

ASF 2021 GENERAL ELECTION QUESTIONS FOR COUNTY BOARD CANDIDATES

Candidate Karantonis Response, Oct 11, 2021

1—PARKS, FORESTRY AND NATURAL RESOURCES:

A. The County's overdue updating of the Urban Forestry Master Plan and Natural Resources Management Plan is in full swing. What are your specific goals for this update, especially as they may relate to tree canopy, green space and the County's natural environment? Please be specific.

My priorities are:

1. **Eco-systemic approach** to manage all natural resource elements interconnectedly and **preserve existing natural spaces**. Urban natural resources management helps improve **human health** (including mental health); maximizes **climate resiliency** of our natural resources themselves and **reduces carbon** emissions. I will prioritize flood and erosion prevention, heat-island- effect mitigation and preserving biodiversity under worsening climate conditions.
2. Investing in a **public Dashboard for Natural Resources** and state-of-the art tools to **acquire data** on metrics like tree preservation, un-programmed open space and stream valley habitat protection. This publicly available source of information would inform County Board decisions and allow citizen activists to monitor our financial and personnel efforts in this important area of community sustainability.
3. **Open space acquisition** and significantly more trees on Arlington public lands and rights-of-way.
4. Commitment to **biophilic development**.

B. Critics contend that both North Arlington's Gulf Branch Nature Center and South Arlington's Long Branch Nature Center have endured benign neglect by the County in recent years, with both facilities suffering from deferred maintenance and programming cutbacks. What do you see as the value of these facilities and what is the right amount of operating and capital expenditures for them?

As a nature- preservation advocate for many years and as a volunteer with EcoAction Arlington, I have first-hand experience of the value of both facilities. I, therefore, believe that they merit the County's support and am open to discussions with advocates and civic organizations to find collaborative ways to safeguard the centers' long-term viability.

C. The County is not on track at this point to accomplish the Public Open Spaces Master Plan (PSMP) goal of adding 30 acres of public space in 10 years. What actions would you support by the Board to ensure meeting this goal?

I remain committed to the acquisition of open spaces even though such opportunities are increasingly rare. I support **appropriating at least \$2M per year** earmarked for park acquisition, an amount that can also be leveraged toward additional funding if an opportunity arises. I will continue to support the Northern Virginia Conservation Trust.

D. The County Manager has offered to APS a list of existing parks that could be considered for potential school sites. Do you believe that this was appropriate, and if so, how do you square that with the PSMP goal of adding 30 acres of public space in 10 years and in light of the dramatic growth occurring in our County?

As additional school capacity needs to be planned for, I remain very supportive of the Joint Facilities Advisory Commission. Sacrificing parks to gain school capacity is not a desirable trade-off. We have many other options to design urban schools that preserve public parks while still providing excellence in education.

2--COST/BENEFIT FISCAL IMPACT STUDIES:

In March 2021, the County entered into a contract with the TischlerBise consulting firm. The contract includes a provision under which TischlerBise will develop “methodologies for forecasting future demand for services and facilities from new development.” Do you support requiring and publicly disclosing the results of such forecasts prior to approving major projects or major zoning initiatives, such as the “Missing Middle”?

As a candidate both last year and today, I am committed to improving the County’s ability to model and measure the impacts from development. Given the current contract, I look forward to the work of TischlerBise as it will inform both the Board’s decision-making processes and our community’s civic dialog.

As a matter of principle, I believe that all relevant work and data should be publicly available. It is fair to expect model calculations to be incorporated into Arlington’s consideration of major planning processes.

As a trained economist, I am mindful that fiscal impact modeling is more meaningful on the aggregate level and less so when attempting to measure or predict impact at the scale of individual projects. I therefore support using fiscal impact modeling as a policy evaluation tool rather than on a project-by-project analysis.

3--PLAN LANGSTON BOULEVARD AND MISSING MIDDLE HOUSING:

A number of civic associations flanking Lee Highway, including Lyon Village and Donaldson Run, have gone on record to sharply criticize current planning efforts as leading to the widespread loss, over time, of small, locally owned businesses, the reduction of relatively modest single family homes, trees and greenspace, the addition of large, multi-story structures that would be starkly out-of-scale with surrounding neighborhoods, and a sharp rise in property values that would induce gentrification of both residential and commercial development. Proponents argue that Langston Boulevard is ripe for redevelopment and that increased density would yield additional housing, commercial growth and amenities that would benefit all demographic groups and people of all income levels. Who is right and is the County on the right path or does it need to stop and reconsider?

The Community vision for Langston Boulevard (LB) as a “Green Main Street” that will connect all neighborhoods, support neighborhood retail and provide sufficient mixed housing supply, great public spaces and upgraded public services, has been in active discussion since 2015.

The overwhelming majority of Boulevard neighbors supports Langston Boulevard as a welcoming and inclusive place for generations to come. I align with this vision and I commit to help realize it.

I walked, talked with and have also actively sought the feedback of many residents. I **registered concerns about:**

- **size and massing** of buildings along LB;
- “**neighborhood manners**” i.e., taper-down future development to the current neighborhood scale;
- rampant **gentrification** and displacement of residents of moderate and lower incomes;
- unmitigated **housing price-inflation** and great concern that LB is already inaccessible to minorities, people of color, or young families;
- current and future **traffic** volume, less car dependent modal-mix, strengthened public transit, walkability and bicycle infrastructure;
- public and private **green space, mature tree preservation** and increased **tree-canopy coverage**;
- necessary upgrades to our **stormwater** infrastructure;
- long-term planning for **school capacity**.

I commit to continue to be very attentive and focused on the impacts for individuals, for neighborhoods, for businesses and for our County as a whole. After more than 5 years of hard work, **the time has come to conclude this planning phase, honor those who invested their talent, time and civic energy, adopt a plan and implement its vision.** [Author]

4--LARGE SINGLE FAMILY HOUSING REDEVELOPMENT:

Arlington loses over 200 older single-family homes a year to redevelopment, with often modest ramblers, bungalows and split levels--and the mature trees that often surround them--bulldozed to yield much larger, much more expensive, and less affordable homes that tower over and cast shadows upon their neighbors, feature greatly expanded footprints and impervious surfaces, and no mature landscaping. Is it time to dial back what a private property owner can build on their land and still be sensitive to private property rights? Why or why not, and if so, how would you accomplish that given Virginia property laws?

If reelected:

- I will continue to work with my colleagues, legal counsel and our community to re-assess currently allowable lot-coverage and height and to study with urgency available options to encourage smaller footprints with less environmental impact while respecting homeowners’ investments.
- I will continue to work with our legislators to find ways to incorporate environmental impact (like GHG-emissions) into by-right development in a way that will incentivize a reduction of the mass of the new construction (or, make the development of over-sized structures less desirable for developers and less valuable for buyers).

- I will continue to pursue additional strengthening of our Land-Disturbance permitting process and the legal framework under which Arlington County can inspect and enforce. I supported LDA 2.0, which represents a significant step forward as it requires a completely new level of storm water management and care for perviousness and tree-coverage.
- I will continue to advocate for mature tree protection on site and look forward to the General Assembly giving additional jurisdiction to Arlington in this respect.
- Most importantly though, and on the long term: The diversification of housing choices across the County and the adoption of policies that address our housing supply challenge is the key strategy to mitigate the current trend. Mixed neighborhoods are significantly more resilient and less welcoming for over-sized and over-priced new housing.