

ASF | ARLINGTONIANS FOR OUR SUSTAINABLE FUTURE

Comments to Arlington County Planning Commission
October 2, 2023
RTA for Plan Langston Blvd

Hello I'm Anne Bodine from Arlingtonians for Our Sustainable Future.

Plan Langston Blvd is transit oriented development without the transit. *It coasts on high rhetoric with little data.* It leaves out schools, rec centers or major stormwater projects, because the county says there's no land, while giving owners 3 to 4 times the current allowed density. We will see 7, 10 and 15 stories at the new nodes, and much higher infill with no parking. How does this translate into a "green Main Street. It doesn't. Langston will remain **Highway 29**, a full-on commuter and truck route that also is an evacuation and national defense route. It is owned by the state that hasn't said yes.

Staff's appealing slide show designs are lovely but survive only through final board vote, when they are replaced by the architectural shop of horrors we see in the new building across from Bozman [county government HQ]. Or the brown hulks along Columbia Pike with no transition to neighbors, little greenscape and much higher rents. We need design requirements, not slick packaging that shows more trees than concrete.

The plan fails to provide the planned number of affordable units and is likely to displace hundreds from market rate affordables where they live now. Redlining kept people out, this pushes them away. Their homes will go to landfills, they will to Prince William, it's a double tragedy. And the new CAFs [committed affordable units] won't make up for the loss of units under 60% of AMI!

The claim of 35% tree canopy at ground level is not credible. 10 stories on narrow strips means covering lotline to lotline or cheating on stepbacks, it's just physics. **We suggest instead adding trees with existing TCF [Tree Canopy Fund] funds and letting owners develop by-right up to 4-5 stories max and avoiding these plus-ups that don't deliver many benefits. Indeed, PLB must teach us that the private sector is NOT the proper steward of the public realm.** The county government is remiss in claiming it CANNOT pay for infrastructure we need for our residents except through upzoning and higher land use. ASF shares your vision for green, diverse, financially responsible planning but also wants balance with public spaces and infrastructure that are funded and retained in public domain.

ASF asks that the county fully define the need for public facilities including schools, parks, and stormwater, and bring them back to us as part of your county CIP. Give us a better plan that avoids gentrification and displacement. Don't choose a plan that leaves too much to chance, too much to private owners whose interests are not ours.

Finally, we were not able to fully digest staffs 250-page update issued Thursday night [4 days prior to October 2]. We also object to reducing speaker times from 5 to 2 minutes. We think the county and the PC can do better than my monthly book club with a plan of such consequence.

Thank you.