

FEBRUARY 24, 2020
PETER ROUSSELOT
A COMMUNITY-BASED APPROACH TO DEVELOPMENT
(REMARKS TO ASF SUPPORTERS)

INTRODUCTION

THANK YOU, **MARGIE BELL**, FOR THAT KIND INTRODUCTION. MY NAME IS PETER ROUSSELOT. I'M A 22-YEAR ARLINGTON RESIDENT AND A COMMUNITY ACTIVIST. AS MARGIE MENTIONED, I CURRENTLY WRITE A BI-WEEKLY COLUMN FOR ARLNOW.COM, AND I'M A PAST CHAIR OF THE ARLINGTON COUNTY DEMOCRATIC COMMITTEE. I'VE ALSO SERVED AS THE CHAIR OF THE FISCAL AFFAIRS ADVISORY COMMISSION TO THE COUNTY BOARD AND AS A CO-CHAIR OF THE ADVISORY COUNCIL ON INSTRUCTION TO THE SCHOOL BOARD.

ARLINGTONIANS FOR OUR SUSTAINABLE FUTURE—ASF

I'M PART OF A RECENTLY-FORMED EDUCATIONAL AND ADVOCACY GROUP CALLED ARLINGTONIANS FOR OUR SUSTAINABLE FUTURE--ASF. ASF IS FOCUSED ON PROMOTING A MORE COMMUNITY-CENTERED APPROACH TO DEVELOPMENT. THAT MEANS WE FAVOR A BOTTOMS-UP RATHER THAN A TOP-DOWN APPROACH TO COUNTY GOVERNMENT DECISION-MAKING.

WE ARE GUIDED BY VALUES THAT WE BELIEVE ARE IMPORTANT FOR OUR COMMUNITY, INCLUDING:

- WE PRIORITIZE PEOPLE OVER BUILDINGS
- WE FAVOR MORE ENVIRONMENTALLY FRIENDLY APPROACHES TO THE IMPACTS OF DEVELOPMENT AND CLIMATE CHANGE
- WE PROMOTE FOCUSING PUBLIC RESOURCES TO ENABLE EXISTING RESIDENTS TO AFFORD TO LIVE IN EXISTING HOUSING

DEVELOPMENT, GROWTH & DENSITY

WITH AMAZON'S ARRIVAL, COUNTY LEADERS ARE PROMOTING AN ACCELERATED POPULATION GROWTH STRATEGY FOR ARLINGTON. BUT WHAT DOES THAT EVER-INCREASING DENSITY MEAN FOR US?

THE COUNTY HAS RECENTLY MADE CHANGES TO OUR ZONING REGULATIONS AND IS CONSIDERING EVEN MORE DRAMATIC CHANGES INCLUDING ELIMINATING SINGLE-FAMILY HOME ZONING TO ALLOW MULTI-UNIT DWELLINGS WHERE THEY WERE PREVIOUSLY PROHIBITED. THE ARLINGTON COUNTY GOVERNMENT HAS MADE OFFICIAL FORECASTS THAT ARLINGTON'S POPULATION WILL GROW TO OVER 280,000 PEOPLE BY 2040. THIS MEANS OUR POPULATION WILL CONSIST OF TENS OF THOUSANDS MORE RESIDENTS THAN WE HAVE NOW [SEE SLIDE # 8 IN MY OCTOBER 15, 2019 PRESENTATION TO THE ARLINGTON COUNTY CIVIC FEDERATION:

[HTTP://WWW.CIVFED.ORG/NEWCONTENT/2019-10/2019-10%20MULTI-FAMILY%20HOUSING%20ZONING%20PRESENTATION.PDF](http://www.civfed.org/newcontent/2019-10/2019-10%20MULTI-FAMILY%20HOUSING%20ZONING%20PRESENTATION.PDF)].

AND ARLINGTON'S OFFICIAL POPULATION GROWTH FORECASTS DON'T FULLY REFLECT THE IMPACT OF THE ARRIVAL OF AMAZON AND ITS ATTRACTION OF THOUSANDS OF NEW EMPLOYEES—AN UNKNOWN NUMBER OF WHOM WILL END UP CHOOSING TO LIVE IN ARLINGTON.

THESE FORECASTS ALSO DON'T REFLECT 2019 ZONING RULES' CHANGES SUCH AS THE MAY 2019 AUTHORIZATION OF ACCESSORY DWELLING UNITS, ALSO KNOWN AS ADU'S, AND THE NOVEMBER 2019 RELAXATION OF RULES ON SO-CALLED "BONUS DENSITY."

