

Report: Erosion of Public Confidence in Arlington County's Decision Making

February 6, 2023

Disclaimer:

This report has been submitted to the Arlington County Civic Federation (ACCF) by individual members of ACCF. It has been submitted by delegates but has not been approved by ACCF. The content contained herein does not necessarily represent the views of the ACCF.

Introduction:

This *Report* is submitted by the past five former Presidents of the Arlington County Civic Federation, namely Stephanie Pryor, Michael McMEnamin, Duke Banks, Sandy Newton, and Allan Gajadhar, due to their concern for the erosion of public confidence in Arlington County's decision making.

The sponsors wish to thank the many contributors who provided countless hours of work and substantial support in collecting and compiling these accounts from numerous concerned residents. The examples provide important perspectives. Given the nature of the documentation compiled and the potential for retribution, example contributors are not named.

The Arlington County Civic Federation ("ACCF") is a not-for-profit corporation which provides a forum for civic groups to discuss, debate, inform, advocate and provide oversight on important community issues, on a non-partisan basis. Its members include over ninety civic groups representing a broad cross-section of the community. Communications, resolutions and feedback are provided to the Arlington County Government on a regular basis. The Civic Federation is committed to foster civic engagement, to provide a voice for residents to express their concerns on county governance, and to work to identify and advocate for common objectives for strengthening Arlington County.

The "Arlington Way", further defined in Section 1.1, has long been a process by which the Arlington elected government gathers input and feedback from Arlingtonians and builds consensus based on citizens' concerns and ideas. Residents from all over the county provided the following examples to substantiate the erosion of confidence in Arlington County's decision making. Many of the contributors to this report are longtime community and county leaders while others just recently started to participate in the Arlington process only to find out that it does not currently work for the community. The critical features of authentic two-way public engagement are well researched and documented, including studies commissioned by Arlington County on the Arlington Way, where research and leadership statements indicate that, if applied, meaningful engagement can result in high quality consensus decision-making and community support not otherwise attainable.

Arlington appears to residents to be in the process of revising some of the fundamental "Smart Growth" planning and other principles that have guided development and other topics for more than 50 years. Additionally, the County is emerging from a three year public health crisis that limited in-person engagement between the County government and residents and also among residents. The pandemic experience affords an opportunity to re-examine engagement and ways to improve it.

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The examples provided by residents have been edited for their length, formatting, and to provide consistency with the report. Issues may have been combined if more than one community member submitted the same issue. While examples have been categorized, the example may also apply to other categories.

The examples appear to demonstrate an erosion in public confidence regarding the County's existing engagement processes, organized by thirteen statements that describe the background of the once lauded Arlington community engagement process and the concerns that this historic civic engagement is in jeopardy. While some of the report's statements are strong, they are representative of the passion and frustration of the community-based authors. The samples are not intended to be all-inclusive or representative of every issue. They set a starting point for understanding some of the issues from the community's perspective and can be used to reestablish the bottoms-up engagement process inherent in the "Arlington Way".

Please note that the County has taken action on a number of items and made some documentation modifications since this report was initially drafted in October 2022. This may result in some links and/or comments appearing to no longer be valid. However, the County's improvements are not so comprehensive that the comments are no longer valid so the historic record has been maintained.

A Table of Contents has been created for easier reference of the engagement samples provided.

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1. For decades Arlington County had an established, bottom-up community engagement process to make decisions, frequently called the “Arlington Way.”

1.1. The “Arlington Way”

The “Arlington Way” has been difficult to define at times. The following definitions have been compiled to document what County leadership and the community have stated over time.

Joseph Wholey, Former County Board Member, said of the Metro and Rosslyn-Ballston Corridor planning: “the planners did not have infinite wisdom. The neighborhood did not have infinite wisdom. But with the clash and compromise that the County Board approved, a better thing came than the planning process had envisioned.”¹

Roye Lowry, Former County Board Member, has noted that “with a site plan approval and a strong land-use plan, [they] had the impetus for what has become known as the Arlington Way.”²

Michael Lane, Former Member of the Arlington County Board, has defined the “Arlington Way” as “an organized structural process to allow for citizen input into major decisions the County makes. It is a combination of a myriad of neighborhood associations, civic associations, and citizen commissions, all of which interact to produce a final reflection of what is perceived to citizen opinion.”³

Sally Michael, Former Arlington County Assistant County Administrator for Public Affairs, defined the “Arlington Way” as “It is intended to be a system where all voices are heard or have an opportunity to be heard in a tiered approach to funneling to the County Board, utilizing Civic Associations and neighborhood groups, various commissions and ad hoc committees with a consensus building process being the result” (paraphrased)⁴

Abbott Bailey, former Arlington County resident wrote a research paper on the “Arlington Way” in 2000. She described the formal and informal elements of the “Arlington Way” as well as tradition and benefits of citizen participation. She included shortcomings and ideas for improvement. Bailey further described the formal system of the “Arlington Way”⁵:

- Citizen Advisory Groups or Commissions
- Citizen organizations (neighborhood and civic associations)
- Community service organizations
- County Staff and the County Board

¹ https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uFHs1_P4qTU&feature=share&si=ELPmzJkDCLju2KnD5oyZMQ&t=1695

² https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uFHs1_P4qTU&feature=share&si=ELPmzJkDCLju2KnD5oyZMQ&t=1711

³ Mapping the Arlington Way: Understanding the System of Citizen Participation in Arlington County, Abbott Bailey, June 2000 <https://www.civfed.org/newContent/2022-10/2022-10%20CivFed%20Res%20Bailey%202000%20Mapping%20the%20Arlington%20Way%20Understanding.pdf>

⁴ [Ibid.](#)

⁵ [Ibid.](#)

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Jorge Gonzalez, former Assistant County Administrator, said “the notion is that government alone is not going to solve all of the problems. There has got to be ownership and investment. What government can do, we will do. What citizens can do, we will want them to do... Neighborhoods know what they want and should tell us what they want, and we should be able to deliver.”⁶

Ellen Bozman, Former Six-Term Arlington County Board Member after whom the Arlington Government Center is named⁷, stated that “government will be better if it involves citizens.”⁸

Jay Fiset, Former County Board Chair, stated that “this country has gone through decades of the public losing faith in government. It can't lose touch and lose faith. The most effective public policy is when people are aware, involved, and contributing... That trust is what a philosophy like the Arlington Way is – as imperfect as it is. It helps create trust in government. That is why it is so important.”⁹

Leni Gonzalez, former Arlington County Multicultural Advisory Committee Member, shared that a barrier to participation is that “the majority of us... we have very little trust in our governments from our country of origin. It is hard to think that government could be different.”¹⁰

Ron Carlee, Former Arlington County Manager, stated that the core of the “Arlington Way” is really “involvement in the community in both the planning decisions that are made and in the operational decisions that are made by the county government so there is a connection between people and the decision makers.”¹¹

In September 2002, Arlington procured the Arlington Forum to “examine community views and existing civic engagement structures for increasing the sustained participation of its residents in county affairs.” In particular, the project goals are to “elicit issues and observations about what works and what doesn't” and to “look at present County civic participation structures” in terms of civic engagement.”^{12, 13} Their report includes that “In choosing to embark upon this project, Arlington's leaders have already taken a major step in engaging citizens that we believe is unprecedented in the country. As we have described in the section on Best Practices, reviews of civic involvement methods in municipalities are few and far between, usually undertaken by outside entities such as funders or academic researchers interested in civic engagement

⁶ [Ibid.](#)

⁷ <https://arlingtonhistoricalsociety.org/2020/06/ellen-m-bozman-building-dedication-2018/>

⁸ Mapping the Arlington Way: Understanding the System of Citizen Participation in Arlington County, Abbott Bailey, June 2000 <https://www.civfed.org/newContent/2022-10/2022-10%20CivFed%20Res%20Bailey%202000%20Mapping%20the%20Arlington%20Way%20Understanding.pdf>

⁹ [Ibid.](#)

¹⁰ [Ibid.](#)

¹¹ https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uFHs1_P4qTU&feature=share&si=ELPmzJkDCLju2KnD5oyZMQ&t=1725

¹² <https://dSPACE2.creighton.edu/xmlui/handle/10504/113499>

¹³ https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=1510267

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structures. We have seen no evidence of studies that engage citizens as to their perspectives on civic engagement. Nor have we found other self-studies that have been undertaken with the express purpose of improving the process of civic engagement.” They said that the “Arlington Way” “has long served as a shorthand expression to describe a way of conducting public business that involves citizens”. Arlington County and the “Arlington Way” were seen as leaders in community engagement. They prepared a needs assessment of current engagement practices, action plan and specific recommendations to improve civic engagement, and proposed measures for evaluating Arlington engagement in the future. The Volunteer Office estimated that “3000 volunteers serve county government each year and that slightly more than that number volunteer for non-profit organizations.” Additionally, the Volunteer Office received approximately 1600 inquiries per year from prospective volunteers. The authors used this information to develop a community engagement guide.¹⁴ Future County Board Chair, Mary Hynes, served as an advisor to the Arlington Forum.

