

**PHASE IB ARCHITECTURAL SURVEY OF THE  
PROPOSED SOAPSTONE CONNECTOR,  
FAIRFAX COUNTY, VIRGINIA**

**Fairfax County Project No. 2G40-078  
DHR #2015-1168**

*by*

**Catherine Schlupp and Heather Dollins Staton**

*Prepared for*

**Fairfax County Department of Transportation**

*Prepared by*

**DOVETAIL**  
CULTURAL RESOURCE GROUP

October 2016



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## ABSTRACT

On behalf of the Fairfax County Department of Transportation (FCDOT) and FCDOT's consultant, Parsons Transportation Group, Inc. (Parsons), Dovetail Cultural Resource Group (Dovetail) conducted a Phase IB architectural survey in support of the Environmental Assessment (EA) for the Soapstone Connector project in Fairfax County, Virginia. The EA is being prepared by FCDOT in cooperation with the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) and the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) (Parsons 2016). The project includes the construction of an approximately 0.5-mile-long new roadway that spans between Sunrise Valley Drive and Sunsets Hills Road in Reston, Virginia. This project includes the construction of a new overpass that crosses over the Dulles Corridor, which comprises the Dulles International Airport Access Highway, the Dulles Toll Road, and the Silver Line, a part of the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority. The study and ensuing report meet all guidelines and regulations promulgated by the Virginia Department of Historic Resources (DHR) as necessary.

In March 2016, Parsons completed a Phase IA cultural resource study associated with the current project. Their study included a background literature and records review, limited archival research, and a review of real estate records on parcels within the direct and indirect Area of Potential Effects (APE). Upon review of the ensuing report, the DHR issued feedback in a letter dated April 12, 2016 requesting that a formal Phase I survey be completed for all above-ground resources in the indirect APE that meet the minimum age requirement for the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP). The current study, building upon the Phase IA survey completed by Parsons, included a vehicular and pedestrian reconnaissance of the architectural APE. The APE for the Phase IB survey is defined as the entire new roadway and overpass footprint plus any areas within the viewshed where an impact to a resource's setting and feeling could occur. The goals of the Phase IB survey were to identify any architectural resources over 50 years in age and make recommendations on the potential NRHP eligibility for all identified resources.

The architectural survey identified a total of two resources that meet the 50-year age requirement for the NRHP. Both of these resources have been previously recorded with the DHR; no newly recorded resources were identified during the current project. **Dovetail recommends that the Washington & Old Dominion Railroad Historic District (053-0276) remains individually eligible for the NRHP.** The Wiehle/Sunset Hills Historic District (029-0014), is located within the architectural APE but it is **recommended not eligible for the NRHP.**

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT.....	i
INTRODUCTION .....	1
PROJECT METHODOLOGY.....	3
RESULTS OF THE Survey .....	5
Previously Recorded Resources.....	5
Newly Recorded Resources .....	8
SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS.....	9
REFERENCES .....	11

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## **List of Figures**

Figure 1: Map of Virginia and Fairfax County with Location of Architectural APE.....	2
Figure 2: Previously Recorded Resources Within Project Viewshed.....	6

## **List of Photos**

Photo 1: Washington & Old Dominion Railroad Historic District (053-0276), Looking West Towards American Dream Way. ....	7
Photo 2: Wiehle/Sunset Hills Historic District (029-0014), Stratford House Drive, Looking Southwest.....	8

## **List of Tables**

Table 1: Previously Recorded Architectural Resources within the Architectural APE.....	5
Table 2: Surveyed Architectural Resources Recorded During the Phase IB Survey. ....	10

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## INTRODUCTION

On behalf of the Fairfax County Department of Transportation (FCDOT) and FCDOT's consultant, Parsons Transportation Group, Inc. (Parsons), Dovetail Cultural Resource Group (Dovetail) conducted a Phase IB architectural survey in support of the Environmental Assessment (EA) for the Soapstone Connector project in Fairfax County, Virginia (Figure 1, p. 2). The EA is being prepared by FCDOT in cooperation with the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) and the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) (Parsons 2016). The project includes the construction of an approximately 0.5-mile-long new roadway that spans between Sunrise Valley Drive and Sunsets Hills Road in Reston, Virginia. This project also involves the construction of a new overpass that crosses over the Dulles Corridor, which comprises the Dulles International Airport Access Highway, the Dulles Toll Road, and the Silver Line, a part of the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority. The study and ensuing report meet all guidelines and regulations promulgated by the Virginia Department of Historic Resources (DHR) as necessary.

