

TO: Mr. Matt de Ferranti, Chairman, Arlington County Board
mdeferranti@arlingtonva.us; Arlington County Board members: Ms. Libby Garvey, Mr. Christian Dorsey, Ms. Katie Cristol, Mr. Takis Karantonis), countyboard@arlingtonva.us;
Ms. Natasha Alfonso-Ahmed, Principal Planner and Plan Langston Boulevard Project Manager, nalfonso-ahmed@arlingtonva.us; Mr. Paul Holland, Chair, Plan Langston Boulevard Community Forum, Paul.alexander.holland@gmail.com; Ms. Sandi Chesrown, Vice Chair, Plan Langston Boulevard Community Forum, sandrachescrown07@verizon.net

September 30, 2021

Mr. Chair, Members of the Board, Manager Schwartz, Ms. Alfonso-Ahmad, members of Langston Boulevard Alliance,

I am writing to express concerns about the current Plan Langston Boulevard (PLB) process that envisions sweeping changes to 14 Arlington neighborhoods along an almost 6-mile stretch of the newly-renamed Langston Boulevard. I am particularly concerned that the current plans (from July 2021) will have serious negative effects on our budget and taxes, on Arlington's environmental sustainability, and on the supply of affordable, especially market-rate affordable, apartments that are key to preserving diversity in North Arlington.

The county had already mortgaged the future of its residents to site-plan developments as the planning framework for growth. However, the PLB process aggravates the problem exponentially. Instead of conducting long-range and comprehensive planning whose costs will be properly reflected in the county's budget, PLB is relying on site plan processes with minimal resident input that will result in "checkerboard" outcomes. These incremental site plan projects do not deliver new services or public amenities for the expanded populations of the much denser area that will result in 30 or 40 years. Nor do they cover the full fiscal, social, and environmental costs of this growth. Site planning leaves these gaps to emerge sometimes years later, when we have to add more trailers to our schools, fight over competing recreation objectives for our parks, curse our traffic-choked roads and wonder how we let luxury development replace naturally-occurring affordable housing and squeeze out residents earning 60-80% of Area Median Income (AMI).

In fact, PLB displays this formula at its worst. In such a comprehensive retooling of a major roadway across so many neighborhoods, we would expect plans for all

the services and infrastructure for thousands of new residents. But PLB shows that the land-use and zoning ideas are being guided by developers' need for more density to maximize profit. In exchange the county is accepting limited and haphazard community benefits (small pocket parks, small stormwater ponds, and transit tweaks) that don't meet the demand that the projects themselves create. Nor is the county investing in the public structures/tools that WOULD meet those demands.

The primary planner for PLB in July confirmed this pattern, saying that, "the County does not anticipate acquiring land to develop open space along the corridor." She also revealed that "for the scenarios that have only minimal height/density increase, stormwater improvements... are anticipated to be minimal because there is no economy of scale to justify larger investments/improvements." In short, PLB puts full stock in site plan processes that will follow up-GLUPping; it thereby obfuscates the real costs of the extreme density awarded.

Assuming we are stuck with that model, I ask that the county halt the current PLB process and take the following steps:

1. Release all existing long-term operating budget forecasts;
2. Prepare three PLB forecasts comparing current (by-right) zoning with up-GLUP-ping/up-zoning envisioned for scenarios A and B of PLB, with respect to the following anticipated effects of each:
 - a. Long-term operating budget;
 - b. Long-term environmental impact;
 - c. Long-term household income by quintiles (showing growing income gaps if applicable)

I also ask that the county show comparisons of the two PLB scenarios to what we have now on the boulevard, and to what is allowed via current zoning. As one example, by-right zoning in Area 3 already permits the following build-outs that WOULD PERMIT significant new development (to include commercial zoning (i.e. C-1, C-2) – up to 3 or 4 stories; multi-family zoning (i.e. RA 8-18, 6-15) – up to 4 or 6 stories; and single family zoning (i.e. R-6) – up to 3 stories.) By ignoring the growth we could achieve from by-right planning, PLB concepts and scenarios show how the county has abdicated its primary planning role and community benefit procurement to developers.

Please compare:

1. the number of new residents the up-GLUPPING and related up-zoning scenarios A and B would accommodate, compared to by-right zoning population expectations and current residents.
2. Current population numbers with a 20-year projection for Scenario A and Scenario B. Compare these as well with the 20-year expected population from by-right development. Provide equivalent student generation factors over 20 years for comparing current student population, by-right, scenario A, and scenario B buildouts.

I look forward to your response.

Sincerely,

Anne C. Bodine