One article described the “Arlington Way” as “an amorphous concept used to describe how residents interact with their government.”¹⁵

Arlington County produced a short video on the definition of the “Arlington Way” in 2012.^{16, 17, 18, 19} While it demonstrates that the “Arlington Way” can be difficult to define, it also stated what some people believe it may be:

- “It’s one of those cryptic things.”
- “It’s a set of words that I’ve known for a long, long time.”
- “As far as I’ve been able to tell in the 30 years lived here, it means pretty much whatever the individual wants it to mean who is doing the speaking”
- “I’ve heard it described as democracy run amok but that may be a little cynical”
- “I kind of think about it like it’s a big city with a kind of small city feel. You know... everyone’s kind of connected.”
- “Even though it’s divided into different neighborhoods, it’s all one community.”
- “Basically, in my opinion, is a system that allows a tremendous amount of citizen input that hopefully will allow the community to come to a consensus that can then be recommended to the leaders to then move forward with specific issues.”
- “I’d like to think that it’s caring about each other and looking out for one another.”
- Mary Hynes, County Board Chair leading the PLACE initiative: “The “Arlington Way” is a way that our community has used for a really long time. Its success depends on

¹⁴ Strand, Palma Joy, Civic Engagement: A Guide for Communities (2006). Palma Strand, CIVIC ENGAGEMENT: A GUIDE FOR COMMUNITIES, Melinda D. Patrician, Mary H. Hynes, eds., The William and Flora Hewlett Foundation, (2006), https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=1510276

¹⁵ Reinvigorating the Arlington Way, <http://www.arlingtonconnection.com/news/2012/jan/04/reinvigorating-arlington-way/>

¹⁶ "What is the Arlington Way?", <https://www.arlnow.com/2012/04/12/video-what-is-the-arlington-way/>
¹⁷ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PY7gOM-idxQ&t=18s>

¹⁸ <https://www.arlnow.com/2012/03/07/events-scheduled-to-launch-place-initiative/>

¹⁹ Uniquely Arlington: ‘The Arlington Way’ remains elusive to define, Oct 5, 2015, https://www.insidenova.com/news/arlington/uniquely-arlington-the-arlington-way-remains-elusive-to-define/article_0bf65318-6b4f-11e5-bffd-7b81d88da822.html

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inclusive, accessible, respectful, constructive, persistent and purposeful dialogue between government and those who live here and work here.”

A PLACE (Participation, Leadership and Civic Engagement) Report²⁰ in 2012 sought to update the “Arlington Way” to “more formally institutionalize Arlington County’s commitment to civic engagement”²¹ and to get “more members of our community to be involved — actively and constructively — in the important local government decisions that affect their lives and those of their neighbors”²². While it does not include a definition of the “Arlington Way”, it includes helpful history on some of the improvement initiatives. However, it is important to access the source documents to gain a balanced history of the initiatives. The PLACE report includes working group accomplishments and recommendations. Additionally, the initiative resulted in clarifications on the roles and responsibilities of Advisory Groups through the Advisory Group Handbook^{23, 24}. Historical papers referenced include Abbott Bailey, Mapping the Arlington Way: Understanding The System of Citizen Participation in Arlington County (2000)²⁵; Melinda D. Patrician & Palma J. Strand, Arlington's Changing Story: Civic Engagement in Arlington County, Virginia (2003)^{26, 27}; and Creating The Arlington E-Way: Enhancing & Improving Community Engagement (2010).²⁸

“What is the ‘Arlington Way’ exactly? It is essentially an open conversation between the local government and the people who live and work in Arlington. But the Arlington Way can mean different things to different people.”²⁹

A 2013 *Arlington Magazine* article refers to the “Arlington Way” as “a tradition of active dialogue between citizens and county officials over planning initiatives.”³⁰

Jay Fiset, Former County Board Chair, wrote an introduction to the *2014 Advisory Group Handbook*³¹: “Arlington’s civic success is rooted in its vision and has been supported by years of citizen activism. It builds from a belief that good ideas can come from anywhere; that collaboration among community members, businesses, County staff and the County Board

²⁰ Participation, Leadership and Civic Engagement: Report to the County Board, December 2012,

https://arlington.granicus.com/MetaViewer.php?view_id=&clip_id=2438&meta_id=105775

²¹ <https://www.arlnow.com/2012/01/02/boards-2012-agenda-backyard-hens-and-the-arlington-way/>

²² <https://www.arlnow.com/2012/01/02/boards-2012-agenda-backyard-hens-and-the-arlington-way/>

²³ <https://arlingtonva.s3.amazonaws.com/wp-content/uploads/sites/5/2014/02/Advisory-Group-Handbook-2014.pdf>

²⁴ https://www.arlingtonva.us/files/sharedassets/public/Commissions/Documents/Advisory-Group-Handbook-Slides_03-20-14.pdf

²⁵ [https://www.civfed.org/newContent/2022-10/2022-](https://www.civfed.org/newContent/2022-10/2022-10%20CivFed%20Res%20Bailey%202000%20Mapping%20the%20Arlington%20Way%20Understanding.pdf)

[10%20CivFed%20Res%20Bailey%202000%20Mapping%20the%20Arlington%20Way%20Understanding.pdf](https://www.civfed.org/newContent/2022-10/2022-10%20CivFed%20Res%20Bailey%202000%20Mapping%20the%20Arlington%20Way%20Understanding.pdf)

²⁶ <https://dspace2.creighton.edu/xmlui/handle/10504/113499>

²⁷ https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=1510267

²⁸ Arlington Economic Development, Source document unavailable

²⁹ <https://www.arlnow.com/2013/01/29/peters-take-has-the-arlington-way-lost-its-way/>

³⁰ <https://www.arlingtonmagazine.com/when-metro-came-to-town/>

³¹ <https://www.arlingtonva.us/files/sharedassets/public/Commissions/Documents/Advisory-Group-Handbook-2014.pdf> Introduction

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typically leads to better results than working alone; and that strategic decisions stand the test of time when developed through robust, creative, respectful civic conversations. Our success has always been a work in progress - open to evaluation and improvement."

The County released the *Six Step Guide to Public Engagement for Capital Projects*^{32, 33} in 2018. As the name suggests, the Guide is focused solely on capital projects. However, it lays out a rigorous structure for public engagement for related projects. It is based on the model developed by the International Association for Public Participation (IAP2)^{34, 35, 36} though the IAP2 model also includes an "Empowerment" level. The IAP2 model also includes core values of public participation^{37, 38} which are significantly different than those in the *Six Step Guide*. Two of the seven IAP2 core values include that public participation is based on the belief that those who are affected by a decision have a right to be involved in the decision-making process and that public participation includes a promise that the public's contribution will influence the decision.³⁹ The *Six Step Guide* can be considered part of the "Arlington Way".

Ron Carlee, after leaving County employment, described the "Arlington Way" in 2019 as "In its most positive framing, the Arlington Way means engaging with the public on issues of importance or concern (not always the same) in an effort to reach community consensus or, in the lack of consensus, a shared understanding and an opportunity for everyone to be heard. In its negative framing, the Arlington Way was derided as a way to talk everything to death so that ideas are killed or that people are so worn-down by the end that they do not care what happens as long as it is just over. It was quipped that Arlington's tagline should be, "Process. It's our most important product."⁴⁰

Krysta Jones, columnist and former County Board employee, defined the "Arlington Way" as "a process that aims to ensure opportunity for civic engagement, participation and transparency to address our community challenges."⁴¹

Libby Garvey, Current County Board Member and former Chair, pointed out that "sometimes when we have the Arlington Way, we want to involve people, but it's very important to involve residents in an appropriate way. And if we've got professional engineering, hydrology and all of this other, to have people that are not professionally doing that is just sort of a recipe for people, and for everyone, getting frustrated. I think that if everyone stays in the area... that is

³² <https://www.arlingtonva.us/About-Arlington/News/Articles/2018/Major-Milestone-A-New-Six-Step-Public-Engagement-Guide>

³³ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CAQtHGlcI8A&t=5202s>

³⁴ <https://www.iap2.org/page/resources>

³⁵ https://cdn.ymaws.com/www.iap2.org/resource/resmgr/pillars/Spectrum_8.5x11_Print.pdf

³⁶ https://cdn.ymaws.com/sites/iap2.site-ym.com/resource/resmgr/files/IAP2_Federation_-_P2_Pillars.pdf

³⁷ <https://iap2usa.org/resources/Documents/Core%20Values%20Awards/IAP2%20-%20Core%20Values%20-%20stand%20alone%20document.pdf>

³⁸ <https://iap2usa.org/resources/Documents/Core%20Values%20Awards/IAP2%20-%20Code%20of%20Ethics%20-%20stand%20alone%20document.pdf>

³⁹ https://iap2usa.org/resources/Documents/IAP2USA_PillarsOfPublicParticipationBrochure.pdf

⁴⁰ <https://www.jstor.org/stable/10.32543/naticivirevi.108.1.0024>

⁴¹ <https://www.arlnow.com/2020/05/12/community-matters-rethinking-the-arlington-way/>

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appropriate for them, and absolutely how it feels and interacts with the neighborhood is totally appropriate for folks. But I think figuring it out stormwater, hydrology, soil types and everything is, just doesn't feel like something for a lot of citizen engagement.^{42, 43}

U.S. Senator Mark Warner of Virginia said the "Arlington Way" is "pretty special.. your level of participation, your level of civic engagement, is the model for all of us and... [others] can learn something from Arlington".⁴⁴

Please refer to Section 2 for additional "Arlington Way" positive examples.

1.2. Example Arlington County Awards Related to the "Arlington Way".

Arlington County and the community have received awards⁴⁵ for innovation, community engagement, transparency and other topics related to this report. While some of the awards are for more recent efforts, many of the planning-related awards are based on the foundations of planning for the Rosslyn-Ballston Metro Corridor⁴⁶. As stated in Section 1.1, community engagement around that planning is believed to be the foundation and beginning of the "Arlington Way".^{47, 48}

Below are examples of some of the awards won with community engagement, transparency and related topics. The year awarded is in parentheses. Please note that the year awarded may be more recent than the foundational work done many years or decades prior. The award materials are not available on the County site therefore it is difficult to determine the basis of all awards.

