

Question 5: Lot Coverage Study by CPHD

In March, the County Board agreed to retain (after the County Manager had recommended their elimination) two CPHD positions (with requisite budget implications); County Board Chair Garvey also noted at that time these positions should commence work on a long-promised study of lot coverage (and setbacks) in low residential zones of Arlington. Since then, the work has stalled. Residential neighborhoods are critical to the County being able to achieve its 40% tree canopy standard as part of its Comprehensive Plan.

Do you unequivocally support the lot coverage study and what will you do to get the ball rolling? What would you like to see as one or two key results of such a study? Do you think it should address all aspects of building size, or just lot coverage and required setbacks?

Candidate Fierro Response to Question 5:

Yes, I wholeheartedly support the lot coverage study. I would persuade my fellow Board members to give guidance to the County Manager that this study needs to be considered a top priority.

The study should also include not only incentives to preserve existing mature trees on lots and how to minimize erosion on sloping terrain but also all aspects of building size.

Tied to the Lot Coverage study, the incentives to preserve existing mature tree canopy and how to minimize erosion it should include heavy fees for cutting down mature trees and causing erosion, with a special fee if a developer comes in with a project after tearing down a building and denuding a property of all trees and vegetation.

Candidate Clement Response to Question 5:

I absolutely support a lot coverage study, the purpose of which would be to revisit the building setbacks and heights that enable construction of McMansions throughout the County. The proliferation of buildings constructed under current regulations has not only induced runoff into and erosion of Arlington's watersheds, it has also provided the justification for the 6-plexes permitted under the EHO Ordinance.

YIMBYs routinely argue that if expanded lot coverage is okay, then 6-plexes are both a more equitable and more economical way to cover the lots. The only way to defeat this argument is to

reduce the lot coverage permitted in residential zones. This will not only discourage McMansions; it will also discourage 6-plexes.

The YIMBY slogan is “Yes in My [meaning **Your**] Backyard.” I find that type of “in your face” sloganeering personally obnoxious, and I think most people in the housing market do too. Who wants to buy a house or rent a unit next to a person who has no consideration for his/her neighbors?

Candidate Granger Response to Question 5:

I list supporting Arlington’s 40% tree canopy goal as one of the priorities of my campaign on my website. I believe that this study is worthwhile and, furthermore, I believe that if we’ve agreed to allocate taxpayer dollars towards making the study possible then we should hold ourselves accountable to producing that outcome. I would require weekly updates from the team working on the study and would involve myself personally in helping to overcome obstacles that are causing it to stall. I would expect that the study should produce actionable recommendations for increasing our tree canopy, both short-term and long-term.

Candidate Spain Response to Question 5:

Yes, I believe we should perform a lot coverage study. It is important for us to take a measured, deliberate, and thoughtful approach to planning and shaping our neighborhoods. Maintaining the integrity of Arlington’s neighborhoods, advancing equity and housing access, and supporting environmental sustainability are all top considerations for this process. Upon being elected, I look forward to discussing this topic further with fellow County Board members and the community.