Parsons completed a Phase IA cultural resource survey of the Soapstone Connector project in March 2016. As part of that survey, Parsons completed a literature review and limited archival research for the project, noting two previously recorded resources within the architectural Area of Potential Effects (APE), which included “a broader area beyond the roadway footprint to assess potential visual and audible effects from the new roadway and overpass” (Parsons 2016). The two resources noted during the Phase IA study are the Washington & Old Dominion Railroad Historic District (053-0276) and the Wiehle/Sunset Hills Historic District (029-0014). No unrecorded resources 50 years in age or older—the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) age requirement—were noted by Parsons.

Upon review of the ensuing report, the DHR issued feedback in a letter dated April 12, 2016 which requested that a formal Phase I survey be completed for all above-ground resources in the indirect APE that meet the minimum age requirement for the NRHP. Specifically, they requested a study of the two previously recorded resources noted by Parsons. The current Dovetail Phase IB architectural survey was built upon the Parsons Phase IA study and the DHR's feedback on this document. Since the current report is a companion document to the Parsons report, the historic context and background research sections are omitted from this report. Refer to Parsons Phase IA report for this information (Parsons 2016).

The goals of the survey were to identify any cultural resources 50 years in age or older and to make recommendations on the NRHP eligibility for all identified resources. The architectural APE for the Phase IB study is defined as the entire new roadway and overpass footprint plus any areas within the viewshed where impacts to a resource's setting and feeling could occur. The Phase IB architectural survey was completed on August 1, 2016 by Catherine Schlupp and Kerri S. Barile. Dr. Barile served as the Principal Investigator and meets or exceeds the standards established for Architectural Historian and Historian by the Secretary of the Interior.