The County site lists only awards won and may not be all-inclusive. It does not include all award applications, conferences,^{49,50, 51} presentations, courses,^{52, 53, 54} papers and other forms related to the topics in this report. The listed awards demonstrate the importance of community engagement and how the County serves as an example for other jurisdictions.

Rosslyn-Ballston Corridor⁵⁵ (long-term planning for the Metro corridor):

⁴² <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=y7L5WEtQN8&t=22073s>

⁴³ https://arlington.granicus.com/MetaViewer.php?view_id=2&clip_id=3793&meta_id=197398

⁴⁴ <https://vimeo.com/525103491#t=2572s>

⁴⁵ <https://www.arlingtonva.us/Government/Departments/CMO/County-Awards-Recognition>

⁴⁶ <https://www.arlingtonva.us/Government/Projects/Planning/Smart-Growth/Rosslyn-Ballston-Corridor>

⁴⁷ https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uFHs1_P4qTU&feature=share&si=ELPmzJkDCLju2KnD5oyZMQ&t=1695

⁴⁸ https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uFHs1_P4qTU&feature=share&si=ELPmzJkDCLju2KnD5oyZMQ&t=1711

⁴⁹ <https://www.planning.org/events/course/9206309/>

⁵⁰ https://fall.smartcitiesconnect.org/program/index_2022.html#detail

⁵¹ <https://www.vlgma.org/dao>

⁵² <https://www.planning.org/events/eventsingle/9196048/>

⁵³ <https://sacrph.org/conference-2019/2019-conference-tours-and-events>

⁵⁴ <https://ncac.planning.org/events/activity/9161013/>

⁵⁵ <https://www.arlingtonva.us/Government/Projects/Planning/Smart-Growth/Rosslyn-Ballston-Corridor>

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- U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Office of Policy, Economics and Innovation, EPA National Award for Smart Growth Achievement,⁵⁶ Smart Growth in the Rosslyn-Ballston Metro Corridor (2002)⁵⁷
- The Coalition for Smarter Growth,⁵⁸ Capital Region Visionary Award (2007)
- American Planning Association (APA), Great Streets in America, Clarendon and Wilson Boulevards⁵⁹ (2008)
- Salon.com, smart growth "Suburb of the Future"⁶⁰ (2014)
- National Planning Achievement Award for Smart Growth Journey, Gold 2017 National Planning Achievement Award for Implementation⁶¹ (2017)

American Planning Association Virginia Chapter,⁶² 2016 Public Outreach and Engagement Award, Community Facilities Study⁶³ (2016)

American Planning Association Virginia Chapter,⁶⁴ honorable mention for both the Outstanding Plan and Public Outreach and Engagement Awards, Courthouse Sector Plan (2016)

American Planning Association, Achievement Award for Innovation in Economic Planning and Development, Crystal City Sector Plan⁶⁵ (2013)

American Planning Association's Virginia Chapter,⁶⁶ Outstanding Planning Award for Nauck Village Center Action Plan⁶⁷ (2005)

American Planning Association, National Capital Area Chapter,⁶⁸ Outstanding Implemented Plan Award,⁶⁹ Western Rosslyn Area Plan (2018)

Virginia Coalition for Open Government, Open Government Award Winner (2016)^{70, 71}

⁵⁶ <https://www.epa.gov/smartgrowth/2002-national-award-smart-growth-achievement-booklet>

⁵⁷ https://www.epa.gov/sites/default/files/2014-04/documents/2002_sg_awards.pdf

⁵⁸ <https://smartergrowth.net/about/>

⁵⁹ <https://www.planning.org/greatplaces/streets/2008/clarendonwilson.htm>

⁶⁰ https://www.salon.com/2014/07/06/the_suburb_of_the_future_is_here/

⁶¹ <https://www.planning.org/awards/2017/achievement/>

⁶² <https://virginia.planning.org>

⁶³ <https://www.arlingtonva.us/Government/Projects/Plans-Studies/Land-Use/Community-Facilities-Study>

⁶⁴ <https://virginia.planning.org>

⁶⁵ <https://www.planning.org/awards/2013/achievement.htm>

⁶⁶ <https://virginia.planning.org>

⁶⁷ <https://www.arlingtonva.us/Government/Projects/Plans-Studies/Land-Use/Nauck-Village-Center-Action-Plan>

⁶⁸ <https://ncac.planning.org>

⁶⁹ <https://ncac.planning.org/chapter-events/chapter-awards/past-ncac-awards/>

⁷⁰ <https://www.opengovva.org/blog/2016-open-government-award-winners>

⁷¹ https://www.insidenova.com/news/arlington/arlington-government-now-putting-foia-responses-online/article_32772190-2b1e-11e6-9fd2-5728571d2b71.html

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Center for Digital Government and National Association of Counties,^{72, 73, 74} No. 1 County in the nation (2022 and prior), 150,000-249,999 population category.

2. In the “Arlington Way” process Arlington residents who sought to be involved perceived that they had a meaningful seat at the decision-making table, which resulted in robust community discussion, producing consensus-driven outcomes that have made Arlington one of the most sought-after places to live in the nation.

2.1. The Clarendon Sector Plan (2006)

The 2006 Clarendon Sector Plan⁷⁵ prioritized open space as one of the most important community benefits, to make high density apartment living possible with community input considered and reflected in the Plan. See 3.2.1 for an example of community elements in the 2006 plan versus the 2022 version.

2.2. Roundtables with Civic and Condo Association Presidents (2018)

Roundtables with Civic and Condo Association Presidents hosted by the County Manager and Civic Federation were conducted in 2018. There was a series of three roundtables with approximately 55 Civic/Condo Association Presidents to explore opportunities for better coordination and communication. Presidents shared practices in areas of communication, identified areas of opportunity for better coordination, and highlighted the challenges that Civic and Condo Association Presidents face on a regular basis. The County will work with the Civic Federation and Presidents to explore short term opportunities for strengthening Civic and Condo Association participation and communication.⁷⁶

2.3. Plan Langston Boulevard (2021)

In June 2021, the County released its first mockups of new density for redevelopment along a 5-mile corridor stretching west of Rosslyn to East Falls Church, referred to as “Plan Langston Boulevard”.⁷⁷ The Langston Boulevard Alliance (LBA)⁷⁸ is “a coalition of 18 civic association leaders who have actively engaged communities along Langston Boulevard since 2012 to develop a community-based vision, and identify actions and strategies to achieve it.”⁷⁹ The county claimed it had proceeded in a straight line of public engagement that began in 2018, with community meetings, charettes, etc. Between 2018 and 2022, the county changed its

⁷² <https://www.govtech.com/dc/digital-counties/digital-counties-survey-2022-winners-announced>

⁷³ <https://www.govtech.com/cdg>

⁷⁴ <https://www.naco.org>

⁷⁵ <https://arlingtonva.s3.amazonaws.com/wp-content/uploads/sites/31/2014/03/Clarendon-SectorPlan06.pdf>

⁷⁶ Roundtables with Civic and Condo Association Presidents, March 2018, <https://arlingtonva.s3.dualstack.us-east-1.amazonaws.com/wp-content/uploads/sites/21/2018/03/SummaryCivic.CondoAssociationRoundtables.March-2018.pdf>

⁷⁷ <https://www.arlingtonva.us/Government/Projects/Plans-Studies/Land-Use/Plan-Langston-Boulevard>

⁷⁸ <https://www.langstonblvdalliance.com/about.html>

⁷⁹ <https://www.arlingtonva.us/Government/Projects/Plans-Studies/Land-Use/Plan-Langston-Boulevard>

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recommendation for high density from three key nodes. The efforts of the Langston Boulevard Alliance (LBA) convinced County staff eventually to reduce the high density at the nodes from 10-12 stories where there are now only one-story shops with surface parking down to a lower density (6 or 7 stories) for most of the corridor. If it were not for the efforts of the Langston Boulevard Alliance and its leadership team, this reduction in density and building height may not have occurred.

While it is a “positive” that LBA Leadership was able to get county staff to back off concerning building heights, other members of the community are still not sold on the Preliminary Concept Plan because it assumes that the Site Review Process⁸⁰ will provide for the infrastructure needs of the Langston Boulevard corridor. See section 10.1.2 for details.

2.4. Bluemont Baseball Field Renovation (2016)

In 2016, the County was planning for Bluemont Baseball Field Renovation and the community had conflicting ideas on the path forward (open vs enclosed field). The County worked with the Community, negotiating a compromised that allowed the renovations to proceed.^{81, 82}

Additional information is available in Section 3.7.3.

⁸⁰ <https://www.arlingtonva.us/Government/Programs/Building/Review-Processes/Site-Plan>

⁸¹ <https://www.arlnow.com/2016/10/31/county-revises-bluemont-baseball-field-plan-in-attempt-at-compromise/>

⁸² <https://arlingtonva.s3.dualstack.us-east-1.amazonaws.com/wp-content/uploads/sites/31/2016/10/Bluemont-Park-Presentation-Oct-25.pdf>

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2.5. Arlington's Historic Smart Growth Journey (1960s – present)

The County produced a Smart Growth Video in 2010, which includes Arlington as a model for smart growth development. Smart Growth is considered a number of strategies and tactics relating to land use and transportation.^{83, 84}

Julie Mangus, Executive Director for the Ballston Partnership and former member of Arlington's for Optimum Growth, stated that "perhaps it's been successful because the citizens are active and really believe in the community and they want to stay here."⁸⁵

Federal Funding for Metro was tied to the approval of Interstate 66 through Arlington.⁸⁶ However, Arlington County worked to have the highway rerouted to a more desirable location and allow better redevelopment of Rosslyn.⁸⁷ Arlington County government fought for additional Arlington metro stations.

