

September 30, 2021

Mr. Matt de Ferranti, Chairman, Arlington County Board
mdeferranti@arlingtonva.us

Dear Mr. Chair,

Arlingtonians for Our Sustainable Future (ASF) has significant concerns about the county's current Plan Langston Boulevard (PLB) plans. This project rivals Columbia Pike's Form-Based Code and the buildout of the Metro corridor in terms of the number of residents affected and its potential to change our cityscape forever. It envisions sweeping changes to 14 Arlington neighborhoods along an almost 6-mile stretch of the newly-renamed Langston Boulevard.

ASF believes that the current plans will have serious negative effects on our budget and taxes, on Arlington's environmental sustainability, and on the supply of truly affordable housing. PLB is relying on massive changes to the General Land Use Plan (GLUP) which presage denser zoning that will unleash non-stop redevelopment along the boulevard west of Rosslyn. In many ways, the process appears to aim for an early-Rosslyn vibe to the corridor up to East Falls Church. With one major difference.



Unlike 1970's Rosslyn, Langston Boulevard is mostly a low-rise commercial strip one block wide on either side of the corridor. This makes "transitions" to neighboring single family areas impossible.

In fact, we see negative outcomes along Columbia Pike with gentrification and non-compatible towers looming over single-family homes, as here in Columbia Heights. Don't say it won't happen; it is happening now.

ASF understands that the county does not now plan to provide any significant new stormwater projects (with the possible exception of Woodstock Park); any addition of public land for new parks/recreation facilities; or any significant capital investments for new schools. This is something of a folly as it ensures that all "community benefits" are left hostage to site plan processes that current residents cannot project.

Moreover, site plan benefits elsewhere in Arlington have shown that benefits are only marginal and do not come close to meeting the needs of all the new residents or mitigating the effects of this development.

In other words, we see no evidence the county has answers how they will cover the full fiscal, social, environmental costs of this growth.

Photo: Columbia Pike Sep 2021



Therefore, ASF asks that the county halt the current PLB process and until it can:

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 quintile (i.e., indicating growing income gaps).

Sincerely,

Peter Rousselot
Arlingtonians for Our Sustainable Future

CC:

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