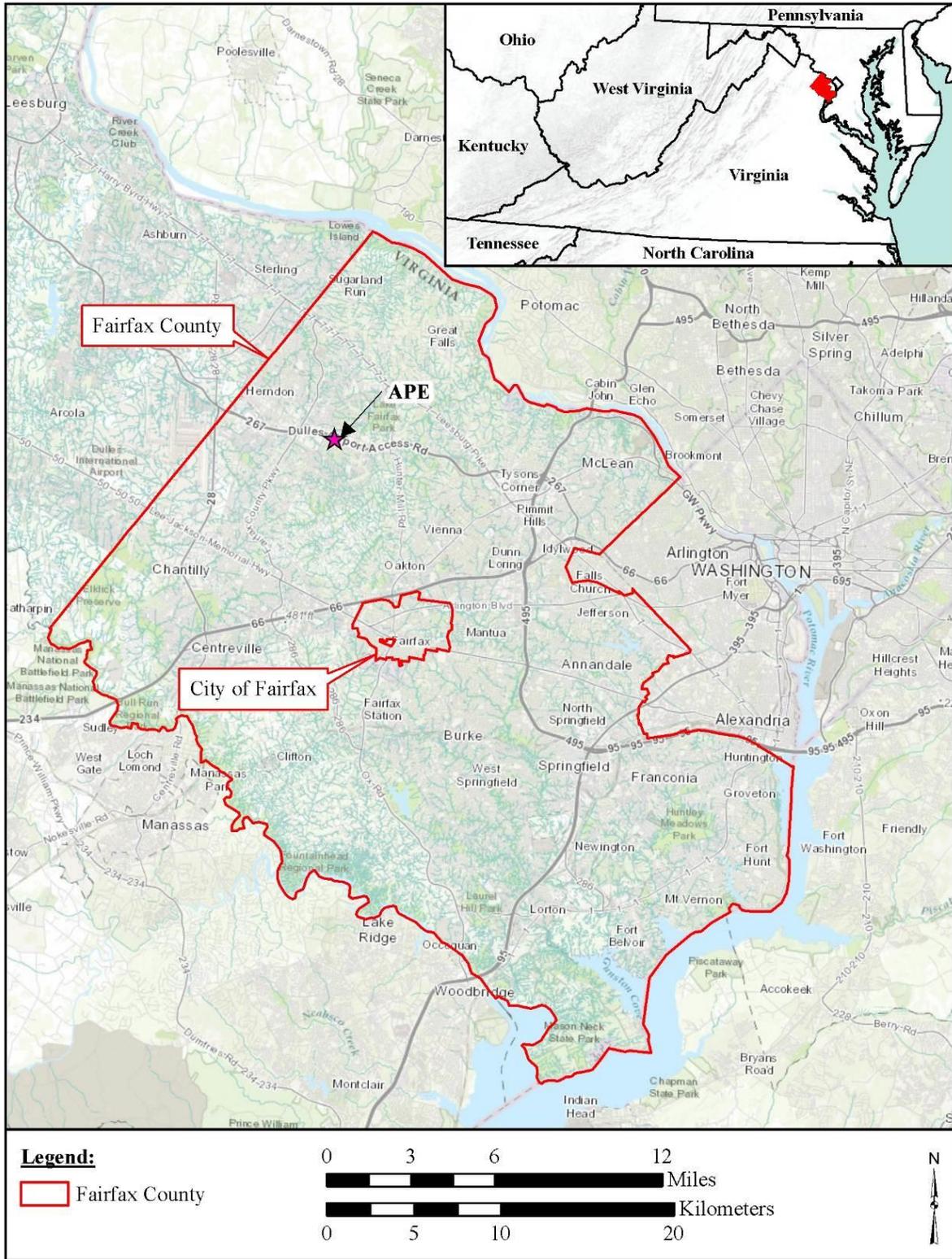


Figure 1: Map of Virginia and Fairfax County with Location of Architectural APE (Esri 2016a).

## **PROJECT METHODOLOGY**

The current project consisted of a Phase IB architectural survey which included a vehicular and pedestrian reconnaissance of the architectural APE—defined as the entire new roadway and overpass footprint plus any areas within the viewshed where impacts to a resource’s setting and feeling could occur. The background review and historic context were completed during a Phase IA study in March 2016 by Parsons (Parsons 2016). These elements were briefly revisited during the current study to assure that the data was up to date, but these chapters are not included in full in the current report as they were presented in a previous project document (Parsons 2016).

The architectural survey was conducted to evaluate any historic buildings, structures, objects, or districts 50 years in age or older within the architectural APE. Each resource was evaluated in regards to Criterion A, for its association with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history; Criterion B, for its association with people significant in our nation’s history; Criterion C, for its embodiment of distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction, or that represent the work of a master, or possess high artistic values; and Criterion D, for its potential to yield information important in history. Criteria considerations were taken into account only where necessary.

The APE was visually inspected through a vehicular and pedestrian reconnaissance to identify buildings, objects, structures, and districts 50 years in age or older. Once identified, each resource was evaluated for architectural significance and historic and physical integrity. The resources were documented through written notes and digital photographs. The information obtained during the survey was then used to update or generate a new DHR Virginia Cultural Resource Information System (V-CRIS) form, to print archival-quality, black and white digital photography, and to make recommendations on each site’s NRHP potential.

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## RESULTS OF THE SURVEY

The architectural investigation of the Soapstone Connector project involved a field survey of all above-ground resources that meet the NRHP criteria of 50 years in age or older within the architectural APE. The current survey identified two previously recorded resources within the architectural APE and no newly recorded resources.

### Previously Recorded Resources

Of the two resources surveyed during this effort, both were previously recorded with the DHR. These resources are detailed in Table 1 and depicted below (Figure 2, p. 6).

Table 1: Previously Recorded Architectural Resources within the Architectural APE.

DHR Number	Name/Address	Date of Construction	Description	Eligibility Recommendation
029-0014	Wiehle/Sunset Hills Historic District	1890	Mixed-use, residential and commercial area	Not Eligible
053-0276	Washington & Old Dominion Railroad Historic District	ca. 1855	45-mile, bike and pedestrian trail, running west to east	Remains Eligible

One resource, the Washington & Old Dominion Railroad Historic District (053-0276), is the site of a former rail line, constructed around 1855, that runs from Arlington County in the east to the Town of Purcellville in the west. First organized in the 1850s, the railroad only saw brief private use before being commandeered by the Union Army during the Civil War (Neville 2000). The railroad reopened to passenger and commercial traffic in 1868 and continued to serve western cities and suburbs, including Falls Church and Dunn Loring, throughout the nineteenth century. As population figures throughout the area exploded in the early twentieth century, the railroad became a major transportation artery for the rapidly-expanding suburban communities. However, by 1950, the majority of residents had adopted the car as their main method of transportation, leading to the line's eventual closure in 1968. The property was sold, and the Washington & Old Dominion Railroad Regional Park opened in 1974. The portion of the park surveyed during this effort begins in the east at Metro Center Drive and continues to American Dream Way in the west, measuring approximately 0.5 miles (Photo 1, p. 7). A paved-asphalt bike trail and gravel pedestrian path runs along the former site of the track with mature tree growth surrounding the park. In 2000, DHR staff determined that the park was individually eligible for listing in the NRHP under Criterion A for Transportation. During the current survey, Dovetail noted this resource has undergone no major alterations since 2000. Because the Washington & Old Dominion Railroad Historic District retains the historic integrity and architectural significance that made it eligible for the NRHP, Dovetail **recommends that the resource retain its previous status as individually eligible for the NRHP under Criterion A.**