Jon Kinney, former Arlington County Sector Plan Committee member, said Metro "offered an opportunity to do the type of planning that hadn't been done in Arlington up until that time in other words to make a conscious decision that growth is going here and not scattered."⁸⁸ The land-use decisions prompted the County Board to establish the Committee on the Long Range County Improvement Program.⁸⁹ The Arlington Committee on Optimum Growth tried to focus on all the impacts of the proposed development.⁹⁰ One of the results of this consideration was the development of the "bull's eye" concept around Metro development.^{91, 92, 93} Once the bull's eyes were established, the County also worked with the individual communities around each station to allow the community to build unique urban villages.^{94, 95, 96}

Metro investment required bond approval so the County focused on Arlington voters for with approval of metro funding. In this case, the change was literally on the ballot for bond funding. A sample metro car was even set up in the County to garner community excitement.⁹⁷ As a result of the change management and community engagement efforts, the bond passed with 70% approval.⁹⁸

⁸³ https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uFHs1_P4qTU&feature=share&si=ELPmzJkDCLju2KnD5oyZMQ&t=167

⁸⁴ <https://www.arlingtonva.us/Government/Projects/Planning/Smart-Growth>

⁸⁵ https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uFHs1_P4qTU&feature=share&si=ELPmzJkDCLju2KnD5oyZMQ&t=2982

⁸⁶ https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uFHs1_P4qTU&feature=share&si=ELPmzJkDCLju2KnD5oyZMQ&t=810

⁸⁷ https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uFHs1_P4qTU&feature=share&si=ELPmzJkDCLju2KnD5oyZMQ&t=888

⁸⁸ https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uFHs1_P4qTU&feature=share&si=ELPmzJkDCLju2KnD5oyZMQ&t=1389

⁸⁹ https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uFHs1_P4qTU&feature=share&si=ELPmzJkDCLju2KnD5oyZMQ&t=1414

⁹⁰ https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uFHs1_P4qTU&feature=share&si=ELPmzJkDCLju2KnD5oyZMQ&t=1472

⁹¹ https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uFHs1_P4qTU&feature=share&si=ELPmzJkDCLju2KnD5oyZMQ&t=1595

⁹² <https://www.arlingtonva.us/files/sharedassets/public/Projects/Documents/RB-Alt-Use1.pdf>

⁹³ https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uFHs1_P4qTU&t=2465s

⁹⁴ https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uFHs1_P4qTU&feature=share&si=ELPmzJkDCLju2KnD5oyZMQ&t=1617

⁹⁵ https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uFHs1_P4qTU&feature=share&si=ELPmzJkDCLju2KnD5oyZMQ&t=1673

⁹⁶ <https://www.arlingtonva.us/Government/Projects/Planning/Smart-Growth/Rosslyn-Ballston-Corridor>

⁹⁷ https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uFHs1_P4qTU&feature=share&si=ELPmzJkDCLju2KnD5oyZMQ&t=1249

⁹⁸ https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uFHs1_P4qTU&feature=share&si=ELPmzJkDCLju2KnD5oyZMQ&t=1299

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Neither the planners or community were determined to have “infinite wisdom”. However, Joseph Wholey, Former County Board Member, said that the clash and compromise helped the Board approve something better than the planning process had envisioned.⁹⁹ This is thought to be the impetus for what has become the “Arlington Way”.^{100, 101, 102}

Jay Fisette, Former County Board Chair, has stated that “the foresight in terms of that the alignment of the Orange Line is amazing it is a case study about how to do things.”¹⁰³

The Rosslyn-Ballston planning effort around Metro has led to Arlington becoming an example of how to plan for Smart Growth.^{104, 105, 106, 107, 108, 109, 110, 111, 112}

Robert Hunter, President of the American Planning Association, recognized Arlington as a National model for transit-oriented development, saying that the model works because “people participated, the elected officials made that decision of inclusionary participation and now, it's occurred and it's really, really working.”¹¹³

2.6. Working together to begin resolving issues at the Serrano apartments (2021-2022)

According to an ArlNow article, “Two weeks ago [April, 2021], Julius “JD” Spain and the NAACP Housing Committee Chair Kellen MacBeth walked through a handful of apartment units, taking pictures of the conditions. They wrote a letter to County Manager Mark Schwartz detailing the conditions and asking Schwartz to assign staff to work with tenants, rehabilitate the units and rewrite policy so all residents have safe, decent and affordable homes.”^{114, 115}

⁹⁹ https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uFHs1_P4qTU&feature=share&si=ELPmzJkDCLju2KnD5oyZMQ&t=1695

¹⁰⁰ https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uFHs1_P4qTU&feature=share&si=ELPmzJkDCLju2KnD5oyZMQ&t=1710

¹⁰¹ <https://www.arlingtonmagazine.com/when-metro-came-to-town/>

¹⁰² <https://www.washingtonpost.com/archive/business/1981/06/01/rosslyn-ballston-carridor-struggling-for-rezoning-with-balance/2218e3b3-38e6-4e0f-88c0-25cd65073a1e/>

¹⁰³ https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uFHs1_P4qTU&feature=share&si=ELPmzJkDCLju2KnD5oyZMQ&t=1037

¹⁰⁴ <https://pgparks.com/DocumentCenter/View/9199/Article-on-Arlington-County-SGJRB-Corridor-9-18>

¹⁰⁵ <https://trid.trb.org/view/706196>

¹⁰⁶ <https://www.cnu.org/what-we-do/build-great-places/rosslyn-ballston-corridor>

¹⁰⁷ <https://www.districtresidential.com/va-neighborhoods-1/rosslyn%2Fballston-corridor>

¹⁰⁸ https://www.researchgate.net/publication/277971538_Planning_for_Sustainable_Transport_in_Germany_and_the_USA_A_Comparison_of_the_Washington_DC_and_Stuttgart_Regions

¹⁰⁹ <https://www.arlingtonva.us/Government/Projects/Planning/Smart-Growth/Rosslyn-Ballston-Corridor>

¹¹⁰ <https://arlingtonva.s3.amazonaws.com/wp-content/uploads/sites/31/2018/09/Smart-Growth-R-B-Corridor-Presentation-Sept-2018.pdf>

¹¹¹ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BQV6mjNX0eE&feature=share&si=ELPmzJkDCLju2KnD5oyZMQ&t=149>

¹¹² <https://smartgrowthamerica.org/arlington-virginias-story-of-smart-growth-the-movie/>

¹¹³ https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uFHs1_P4qTU&feature=share&si=ELPmzJkDCLju2KnD5oyZMQ&t=2896

¹¹⁴ <https://www.arlnow.com/2021/05/06/rodents-mold-shoddy-maintenance-plague-affordable-apartment-building/>

¹¹⁵ <https://storage.googleapis.com/production-constantcontact-v1-0-4/824/621824/9vj90fif/6c7da4c0e6d0401ab48f7adf701a33ed?fileName=Serrano%20Apartments%20Letter%20-%20April%2030,%202021%201.pdf>

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"The significant County response to the Serrano kicked-off one day after the Housing Commission's meeting on May 6th, 2021, where tenants, advocates, and community members pressed AHC¹¹⁶ and county leadership to address the poor conditions and mistreatment at the property."¹¹⁷

BU-GATA¹¹⁸, Virginians Organized for Interfaith Community Engagement (VOICE)¹¹⁹, and the Asian American-Pacific Islander Civic Engagement (ACE) Collaborative¹²⁰ also engaged due to "Mice and rat infestations. Balconies with broken glass and rust. Dirty HVAC units with water damage underneath. Shoddy maintenance."¹²¹

In response to the issues, the County produced *Long-Term Strategies for Improved Oversight and Tenant Support at Aging Properties* (April 2022)¹²², which includes recommendations for long-term strategies and outlines staffing and resource needs. Arlington outlined its roles and responsibilities as¹²³:

- As a lender (rather than Housing Authority), oversight of properties with County AHIF loans, including unit inspections using Housing Quality Standards (HQS) (currently 10% annual sample)
- DHS client case management and HCV/PSH unit oversight using HQS (currently 100% annual sample)
- Vector control: rodent inspection and education (complaint-based)
- Code enforcement (complaint-based)
- Fair Housing Enforcement/Resident support: information about rights and responsibilities, referrals to County resources (e.g., rental assistance, code enforcement, fair housing)
- Financial management

¹¹⁶ <https://www.ahcinc.org>

¹¹⁷ <https://www.arlingtonva.us/files/sharedassets/public/commissions/documents/housing-commission/jssap-report-serrano-apartments-sep-2022-draft.pdf>

¹¹⁸ <https://www.bu-gata.org>

¹¹⁹ <https://voice-iaf.org>

¹²⁰ https://www.newvirginiamajority.org/ace_collaborative

¹²¹ <https://www.arlnow.com/2021/05/06/rodents-mold-shoddy-maintenance-plague-affordable-apartment-building/>

¹²² <https://www.arlingtonva.us/files/sharedassets/public/commissions/documents/housing-commission/aging-caf-strategies-final-report.pdf>

¹²³ <https://www.arlingtonva.us/files/sharedassets/public/commissions/documents/housing-commission/aging-caf-strategies-final-report.pdf>

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The Housing Commission provided additional opportunity for public comment and increased issue visibility to ensure residents' concerns are heard and addressed.^{124, 125, 126} The Housing Commission also submitted a letter to the County Board with preliminary observations and recommendations.^{127, 128} Additionally, the Citizens Advisory Commission on Housing and Tenant-Landlord Commission joined together to form the Joint Subcommittee on the Status of Aging Properties (JSSAP) to "identify (1) the conditions leading to the poor health and safety environment for some residents at the Serrano Apartments; (2) why attempts to address the issues from 2019 until May 2021 were not successful; and (3) develop recommendations to ensure that a similar situation does not happen again."¹²⁹

The County Manager designed immediate action items and mid-long term strategies that were consistent with County oversight roles for the AHIF loan, DHS client unit oversight, inspections and monitoring and resident support.¹³⁰ One of those steps included assembling an inter-departmental task force consisting primarily of the Department of Community Planning, Housing and Development (CPHD); Department of Human Services (DHS), Housing Assistance Services; and Code Enforcement.

