

July 2021

**Excerpts from Public Comments on Arlington
County's Feedback Survey on Plan Lee Highway
Concepts/Scenarios**

Costs

"These builder-negotiated "benefits" are not capturing the costs of development with the result they are shifting to taxpayers, and the process obscures the costs until it is too late for residents to weigh in."

"Arlington was already facing budget deficits before the pandemic, especially in the out years.. . the county should be looking for new revenue sources that are far less dependent on expensive services like schools."

"The county must first provide fiscal, environmental, school, transport, and gentrification impacts of these scenarios. . . ."

Process

"Survey questions are "loaded," offering only limited replies, like a choice between "A" or "B" with no ability to say "neither".

"LHA was a neighborhood advocate. We attended, sent reps, and heavily participated. That was when LHA was going to improve Lee Hwy and keep the small business, neighborhood character, art, parks, etc. At that time housing was envisioned in areas along Lee Hwy but not anywhere near the extent the county is proposing now. The high-rise concept was NEVER part of the conversation. The extreme density, the lot consolidation, etc. This is not what Lee Highway was sold to be."

Environment

"The proposed entrance from Spout Run Parkway to this unneeded costly street is in a Watershed Resource Protected Area (RPA). RPA's are protected natural buffers intended by Virginia Law and Arlington Ordinance to keep and lakes healthy, filter storm water runoff, and provide habitat for animals and birds.'

Displacement and Affordability

"Both scenarios A and B propose eliminating garden apartments . . . on Lee Highway that (to the best of my knowledge) are MARKS [Market-rate affordable units] affordable at 0.6-0.8 AMI."

"If you allow upzoning, your fate is in the developers' hands, and I've got news for you – they're not going to build you a more affordable apartment."

". . .this density will not improve racial or ethnic diversity in the area nor create more openings for seniors and lower income households.... The opposite will happen. Land use tools should not seek to benefit the better-off among us and exile populations who can't afford upzoned prices."

"Another potential impact that should be studied is the loss of commercial—especially small—businesses along Lee Hwy. that would be displaced by redevelopment. The focus is always on adding housing, which typically doesn't generate net revenue, as opposed to businesses that frequently do generate net revenue."

Infrastructure (Schools, Transportation, etc.)

"There seems to be an idyllic mentality of thinking that if you make driving around an area horrible that it will encourage people to increase their use of public transportation... It is a lack of proper planning to encourage increased density along with NARROWING of roads and not expect long-term traffic nightmares."

"The current infrastructure cannot support parking for this density and there are also no sites for elementary, middle, or high school options that are already bursting to support this type of growth."

"The "gathering place" and the few added open spaces are a sop to the community and pale compared to the increase in traffic, pollution, heat island effect and demand on green space by new residents. This area is well beyond metro walkable and does not

have a history of bus commuting. Everyone will have cars, and traffic will be awful."

"Stormwater runoff is sure to increase with all of this intensified, increasingly dense redevelopment. Where will all of this additional runoff go? Has the county updated existing watershed analyses? Or are additional watershed-level analyses necessary to accurately project the additional stormwater runoff to be generated by all this new density?"

Density and Mass

"The county Board in 2021 voted to remove bonus density caps in the county's zone RA6-15, among other multi-family residential zones, for certain types of affordable housing. The area along Rt. 66 now proposed for 15-story buildings (dark violet on the maps) is zone RA 6-15. While Lee Highway area was not included in that new policy, the board very likely envisions reintroducing similar plans here."

"Intruding even one block into Lyon Village south of Lee Highway with two family or multi-family housing, and adding significant new density north of Lee Highway, sounds death knells for both of these small areas. Lyon Village is essentially only 4 blocks deep in most parts between commercial Lee Highway and Metro-dense Wilson/Clarendon Blvds. As the missing middle study will seek to encroach from the south, Lee Highway density will spread from the north."