cherrydale Library (or any other branch library) serve a different need and are not interchangeable.
- Aging Facility: Every public facility in Arlington is “aging.” Old does not mean “bad.” Many libraries are housed in buildings that are older, and some in newer ones that are not as well-maintained. The Cherrydale Library is well maintained, a fact noted by one of the original architects who spoke at the library’s 50th anniversary. Its major infrastructure – roof, HVAC – are not in need of replacement. In fact, the County Manager does not propose to tear down the library but to find an alternative use.
- ADA-Accessibility: Department of Justice guidelines stipulate that a government program, in this case Arlington’s library system, is compliant with the ADA as long as one or more elements of the program are ADA-accessible. In short, not all libraries in the Arlington program need to be ADA-accessible. That said, ADA-accessibility has not been an issue raised by the County since the law was passed. We would welcome any such improvements.
- Future Use: As noted above, the County Manager proposes to retain the Cherrydale Library building for some yet-to-be identified purpose. There will be costs to the County to

maintain this building and property over the “multi-year period” envisioned by the Manager to identify and repurpose the facility for another purpose. The proposed budget does not identify these costs. Moreover, it goes without saying that whatever new use is made of the building, it will need to be brought up to code, including the addition of ADA features. Meanwhile, we are mindful that no “permanent” use has been identified for the North Quincy St property and buildings that the County acquired in 2017.

On the other hand, data generated by the County’s Department of Libraries, and included in the County Manager’s FY 2027 budget proposal, reveals that the Cherrydale Library provides a larger percentage of the Department’s service than the percentage it consumes from the Department’s budget:

- Personnel Costs: Cherrydale Library's permanent FTEs (fulltime equivalent employees) in 2026 were 3.75. The total of the Libraries Department’s FTEs is 137.94. This means that Cherrydale Library consumes 2.7 percent of the Libraries Department’s personnel costs.
- Circulation: Cherrydale Library in FY 2026 handled 4.6 percent of the library system’s total circulation.
- Program Attendance: Program attendance at Cherrydale Library in FY 2026 was 3.7 percent of program attendance throughout the library system.

A review of other prior FY data also supports the finding that the Cherrydale Library consistently delivers above its weight in the system.

As you consider our request to keep the Cherrydale Library open, also understand that: (in no order of priority)

- The Cherrydale Library is the only library north of Langston Blvd., giving it a service area larger than any other branch library.
- The cost savings from closing Cherrydale Library are insignificant. Given the number of households in Arlington County, the average residential taxpayer would save \$4.05 per year by closing Cherrydale Library.
- Real estate websites maintain that the proximity of a home to a local library raises the value of that home by some five percent. If this is true, the size of the County’s tax base would actually decline if Cherrydale Library were to close.
- Maintaining energy-efficient infrastructure is a priority of the County Board and the Cherrydale Library has been rated as meeting this goal.
- The small size of Cherrydale Library is part of what makes it preferable to families with young children over Central Library.
- Our library is a long-established hub for our community. The current building has been a cherished community haven for the citizens of our neighborhoods for almost 65 years. As the Board recognized in Plan Langston Boulevard, “promoting placemaking” of this kind is critical so that neighborhoods “can remain authentic and avoid becoming anonymous.”
- The Cherrydale neighborhood’s 125th anniversary took place at Cherrydale Library. No other local county facility would have sufficed.
- Cherrydale Library is an after-school resource for students at Dorothy Hamm Middle School, located just around the corner from the library.
- Our library offers free entertainment for children, youth and adults, and exhibit space for local artists and photographers.
- Cherrydale has had a neighborhood library since 1922. The library survived the Great Depression and the recessions of 1974, 1981, 1991, and 2008.

- The older our library gets, the dearer it becomes to those who use it. Young mothers, taking their children for the first time to Cherrydale Library, have related to us their fond memories of their own mother having taken them for the first time to Cherrydale Library. These kinds of community memories have no cash value but are priceless to those who hold them.
- Community surveys underlying the Cherrydale Neighborhood Conservation Plan showed overwhelming support for keeping Cherrydale Library. Similarly, the Donaldson Run Neighborhood Conservation Plan opposed closing the library. Many said that they visited it at least once a week. A more recent survey found that 82% of DRCA residents see this library as an asset to the neighborhood.
- This is not the place or the time to close libraries. Libraries reflect the values held by our community. While some might argue that every dollar saved adds up, so does every chisel blow at the edifice of civilization.