"In the ensuing weeks, the County Board instituted regular updates¹³¹ from residents and affordable housing nonprofit AHC to keep tabs on the work being done to improve life at the Serrano. Both parties say physical conditions have improved. Inspections are complete, everyone has either moved back to the Serrano or into a new living situation and AHC is still seeing administrative changes after the retirement of CEO Walter Webdale: two more retirements, six new members of the Board of Directors, including two AHC apartments residents, and an ongoing CEO search."¹³² The AHC Board also provided a letter County Board detailing corrective actions.¹³³

¹²⁴ <https://www.arlingtonva.us/files/sharedassets/public/commissions/documents/housing-commission/9-9-21-hc-approved-notes.pdf>

¹²⁵ <https://www.arlingtonva.us/files/sharedassets/public/commissions/documents/housing-commission/9-9-21-hc-approved-notes.pdf>

¹²⁶ <https://www.arlnow.com/2021/05/20/a-flurry-of-activity-descends-on-the-serrano-apartments-after-residents-decry-conditions-inside/>

¹²⁷ <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1P0dAm5FvGG4OAJWapaG6yX0ic9IbipfY/view?fbclid=IwAR2yfHVpy-ZMJ0vgkXzJnO8mpMwq95YlvAkj4IgiWVvzntug-i2HATPYSiSY>

¹²⁸ <https://www.arlnow.com/2021/05/19/peters-take-arlington-must-act-now-to-help-all-tenants-at-ahcs-serrano-apartments/>

¹²⁹ <https://www.arlingtonva.us/files/sharedassets/public/commissions/documents/housing-commission/jssap-report-serrano-apartments-sep-2022-draft.pdf>

¹³⁰ https://arlington.granicus.com/MetaViewer.php?view_id=2&clip_id=3924&meta_id=203930

¹³¹ <https://www.arlnow.com/2021/06/17/county-board-drills-into-ahc-about-serrano-apartment-conditions/>

¹³² <https://www.arlnow.com/2021/11/20/reporters-notepad-an-update-on-the-serrano-apartments/#more-256447>

¹³³ https://arlington.granicus.com/MetaViewer.php?view_id=2&clip_id=3924&meta_id=203935

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JSSAP delivered their report on September 1, 2022, detailing the history, County involvement, timeline, recommendations for Arlington County and Virginia action, and tenant resources.^{134, 135, 136, 137} The County Manager and County Board are anticipated to share more information and actions with the public in the near future (Fall 2022). In addition to County actions, the County may include Commonwealth action recommendations in their 2023 legislative priorities.¹³⁸

Problems at the Serrano will not be solved overnight. However, the County Board and County Manager listened to community feedback and media pressure, determined a course of action consistent with their oversight and community roles, and are following through. As a result, physical conditions are improving and residents have a safer environment in which to live.

2.7. Creation of a Police Practices Work Group (2020)

"Following recent events involving policing and racial justice across the United States, the County Board asked the County Manager to lead a review of police policies and practices. This review will ensure that the Arlington County Police Department is current with policing best practices and continue to build trust between our police and the community."^{139, 140}

A Scope and Topics¹⁴¹ document was created to clearly articulate the purpose, timeline, areas of consideration, areas out of scope, membership and appointments. This focus allowed the volunteer Subcommittee/Work Group to quickly deliver recommendations to the County.

Despite reporting to the County Manager, which is not subject to the same Open Meeting requirements as the County Board and their Advisory Groups, the Subcommittee/Work Group conducted some meetings that were open to the public.¹⁴² Members of the community were

¹³⁴ <https://www.arlingtonva.us/files/sharedassets/public/commissions/documents/housing-commission/jssap-report-serrano-apartments-sep-2022-draft.pdf>

¹³⁵ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gTbr12UC2vc&t=6632s>

¹³⁶ <https://www.arlnow.com/2022/09/22/report-outlines-how-arlington-county-can-prevent-another-serrano-saga/>

¹³⁷ <https://www.arlingtonva.us/files/sharedassets/public/commissions/documents/tenant-landlord/tlc-notes-2022-07-13.pdf>

¹³⁸ <https://www.arlingtonva.us/Government/Departments/CMO/Legislative-Affairs>

¹³⁹ <https://www.arlingtonva.us/Government/Departments/CMO/Police-Practices-Work-Group>

¹⁴⁰ <https://www.arlingtonva.us/About-Arlington/News/Articles/2020/Arlington-Launches-Review-of-Police-Policies-and-Practices?transfer=89f1092e-23e1-4e18-8cca-b991a655617a>

¹⁴¹ <https://arlingtonva.s3.amazonaws.com/wp-content/uploads/sites/6/2020/07/Updated.PolicePracticeGroup.SCOPE-and-TOPICS.-7.17.20b.pdf>

¹⁴² <https://www.arlingtonva.us/Government/Departments/CMO/Police-Practices-Work-Group>

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allowed to submit insights and feedback to inform recommendations.¹⁴³ Additionally, the Subcommittee/Work Group engaged with the public to inform and educate.^{144, 145, 146, 147, 148}

See Section 3.6.1 for additional information on a challenge with the Police Practices Group and County handling of recommendations.

2.8. Police accessibility, transparency, and process improvements (2021)

The County Manager coordinated an external consultant's review of police practices. The Hillard Heintze (external consultant) report¹⁴⁹ on Arlington County Police Department (ACPD)¹⁵⁰ was published in October 2021 and transmitted to the public by the County Manager in January 2022¹⁵¹. Both occurred after some delays as addressed in the Arlington County Civic Federation's (ACCF) June 2021 resolution¹⁵². The report noted that ACPD meets best practices for Body-Worn Cameras (BWC), training well beyond minimum standards, and update use-of-force practices to national best practices. Additional suggestions from the report are in process, including expansion of Spanish language resources and better leveraging data collected.

The ACPD improved their website¹⁵³ over the past 3 years, including a central dashboard. Policies¹⁵⁴, procedures, memorandums of understanding, crime rate statistics by neighborhood, and other resources are easier to access and cross-referenced via other sites.

¹⁴³ https://www.arlingtonva.us/wp-content/uploads/sites/6/2021/02/PPG-Feedback_FINAL-TAGGING.xlsx

¹⁴⁴ <https://vimeo.com/539673871#t=4927s>

¹⁴⁵ <https://vimeo.com/525103491#t=2682s>

¹⁴⁶ <https://www.arlingtoncommitteeof100.org/past-programs-1/2020-2021-meeting-videos/>

¹⁴⁷ https://us02web.zoom.us/rec/play/aDMBpOr3g5sVFOqKJ7HT2RqrUWFeyjRFCHYAIg9oB65MfCtXrx-ItACP-NjMXWb7hSt1Ey3BneZ_cDFz.MfgniQpSgOR-VRjE?continueMode=true&xzm_rtaid=uYHX0_DYSUuhMZdqvguazg.1666196916282.e217df1ef39dc1eb178a85e49e7ecaee&xzm_rtaid=713

¹⁴⁸ <https://www.civfed.org/newContent/2021-04/2021-04%20ACCF%20Presentation%20PolicePracticesGrp.pdf>

¹⁴⁹ <https://www.arlingtonva.us/files/sharedassets/public/departments/documents/hillard-heintze-administrative-policy-and-data-review-of-the-arlington-county-pd-10-04-21.pdf>

¹⁵⁰ <https://www.arlingtonva.us/Government/Departments/Police-Department>

¹⁵¹ https://www.arlingtonva.us/files/sharedassets/public/departments/documents/rev.01.12.2022_final-transmittal-letter.pdf

¹⁵² <https://www.civfed.org/newContent/2021-06/2021-06-ACCF-PubSvcCmte-Res-External-Police-Consultant-APPROVED.pdf>

¹⁵³ <https://www.arlingtonva.us/Government/Departments/Police-Department>

¹⁵⁴ <https://www.arlingtonva.us/Government/Departments/Police-Department/About-ACPD/Publications>

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The ODAG was tasked with helping to grow the county's Open Data Program^{170, 171} in order to¹⁷²:

- better engage community members in decision making processes;
- inspire the creation of innovative application and service delivery solutions;
- extend and improve community outreach by publicizing open data initiatives and
- provide recommendations for improvement/expansion of the Open Data Portal

The Open Data Portal, with input from ODAG, could help the community make better decisions using data. The concept started on the correct path. For additional information on ODAG, see Section 13.1.2.

2.11. Expansion of the Community and Public Engagement Function (2016)

According to the County website, the County began building the capability for community engagement in 2012.¹⁷³ The function was further expanded in 2016 after Mark Schwartz was appointed County Manager¹⁷⁴. A new Assistant County Manager for Communications and Public Engagement^{175, 176, 177} was appointed to “bringing the expertise, energy and creativity that we need to make even more improvements to our public engagement efforts”¹⁷⁸.

This initiative started with a strong dedication to community engagement. However, as this report demonstrates, there is still a need for additional bottom-up community input into County decisions.