DESPITE ARLINGTON'S HAVING ALREADY GREEN-LIGHTED ALL THIS POPULATION GROWTH AND DENSITY, ARLINGTON HASN'T EXPLAINED HOW IT'S GOING TO ACCOUNT FOR, PAY FOR, OR ADJUST TO THE

INCREASED POPULATION GROWTH AND DENSITY ARLINGTON HAS ALREADY LEGALLY AUTHORIZED.

THESE KINDS OF ZONING CHANGES COMMIT ARLINGTON TO MASSIVE NEW SPENDING AND ESCALATING REAL ESTATE TAX BILLS. ***THE AVERAGE RESIDENT COSTS THE COUNTY OVER \$850 MORE IN INFRASTRUCTURE AND SERVICES THAN THE INCREMENTAL REVENUE THAT RESIDENT GENERATES*** (SEE: SLIDE # 9 OF THAT SAME OCTOBER 15, 2019 CIVIC FEDERATION PRESENTATION).

ARLINGTON'S ACCELERATED GROWTH POLICIES INTENSIFY THE COUNTY'S NEEDS FOR MORE AND MORE REAL ESTATE TAX REVENUES. THIS MAKES IT HARDER TO FUND IMPORTANT PRIORITIES SUCH AS OUR PUBLIC SCHOOLS, AND TO MAKE ESSENTIAL UPGRADES TO OUR OTHER INFRASTRUCTURE, LIKE STORM-AND-WASTEWATER SEWERS AND FRESH-WATER MAINS, WHICH ARE AGING AND WERE BUILT TO SUPPORT A MUCH SMALLER POPULATION.

ASF WANTS ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS LIKE THESE:

- *HOW DENSE CAN WE GET?*
- *HOW DENSE SHOULD WE GET?*
- *WHAT ARE THE COSTS OF ELIMINATING SINGLE-FAMILY ZONING?*

ASF'S PLATFORM

WE SAY: DON'T PASS NEW LAWS, REGULATIONS, OR RULES ENABLING EVEN MORE DENSITY UNTIL THE COMMUNITY HAS NEW TOOLS TO EVALUATE THE DENSITY ARLINGTON HAS ALREADY AUTHORIZED. BEFORE ARLINGTON ENABLES EVEN MORE DENSITY, ACCELERATING POPULATION GROWTH FROM ABOVE 280,000 TO, SAY, 330,000, ***ASF'S PLATFORM (COPIES AVAILABLE IN OUR ROOM TODAY)*** CALLS FOR ARLINGTON TO CREATE AND MAKE AVAILABLE TO THE COMMUNITY A SERIES OF NEW STUDIES AND PLANNING TOOLS.

THE NEW STUDIES AND PLANNING TOOLS THAT ASF'S PLATFORM REQUESTS ARE:

- A FLOODING AND LAND USE PLAN—USING AN ACCEPTED ***FLOODPLAIN MANAGEMENT TOOL***
- THE ***TISCHLERBISE DEVELOPMENT FISCAL IMPACT*** TOOL—OR A SIMILAR TOOL
- A ***10-YEAR OPERATING BUDGET FORECAST***—FOR DIFFERENT POPULATION AND REVENUE SCENARIOS

COMMUNITY-BASED FOCUS

ASF WANTS TO EMPOWER THE COMMUNITY—THAT MEANS ALL OF US—WITH THESE TOOLS IN ORDER TO ENABLE US TO DECIDE ON, AND EXPRESS MEANINGFUL OPINIONS ABOUT, THE CRITICAL ISSUES THAT REALLY MATTER TO OUR LONG-TERM FUTURE.

BY CONTRAST, THE COUNTY GOVERNMENT TOO OFTEN SEEMS TO WANT TO ENGAGE THE COMMUNITY ABOUT THE ISSUES *IT* DEFINES AS IMPORTANT AND ONLY IN THE WAYS *IT* CHOOSES TO DEFINE THEM. COUNTY GOVERNMENT TOO OFTEN HIDES THE FACT THAT IT ALREADY HAS DECIDED A CRITICAL ISSUE THAT THE COMMUNITY WOULD RESOLVE DIFFERENTLY IF ONLY THE COMMUNITY WERE CONSULTED.

AFFORDABLE HOUSING

ASF SUPPORTS A DIVERSE AND INCLUSIVE ARLINGTON. BY CONTRAST, COUNTY GOVERNMENT'S ZONING CHANGES AND OTHER ACCELERATED DENSITY INITIATIVES ARE TURNING OUR LAND INTO A SPECULATION CASINO AND DECREASING AFFORDABILITY IN OUR COMMUNITY.