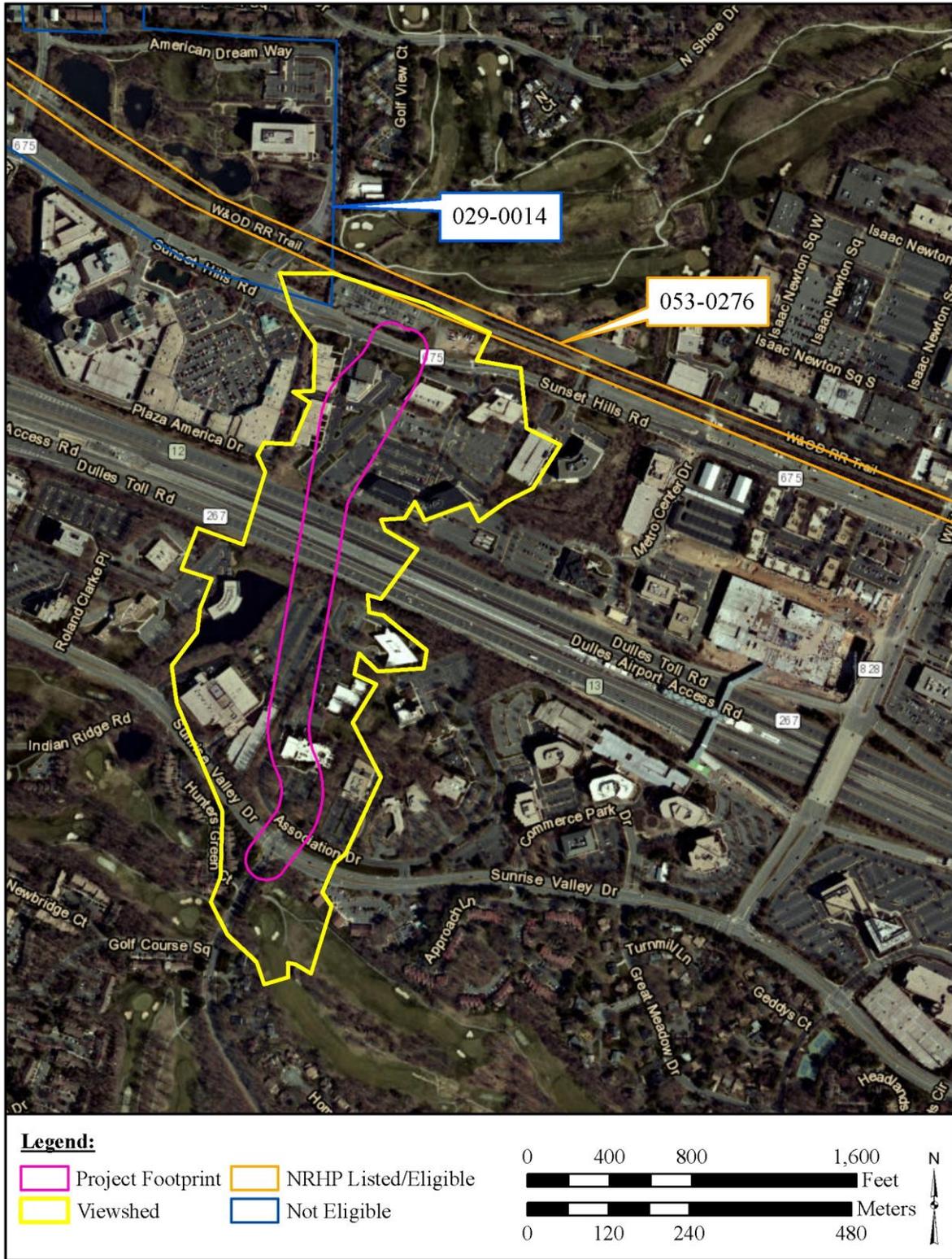


Figure 2: Previously Recorded Resources Within Project Viewshed (Esri 2016b).



Photo 1: Washington & Old Dominion Railroad Historic District (053-0276), Looking West Towards American Dream Way.