2.12. Retail Options Expanded in Columbia Pike Corridor (2021)

The County Board voted to improve retail flexibility in the Columbia Pike Form Based Code (FBC)¹⁷⁹ and Neighborhoods-Form Based Code (N-FBC)^{180, 181} in November 2021. The positive

¹⁷⁰ <https://data.arlingtonva.us/home>

¹⁷¹ <https://www.arlingtonva.us/Government/Topics/Open-Arlington>

¹⁷² <https://www.arlingtonva.us/Government/Commissions-and-Advisory-Groups/ODAG>

¹⁷³ <https://www.arlingtonva.us/Government/Departments/CMO/Comms-Public-Engagement>

¹⁷⁴ <https://www.arlingtonva.us/About-Arlington/News/Articles/2016/Mark-Schwartz-Named-Arlington-County-Manager>

¹⁷⁵ <https://www.arlingtonva.us/About-Arlington/News/Articles/2016/Bryna-Helfer-Appointed-as-Director-of-Communications-and-Public-Engag>

¹⁷⁶ <https://patch.com/virginia/clarendon/new-director-communications-announced-arlington>

¹⁷⁷ <https://www.arlnow.com/2016/11/10/bluement-baseball-field-compromise-approved-county-promises-better-outreach/>

¹⁷⁸ <https://patch.com/virginia/clarendon/new-director-communications-announced-arlington>

¹⁷⁹ <https://www.arlingtonva.us/Government/Commissions-and-Advisory-Groups/Form-Based-Code-Advisory-Working-Group/Past-Meetings>

¹⁸⁰ <https://www.arlingtonva.us/Government/Programs/Building/Permits/Form-Based-Code/Neighborhoods>

¹⁸¹ https://arlington.granicus.com/GeneratedAgendaViewer.php?view_id=2&clip_id=3979

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vote^{182, 183, 184} was culmination of years of advocacy from the FBC Advisory Working Group (AWG)¹⁸⁵, Columbia Pike Revitalization Organization¹⁸⁶ (a.k.a. Columbia Pike Partnership), Columbia Pike Presidents Group (PPG)¹⁸⁷, residents, businesses, and Arlington Chamber of Commerce¹⁸⁸ with additional support from NoVA Hispanic American Chamber of Commerce¹⁸⁹ and Arlington NAACP¹⁹⁰. Arlington county staff expanded list to include urban agriculture, which was missed in earlier stakeholder discussions. The list now includes:

- Museums, Art Galleries, Art Studios
- Animal Boarding
- Shared Commercial Kitchens
- Artisan Beverage
- Artisan Workshop
- Agriculture
- Legacy site's ability to utilize FBC without full redevelopment

Arlington County Civic Federation (ACCF)¹⁹¹ passed resolution in May 2015 expressing concerns for the county-wide restrictive retail plan. The 2021 expansion impacts Columbia Pike corridor only at this time.

3. It appears to many residents that the current community engagement methods are unevenly applied or have fundamentally changed and no longer consistently includes critical engagement principles and features, and that far-reaching decisions may be made without incorporating substantive resident input from some of those who want to provide it or reaching broad community consensus.

3.1. Appearing to Dismiss Widespread Community Input.

3.1.1. The Pentagon City Sector Plan¹⁹²

More than 2,400 individuals¹⁹³ opposed the county's proposed plan citing significant issues, over one hundred individuals testified¹⁹⁴ opposing the plan in several County

¹⁸² https://arlington.granicus.com/GeneratedAgendaViewer.php?view_id=2&clip_id=3990

¹⁸³ https://arlington.granicus.com/MetaViewer.php?view_id=2&clip_id=3990&meta_id=206597

¹⁸⁴ https://arlington.granicus.com/MetaViewer.php?view_id=2&clip_id=3990&meta_id=206598

¹⁸⁵ <https://www.arlingtonva.us/Government/Commissions-and-Advisory-Groups/Form-Based-Code-Advisory-Working-Group/Past-Meetings>

¹⁸⁶ <https://www.columbia-pike.org>

¹⁸⁷ <http://www.pike-ppg.org>

¹⁸⁸ <https://www.arlingtonchamber.org>

¹⁸⁹ <https://www.novahispanicchamber.com>

¹⁹⁰ <https://www.arlingtonnaacp.com>

¹⁹¹ <https://www.civfed.org>

¹⁹² <https://www.arlingtonva.us/Government/Projects/Plans-Studies/Land-Use/Pentagon-City-Planning-Study>

¹⁹³ <https://www.change.org/p/arlington-county-board-riverhouse-neighbors-for-sensible-density>

¹⁹⁴ https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_8dCOoYwFw&feature=share&si=ELPmzJkDCLju2KnD5oyZMQ&t=13855

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meetings and at the February 2022 Arlington County Board^{195, 196} monthly meeting, two civic associations voted on resolutions to not approve the plan due to its questionable impact on the community, hundreds of people wrote to the County Board, and experts testified that this Plan would be detrimental to equity and livability. Despite the significant level of community concern, the County Board voted 5-0 to move the Pentagon City Sector Plan offering no acknowledgment of dissenting opinions.

The County Board did not address the issues or even extend the engagement period for the many thousands of people who just only learned about the project at the very end of the process.¹⁹⁷ Letters from the public are not included with the County agenda.¹⁹⁸ See Section 3.6.3.

3.2. Appearing to renege on plans made through community consensus.

3.2.1. The Clarendon Sector Plan established in 2006¹⁹⁹ prioritized open space as one of the most important community benefits to make high density apartment living possible.

The 2006 plan included a 50,000 square foot park on Irving St. The open space was negotiated in return for the massive increase in height and density.

During the revisions of the plans that followed between 2006 and 2022²⁰⁰, the open space vanished.

2006	2022
Designed to be an urban village with attention to step backs, setbacks, building facades and height/density for example 55’ along roads tapering up to 110’.	Step backs and tapering ELIMINATED. Joyce motors site is now planned to be one massive wall on 10th and on Irving for example. County staff requested height increases beyond even what the developers were asking for the Board approved the additional height.
Required extraordinary community benefits for developers to get to max height and density.	New plan does not specify any additional community benefits for the massive award of height and density.

¹⁹⁵ http://arlington.granicus.com/GeneratedAgendaViewer.php?view_id=2&clip_id=4040

¹⁹⁶ https://arlington.granicus.com/MetaViewer.php?view_id=2&clip_id=4040&meta_id=208829

¹⁹⁷ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8dCOoYwFw&feature=share&si=ELPmzJkDCLju2KnD5oyZMQ&t=4264>

¹⁹⁸ http://arlington.granicus.com/GeneratedAgendaViewer.php?view_id=2&clip_id=4040

¹⁹⁹ Clarendon Sector Plan (2006), <https://arlingtonva.s3.amazonaws.com/wp-content/uploads/sites/31/2014/03/Clarendon-SectorPlan06.pdf>

²⁰⁰ Clarendon Sector Plan Update (2022), <https://www.arlingtonva.us/Government/Projects/Plans-Studies/Land-Use/Clarendon-Sector-Plan-Update>

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2006	2022
A months-long negotiation across all Arlington constituencies. Affordable housing, parks, LRPC, staff, neighborhoods and others.	Staff and developer presentations did not incorporate significant input from constituents.

Significant changes from the original plan with significant increases and elimination of originally planned community benefits²⁰¹. Despite entreaties from all adjoining neighborhoods and the Parks Department, the original park was eliminated from the 2022 plan. The developers received additional height and density beyond even the massive increase in 2006. Residents’ input and concerns were not taken into account.

3.3. Processes appear to be approved without consensus, outreach and even an understanding of what it was trying to accomplish.

3.3.1. The Residential Parking Program (RPP) changes were not broadly communicated with the public. The County sent a mass mailing to residents after RPP approval.

County Staff review began in summer of 2017²⁰². The county-planned Spring 2020 deliberative dialogue with residents was cancelled because of COVID-19²⁰³. The County told residents that it would be inequitable to hold online forums. A virtual Q&A session in October 2020 was the only public dialogue with residents to take place after the proposal was released.

The County Board proceeded to advertise the plan at the December 2020 meeting and took action on February 20, 2021, to overhaul and adopt changes to the program²⁰⁴. “I look forward to deliberating on this next spring, it’s going to be a doozy,” said County Board Chair Christian Dorsey.²⁰⁵

On the day of the vote, the Board did respond to the community uproar and eliminated the proposed 2-hour paid parking on residential streets component, but the eligible parking permits for a typical home were reduced prejudicing against multi-generational homes and giving an inequitable preference to group homes by differentiating eligibility for passes. Fees also were increased.