AT A NOVEMBER

2019 EVENT [HTTPS://WWW.BISNOW.COM/EVENTS/VIRGINIA/FUTURE-OF-ARLINGTON-COUNTY-2354](https://www.bisnow.com/events/virginia/future-of-arlinton-county-2354) SPONSORED BY DEVELOPERS AND

OTHER REAL ESTATE INTERESTS, THE SPONSORS BOASTED:

*“ARLINGTON MEANS ONE THING TO RESIDENTS AND TENANTS:
POTENTIAL FOR DEVELOPMENT.”*

AND WITH DEVELOPERS AND OUR COUNTY BOARD DRIVING THIS ENGINE, THE COUNTY GOVERNMENT IS APPROVING HUNDREDS OF LUXURY UNITS FOR JUST A FEW AFFORDABLE ONES.

ASF’S APPROACH TO AFFORDABLE HOUSING IS TO *PRIORITIZE*: PRESERVING THE EXISTING AFFORDABLE HOUSING WE STILL HAVE, AND PROVIDING TARGETED CATEGORIES OF INDIVIDUALS AND GROUPS WITH THE RESOURCES THEY NEED TO ENABLE THEM TO LIVE ANYWHERE THEY WANT IN ARLINGTON.

ASF FAVORS A COST-BENEFIT ANALYSIS TO CHOOSE HOW BEST TO ALLOCATE OUR FINITE PUBLIC RESOURCES, PRINCIPALLY AMONG THE FOLLOWING AFFORDABLE HOUSING OPTIONS:

- EXPAND THE HOUSING GRANT PROGRAM
- PROVIDE RENT VOUCHERS TO TARGETED GROUPS AND INDIVIDUALS
- INVEST IN CO-OPS
- MAXIMIZE THE USE OF COMMUNITY LAND TRUSTS
- INCREASE THE PAY OF POLICE, FIREFIGHTERS, AND TEACHERS TO GIVE THEM MORE PERSONAL HOUSING OPTIONS IN ARLINGTON

CONCLUSION

ASF IS GUIDED BY A SERIES OF VALUES THAT WE BELIEVE ARE IMPORTANT FOR OUR COMMUNITY, INCLUDING:

- WE PRIORITIZE PEOPLE OVER BUILDINGS
- WE FAVOR MORE ENVIRONMENTALLY FRIENDLY APPROACHES TO THE IMPACTS OF DEVELOPMENT AND CLIMATE CHANGE
- WE PROMOTE FOCUSING PUBLIC RESOURCES TO ENABLE EXISTING RESIDENTS TO AFFORD TO LIVE IN EXISTING HOUSING

YOU NEED TO WEIGH IN BEFORE YOU ARE SQUEEZED OUT!

WHAT YOU CAN DO NOW

- SIGN UP ON OUR WEBSITE <https://www.asf-virginia.org/> TO STAY INFORMED ABOUT CURRENT ASF AND OTHER INITIATIVES
- SEND US AN EMAIL AT asf.virginia@gmail.com WITH YOUR SUGGESTIONS
- INVITE AN ASF REPRESENTATIVE TO SPEAK AT A CIVIC ASSOCIATION OR OTHER COMMUNITY MEETING
- WRITE TO THE COUNTY BOARD ASKING FOR MORE INFORMATION ON THE LOGIC AND RATIONALE FOR THE COUNTY GOVERNMENT'S ACCELERATED DEVELOPMENT/GROWTH/NEW BUILDING AGENDA:

1. WHY WOULD WE BE BETTER OFF BY ALLOWING MULTI-FAMILY HOUSING IN SINGLE-FAMILY NEIGHBORHOODS?
2. WHAT ARE THE LONG-TERM COSTS OF RAPIDLY CLIMBING SCHOOL ENROLLMENTS?
3. WHAT ARE THE IMPACTS ON OUR AGING INFRASTRUCTURE, LIKE STORM-AND-WASTE-WATER-SYSTEMS AND FRESH WATER MAINS?
4. WHAT ARE THE LONG-TERM IMPACTS ON THE COUNTY BUDGET?
5. WHAT ARE THE IMPACTS ON OUR ENVIRONMENT, FLOODING, AND WATERSHEDS--INCLUDING INCREASES IN IMPERVIOUS SURFACES, LOSSES OF MATURE TREES, AND ECOLOGICAL DAMAGE TO STREAMS?

ASK THE COUNTY BOARD TO SHOW YOU THE MONEY—AND THE MATH!

WE NEED A MORE COMMUNITY-CENTERED APPROACH TO DEVELOPMENT IN ARLINGTON!

THANK YOU.