We urge you and your fellow board members to take these facts and concerns into account and reject the County Manager's proposal to close our library.

Respectfully,

Melissa Adelman, *President*; Janelle Haskell, *Vice President*
Arlingwood Neighborhood Association

Alexandra Beall, *Secretary*
Bellevue Forest Citizens' Association

Jim Todd, *President*
Cherrydale Citizens Association

Bill Richardson, *President*
Donaldson Run Civic Association

Marc Koblentz, *President*
Maywood Community Association

Howard Solodky, *President*
Old Glebe Civic Association

Janet Nuzum, *Co-President*
Rivercrest Civic Association

cc: Members of the Arlington County Board
County Manager

ARLINGTON COUNTY, VIRGINIA Cherrydale Library Service Area



Legend

Civic Association - Boundaries

- Williamsburg
- Yerktown
- Leeway Overlee
- Tara - Leeway Heights
- Waycroft - Woodlawn
- Balston - Virginia Square
- Clarendon - Courthouse
- Lyon Park
- Penrose
- Foxcroft Heights
- Arlington View
- Columbia Heights
- Arlington Forest
- Arlington Heights
- Alcovia Heights
- Douglas Park
- Nauck
- Fairlington
- Forest Glen
- Columbia Heights West
- Forest Hills
- Arlington Ridge
- Long Branch Creek
- Aurora Highlands

County Boundary

Open Space Zoning

- S-3A, SD, PS

Buildings

Facility

- Post Office
- Swimming Pool
- Recycling Center
- Metro Station
- Fire Station
- Nature Center

Block Numbers on Numbered Streets

Street	Block Numbers
1st St	1000-1099
2nd St	2000-2099
3rd St	3000-3099
4th St	4000-4099
5th St	5000-5099
6th St	6000-6099
7th St	7000-7099
8th St	8000-8099
9th St	9000-9099
10th St	10000-10099
11th St	11000-11099
12th St	12000-12099
13th St	13000-13099
14th St	14000-14099
15th St	15000-15099
16th St	16000-16099
17th St	17000-17099
18th St	18000-18099
19th St	19000-19099
20th St	20000-20099
21st St	21000-21099
22nd St	22000-22099
23rd St	23000-23099
24th St	24000-24099
25th St	25000-25099
26th St	26000-26099
27th St	27000-27099
28th St	28000-28099
29th St	29000-29099
30th St	30000-30099
31st St	31000-31099
32nd St	32000-32099
33rd St	33000-33099
34th St	34000-34099
35th St	35000-35099
36th St	36000-36099
37th St	37000-37099
38th St	38000-38099
39th St	39000-39099
40th St	40000-40099
41st St	41000-41099
42nd St	42000-42099
43rd St	43000-43099
44th St	44000-44099
45th St	45000-45099
46th St	46000-46099
47th St	47000-47099
48th St	48000-48099
49th St	49000-49099
50th St	50000-50099

South and West Sides are E-odd Address Numbers

Map prepared by GIS Mapping Center
2005 December 2nd, June 21st
Arlington, VA 22204
Email: gis@arlingtonva.us
Web: www.arlingtonva.us

Scale of reference Virginia State Plane North NAD 83
Base map updated from Source 2007 digital aerial photography
Photorec Blue Sun 0303 1 34 2007 02 05 05
Copyright and spatial data rights are maintained on
all data used.

Civic Association boundaries are defined by Arlington County
Civil Engineers, who provide the Office of the Arlington
County Board.

Open Space Zoning is not shown on large documents.

Permitted by Section 16-1-402 of the Code of Virginia, any
reproduction of this map is hereby authorized, in whole or in part,
for general information only, and shall not be used for the design,
construction, or maintenance of any public or private project.
© 2005 Arlington County, VA
Printed February 2005