The County Board attempted to place it in an equity framework and claimed that the community had a 50-50 split on this issue without any evidence. At the public hearing, 19 of the 20 speakers spoke against the RPP proposal. “Some people will be unhappy no matter how we do this program,” Board Chair Libby Garvey said. “The people who might

²⁰¹ <https://www.arlnow.com/2018/05/18/despite-public-pressure-county-unlikely-to-press-developers-for-schools-parks-contributions/>

²⁰² <https://www.arlingtonva.us/Government/Projects/RPPReview>

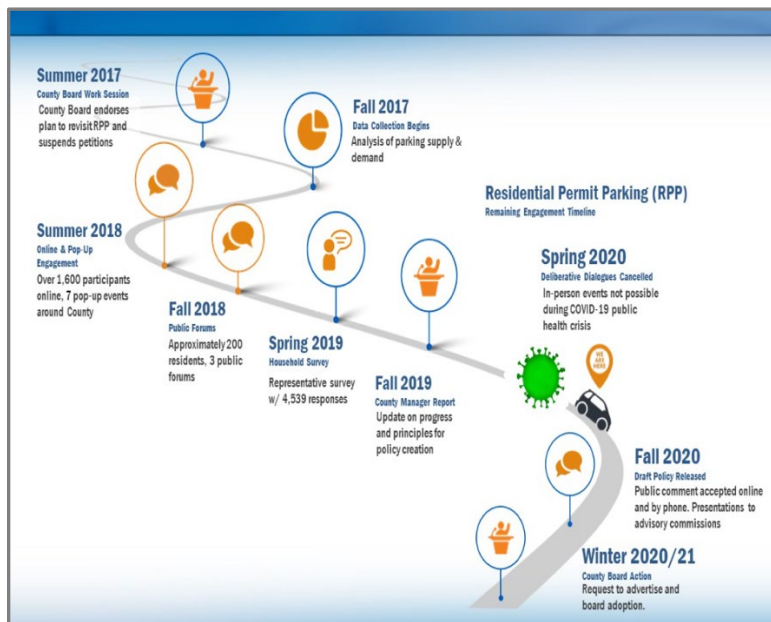
²⁰³ <https://www.arlnow.com/2021/02/22/county-board-approves-new-residential-permit-parking-program/>

²⁰⁴ <https://www.arlnow.com/2021/02/22/county-board-approves-new-residential-permit-parking-program/>

²⁰⁵ <https://www.arlnow.com/2019/11/20/residential-parking-changes-on-the-way-its-going-to-be-a-doozy/>

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benefit from this in terms of apartment buildings aren't here." "Aurora Highlands has been well-represented in the public comments," Board member Matt de Ferranti said.²⁰⁶



A County-wide mailing was made *after approval* to notify the community.

3.4. County Board states it wants the community to reduce expectations of engagement/ input/ concerns addressed in County process.

3.4.1. County Board discussing the need for the "Arlington Way 2.0" to reduce expectations.

At the December 14, 2021 Recessed Board Meeting, Ms. Libby Garvey stated that there was a major disconnect between the expectation of people and County expectations related to when and how to engage with the community when the topic is something the community will not be able to influence anyway. The Board discussed the need for "Arlington Way 2.0" to reduce expectations.²⁰⁷

3.4.2. Arlington Transit Operations and Maintenance Facility²⁰⁸ appears to have insignificant community engagement opportunities.

In September 2020, the County Board addressed the award of a contract for the planning and design of the Arlington Transit Operations and Maintenance Facility²⁰⁹. County Board

²⁰⁶ <https://www.arlnow.com/2020/12/18/public-hearing-on-residential-parking-program-deferred-to-february/>

²⁰⁷ <https://youtube.com/watch?v=DWJ-nOGt-6Y&feature=share&si=EMSIkaIECMiOmarE6JChQQ&t=2767>

²⁰⁸ <https://www.arlnow.com/2020/09/17/county-board-approves-contract-for-new-art-bus-facility/>

²⁰⁹ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=y7L5WEtQN8&feature=share&si=ELPmzJkDCLju2KnD5oyZMQ&t=20807>

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and staff informed the community that "public engagement" would be limited to only the "aesthetic elements of the buildings and perimeter treatments."^{210, 211}

3.5. Arlington's apparent lack of inclusivity, transparency and addressing the needs and concerns of residents are perceived to be widespread.

3.5.1. Comments about process failures appear to have become commonplace and pervasive in public forums.

Despite repeated concerns about the lack of incorporating residents' input, the County Board has not made any improvements to the engagement process. Instead, the County has placed further restrictions on resident participation, see Section 12 of this report.

²¹⁰ https://arlington.granicus.com/MetaViewer.php?view_id=2&clip_id=3793&meta_id=197398

²¹¹ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=y7L5WEtQN8&feature=share&si=ELPmzJkDCLju2KnD5oyZMQ&t=22025>

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T [Redacted]

We know how this works. The county wants to put multi-family housing into single family neighborhoods. There will be 'listening sessions' for residents to object and earn their NIMBY label from activists. Then the county will proceed to do what it has already decided.

S [Redacted]

The Board will not put it to a referendum because they know it will not pass.

2d 🗳️👍👎 8 Like Reply Share

J [Redacted]

Does anyone know of a database that tracks all board members votes over the last several years? I can't find one on the counties website. And extra kudos if the database includes public feedback data.

2d 😊👍 3 Like Reply Share

R [Redacted]

[Redacted] That would resemble transparency; egads

2d 🗳️👍👎 7 🗳️ Like Reply Share

C [Redacted]

Having been to a county board meeting on the traffic circles on Utah St when 3 of the board members got up and walked out when it was our turn to talk about it, it seems like the meetings are pretty much window dressing (in my opinion). I imagine the board has already made up their minds

2d 🗳️👍👎 16 Like Reply Share

B [Redacted]

Because they don't care what we think or want. Most of them cater to the developers & others seeking to destroy Arlington. They need to be voted out!

2d 🗳️👍👎 18 Like Reply Share

M [Redacted]

Have gone to meetings, called, filled out surveys, etc, to protest the double whammy of MMH and the LBP, but still the CB says that their policy is higher density period. Careful reading of their preliminary plans demonstrates that the more vague the plans are, the more the plans are changed to include new horrors like light manufacturing at Harrison and LB or 10 story buildings if money is donated to the AHF. When neighborhoods are listed in 2 separate plans, more confusion arises about possible high density levels. Lack of concrete information leads to lack of transparency. (edited)

2d 🗳️👍👎 19 Like Reply Share

J [Redacted]

The County has made huge changes in the process for obtaining feedback -- and they are not good changes. The first is reliance on surveys, which are incredibly confusing and don't follow marketing research best practices (I'm a professional market researcher). The second major change to the Sector Planning and Site Plan process, that used to be a community-wide process. Now it's County staff pushing developer proposals forward, changing the zoning. By the time we get to an SPRC, the decisions are moot. This always includes higher and denser development and in the case of the Clarendon Sector Plan, the elimination of significant open space. I've been involved in Sector Planning and SPRCs for over 10 years, so know the (old) process backwards and forwards. This is a major change, that reduces the input of the neighborhoods (as well as many other constituencies). So, yes the only way to fix this is via VOTE.

3.6. The County Appears to Fail to Address Community Concerns.

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3.6.1. Civilian Review Board (CRB, later renamed the Community Oversight Board).

Due to potential conflicts of interest and policy-related outcomes, actions regarding the Police Practices Group²¹² recommendations were handled by the County Manager and County Board rather than through the Police Department.

3.6.1.1. NAACP went to media to be heard.

The NAACP sent a letter²¹³ to the County Board prior to the final consideration of the Civilian Review Board proposal²¹⁴. The letter stated that "The Arlington Branch NAACP strongly encourages you to exercise full CRB authority granted to Arlington County by State law, reevaluate the PPG's many CRB recommendations put on hold, and put more resources and commitment into enacting them."

The NAACP was forced to go to a news organization (WJLA) because "To date, we have not heard back from the County Manager, we (being the NAACP) nor has Arlington for Justice and many others, heard back from them about our recommendation and that's concerning." WJLA used a Christian Dorsey quote from a County Board meeting saying "...if we short-circuit, direct the Manager to alter his recommendations to fit with the views of some, then it discredits the opportunity to discuss it with all and it also undermines the capability of professional people to provide us with their best advice."²¹⁵

Further, the NAACP issued a press statement signed by President (Julius "JD" Spain) and First Vice President (Kent Carter) after the County Board's adoption of the Community Oversight Board.²¹⁶ The letter was adapted by Sun Gazette.²¹⁷ The letter states "What remains problematic to us is the failure of elected leaders to embrace the moment and fully adopt authorities granted in [Virginia law] § 9.1-601. Law-enforcement civilian oversight bodies..."²¹⁸ Additionally, the NAACP letter went on to say that "Words Matter! What is truthful, factual, and indisputable is that the County Board rejected community input and its own Police Practices Group's recommendations (Pg.'s 21-24) for true "independent

²¹² <https://www.arlingtonva.us/Government/Departments/CMO/Police-Practices-Work-Group>

²¹³ <https://storage.googleapis.com/production-constantcontact-v1-0-4/824/621824/9vj90fif/ecfcc6c725c5496daf10012531c74ba5?fileName=Arlington%20Branch%20NAACP%20PPG%20Letter%20of%20May%2013%202021%20FINAL.pdf>

²¹⁴ <https://www.arlingtonva.us/Government/Commissions-and-Advisory-Groups/Community-Oversight-Board>

²¹⁵ <https://wjla.com/news/local/arlington-civilian-review-board-police-department>

²¹⁶ <https://storage.googleapis.com/production-constantcontact-v1-0-4/824/621824/9vj90fif/7c14985cf4024f37aef8b8f0cfe46dfd?fileName=Arlington Branch NAACP - Public Statement- July 23 2021 1.pdf>

²¹⁷ <https://sungazette.news/commentary-arlington-effort-on-policing-fell-short/>

²¹⁸ <https://law.lis.virginia.gov/vacode/9.1-601/>

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investigatory" power and binding disciplinary actions for the COB. Though the Board and its members repeatedly refer to the COB's ability to make findings, in fact, key provisions for the COB's ability to make findings based on investigations were removed from the ordinance that was passed." The link from the NAACP letter to the Police Practices Group's recommendations on the County's website is not accessible due to a broken link to a former County page.²¹⁹ The NAACP letter was not included in public comments listed in the County Board agenda.²²⁰

The County Board and County Manager made local news because the community was forced to escalate the problem to news organizations to be heard.