The core of the Wiehle/Sunset Hills Historic District (029-0014) is centered around the Smith-Bowman distillery complex, founded in the mid-1930s, and the 1890 mansion house known as Sunset Hills which was built for the prominent local Wiehle family (David 1987). However, while these resources remain important architectural features in the area, the majority of the land that once made up their associated land and properties has been sold off and developed. The area is now dominated by modern high-rise apartment buildings, mixed-use buildings, and large commercial properties (Photo 2, p. 8). For the current project, both the distillery complex and Sunset Hills mansion house fall outside the architectural APE and were not evaluated during the survey. The only resource within the Wiehle/Sunset Hills Historic District boundaries that is also within the Soapstone Connector architectural APE is the Fannie Mae building at 11600 American Dream Way. This building was constructed in 1996 and as such, was not included in the current survey. In 1987 the County of Fairfax completed a Preliminary Information Form (PIF) for the Wiehle/Sunset Hills Historic District; however, DHR staff did not make a formal eligibility determination on the district. In recent decades, the district appears to have a loss of integrity as a result of modern growth and infill. As a result Dovetail **recommends the district not eligible for the NRHP under Criteria A–C. As an architectural resource, the Wiehle/Sunset Hills Historic District (029-0014) is not eligible under Criterion D.**



Photo 2: Wiehle/Sunset Hills Historic District (029-0014), Stratford House Drive, Looking Southwest.

### **Newly Recorded Resources**

No newly recorded resources 50 years in age or older were noted in the architectural APE during the current Phase IB survey.

## SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

On behalf of the FCDOT and FCDOT's consultant, Parsons, Dovetail conducted a Phase IB architectural survey in support of the EA for the Soapstone Connector project in Fairfax County, Virginia. The EA is being prepared by FCDOT in cooperation with the VDOT and the FHWA (Parsons 2016). The project includes the construction of an approximately 0.5-mile-long new roadway that spans between Sunrise Valley Drive and Sunsets Hills Road in Reston, Virginia. This project includes the construction of a new overpass that crosses over the Dulles Corridor, which comprises the Dulles International Airport Access Highway, the Dulles Toll Road, and the Silver Line, a part of the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority. The study and ensuing report meet all guidelines and regulations promulgated by the DHR as necessary.

The Phase IA study was carried out by Parsons in March 2016. Upon review of the ensuing report, the DHR issued feedback in a letter dated April 12, 2016 requesting that a formal Phase I survey be completed for all above-ground resources in the indirect APE that meet the minimum age requirement for the NRHP. The current study, building upon the Phase IA survey completed by Parsons, included a Phase IB architectural survey involving a vehicular and pedestrian reconnaissance of the architectural APE.

The architectural survey identified a total of two resources located within the architectural APE that meet the age requirement for the NRHP (Table 2, p. 10.) Both of resources had been previously recorded with the DHR. The Washington & Old Dominion Railroad Historic District (053-0276) is a former rail line constructed around 1855 and later converted into a park and trail. It was previously determined by DHR to be eligible for listing in the NRHP. Dovetail concurs with the previous determination and **recommends that this resource retain its status as individually eligible for listing in the NRHP under Criterion A for Transportation.**

In 1987, DHR staff received a PIF for the Wiehle/Sunset Hills Historic District (029-0014), but did not make a formal eligibility determination on the district. Since that time, the majority of the proposed district has continued to undergo extensive development. Most of the buildings are under 50 years of age and lack outstanding architectural characteristics or associations with individuals or events of historical significance. Therefore, Dovetail **recommends that the Sunset Hills Historic District (029-0014) is not eligible for listing in the NRHP under Criteria A–C.** As an architectural resource, Dovetail **recommends that it is not individually eligible under Criterion D.**

Table 2: Surveyed Architectural Resources Recorded During the Phase IB Survey.

<b>DHR Number</b>	<b>Name/Address</b>	<b>Date of Construction</b>	<b>Eligibility Recommendation</b>
029-0014	Wiehle/Sunset Hills Historic District	1890	Not Eligible
053-0276	Washington & Old Dominion Railroad Historic District	ca. 1855	Remains Eligible

## REFERENCES

David, Elizabeth S.

1987 Preliminary Information Form for the *Sunset Hills Historic District (029-0014)*, Reston, Virginia. Prepared by the County of Fairfax, Virginia.

Esri

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2016b United States Geological Survey. Electronic document, <http://services.arcgisonline.com/arcgis/services>, accessed August 2016.

Neville, Ashley

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Parsons Transportation Group, Inc. (Parsons)

2016 *Phase IA Cultural Resources Survey of the Proposed Soapstone Connector*, Fairfax County, Virginia. Washington, D.C.