3.6.1.2. Commission was concerned about decisions being made prior to public release of a related report.

The Emergency Preparedness Advisory Commission (EPAC) requested that the County Board delay the CRB decision until after the County Manager released his full set of recommendations, based on recommendations from the PPG Consultant Report and PPG Subcommittee Report.²²¹ EPAC stated that "The County Manager's PPG report will allow EPAC and the community to systematically identify the status and timeline of County Manager actions and recommendations. Once the Board receives that report, the Board could lay out a draft timeline for public participation and Board action, thereby allowing the community to anticipate the opportunities and provide better input to informed Board decisions."

Only the PPG Subcommittee Report^{222, 223} (volunteers), not the paid Consultant's report, was publicly available prior the County Manager's Community Review Board/Community Oversight Board recommendation²²⁴ and Board's approval action.^{225, 226} The Consultant's report final version was dated October 4, 2021²²⁷ but not transmitted by the County Manager to the public until January 12,

²¹⁹ <https://www.arlnow.com/2021/11/16/broken-links-on-countys-new-website-still-frustrating-some-residents/>

²²⁰ http://arlington.granicus.com/GeneratedAgendaViewer.php?view_id=2&clip_id=3956

²²¹ https://arlington.granicus.com/MetaViewer.php?view_id=2&clip_id=3956&meta_id=204891

²²² <https://www.arlingtonva.us/files/sharedassets/public/commissions/documents/ppwg/arlingtonpolicepracticegroup.subcommittee.report.final.2.15.21.pdf>

²²³ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hhlKqU4kn8Y>

²²⁴ https://arlington.granicus.com/MetaViewer.php?view_id=2&clip_id=3956&meta_id=204895

²²⁵ https://docs.google.com/gview?url=https%3A%2F%2Farlington.granicus.com%2FDocumentViewer.php%3Ffile%3Darlington_ae0bf032f3e8c78d420db40602aa942b.pdf%26view%3D1&embedded=true

²²⁶ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7iR62-v8FUg>

²²⁷ <https://www.arlingtonva.us/files/sharedassets/public/departments/documents/hillard-heintze-administrative-policy-and-data-review-of-the-arlington-county-pd-10-04-21.pdf>

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2022²²⁸. Therefore, the Advisory Groups and public were not able to have key information required for public comment about the decision. It is unclear whether the entire Board was fully informed prior to their decision. Transparency, cost effectiveness and public confidence in decision making and County contract language suffered.

3.6.2. The County attempts to raise affordable housing Area Median Income (AMI) from 60% to 80%.

Columbia Heights Civic Association²²⁹, Arlington NAACP²³⁰, Penrose Neighborhood Association²³¹, Douglas Park Civic Association²³², elected officials, and other community advocates fought against a county staff attempt to raise affordable housing Area Median Income (AMI) from 60% to 80% thresholds. The County withdrew the amendment to the Columbia Pike Neighborhoods Form Based Code (N-FBC)²³³ October 2020. See links for letters, testimony, and other materials ^{234, 235}

Comments from the community:

- “Affordable housing tools should benefit the vulnerable. The County Board cannot credibly address racial and economic equity while promoting the displacement of so many of our neighbors on Columbia Pike, known as “the world in a zip code.” “By using county standards, you are destroying the very diversity you claim to support. “Protect our most vulnerable residents who don’t have time to come to myriad of meetings or be a commissioner.” County policies should be raised to meet our Columbia Pike standards, not pushing Columbia Pike to lower ours.”

With enormous effort from the community, the County had to keep Columbia Pike standards for 60% AMI on affordable housing and developer density bonuses despite county staff attempts to change that.

3.6.3. Pentagon City Sector Plan²³⁶: Community, Civic Associations, and a 22202 resident survey all demand an increase in green space and dedicated casual use space.

3.6.3.1. *Pentagon City Study*²³⁷ *Open Space group, April 26, 2021*

²²⁸ https://www.arlingtonva.us/files/sharedassets/public/departments/documents/rev.01.12.2022_final-transmittal-letter.pdf

²²⁹ <https://columbiaheightsva.org>

²³⁰ <https://www.arlingtonnaacp.com>

²³¹ <http://penroseneighborhood.org>

²³² <http://www.douglasparkca.org>

²³³ <https://www.arlingtonva.us/Government/Programs/Building/Permits/Form-Based-Code/Neighborhoods>

²³⁴ <https://columbiaheightsva.org/group-letter-opposing-n-fbc-amendment/>

²³⁵ County Board meeting, item #47: https://arlington.granicus.com/MediaPlayer.php?view_id=2&clip_id=3808

²³⁶ <https://livability22202.org/wp-content/uploads/Summary-of-Pentagon-City-Plan-and-AHCA-comments.pdf>

²³⁷ <https://www.arlingtonva.us/Government/Projects/Plans-Studies/Land-Use/Pentagon-City-Planning-Study/Documents>

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- Community members stated that they need the Pentagon City Study to contain a net increase in open green spaces and natural areas. Community members also stated that they kept saying that open green space is important, but they're not seeing that reflected in any of the reports.
- The Consultant was reported to say that they were also hearing that the community wants to see more dedicated public space. The consultant stated that they were not showing the community enough.
- Planning Commissioner and former Parks and Recreation Commissioner, Elizabeth Gearin, stated that the community has been consistent in wanting more open space. Ms. Gearin stated that she thought all 3 Civic Associations (Arlington Ridge Civic Association²³⁸, Aurora Highlands Civic Association²³⁹, and Crystal City Civic Association²⁴⁰) had been really clear. They are going to look at this very carefully. Ms. Gearin asked why wasn't there a greater increase in the open space because it would definitely raise a red flag if a site plan that's being amended proposes less open space or accessible in a different way, or lack of easement on it.
- The Consultant verbally summarized participant comments from the open space group engagement, stating there was a very strong sentiment that expanding public space is great but it's all conditional on the fact that there needs to be casual use, unprogrammed open space because those are needs that are not being met in the community. The other significant take away expressed was that any net loss of current green space on private development is a loss of public space even if it's on private parcels; therefore, those needs should be taken into account in thinking about how much public space we need.

²³⁸ <https://www.arcaonline.org>

²³⁹ <https://aurorahighlands.org>

²⁴⁰ <https://www.crystalcitycivic.org>

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3.6.3.2. Important content not included in plan Pentagon City Phased Development Site Plan (PDSP).

Comment from the Aurora Highlands Civic Association²⁴¹: “the plan lacks important content that AHCA has raised repeatedly throughout the process. Most significantly perhaps is the need to plan for adequate publicly funded community facilities including parks, library, community center and school to meet the needs of a growing population. In terms of park space, rather than leading to significant new space such as in the original Pentagon City plan from the 1970s, this plan focuses on only improving current open space and new additions are generally on the margin.”²⁴²

3.6.3.3. An Aurora Highlands survey of 22202 residents showed that the greatest thing needed was open (unprogrammed) park space.²⁴³

Despite the survey, staff still refused to insert acknowledgement of community need for unprogrammed open space into the Pentagon City Sector Plan and the County Board approved the Plan diminishing the existing publicly accessible green space for residents, while increasing density by double and triple the current density levels.^{244, 245, 246, 247}

3.7. Public engagement appears to sometimes miss the mark.

3.7.1. Consensus-building leadership may appear to be lacking.

At the September 17, 2022 County Board Meeting, a resident’s call for consensus-building as a true hallmark of true leadership is dismissed and refuted. The County Board turned the resident’s public comments which implore inclusivity, transparency, and consensus-driven engagement and outreach, into statements that residents are “uncompromising.” The resident’s statements²⁴⁸:

- “We need a leadership that unites us.”
- “With a collaborative approach, you get far superior results”
- “Citizens and their associations need to be invited back to have a weighted seat at the table.”
- “We, your citizens, are ready and willing to work with you.”

²⁴¹ <https://aurorahighlands.org>

²⁴² <https://livability22202.org/wp-content/uploads/Summary-of-Pentagon-City-Plan-and-AHCA-comments.pdf>

²⁴³ <https://www.jotform.com/report/21132727719705613> (page 7)

²⁴⁴ <https://arlington-analytics.com/papers/OPS22202.pdf>

²⁴⁵ http://livability22202.org/wp-content/uploads/ARCA_Responses_PCSP_Jan2022.pdf

²⁴⁶ http://livability22202.org/wp-content/uploads/AHCA_Responses_PCSP_Jan2022.pdf

²⁴⁷ https://livability22202.org/wp-content/uploads/CCCA_Responses_PCSP_Jan2022.pdf

²⁴⁸ https://youtube.com/watch?v=pY_5oEluops&feature=share&si=EMSikalECMiOmarE6JChQQ&t=1317

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- “Public engagement must be real, not a check-the-box attitude”
- “It starts at the top.”
- “Surveys must solicit opinions, not limit them.”

Board Vice Chair Christian Dorsey noted the community does not have shared values and so “we are not there yet on consensus on growth and development.”²⁴⁹

3.7.2. Nelly Custis Park Project was about more than a playground.

According to the Friends of Aurora Parks, “The concern surrounding the Nelly Custis Park project was never just about a playground – it was and is about transparency, the role of advocacy groups, fiscal and environmental responsibility, assessing needs, inclusiveness, community engagement, the role of County staff and civic associations, and ultimately ensuring that our valuable parks and public spaces remain available for everyone in the community.”²⁵⁰

Documents produced after a FOIA request led to a public, County statement concerning the County staff's interaction with the community.²⁵¹ As a result, the County Manager's Office and Department of Parks and Recreation issued an apology:

“On behalf of the County Manager's Office and the Department of Parks and Recreation, regarding the Neighborhood Conservation project at Nelly Custis Park we'd like to apologize to the community for a process that did not meet Arlington's vision to be a *diverse and inclusive community where people unite to form a caring, learning, participating, sustainable community in which each person is important*. County staff made statements that were inappropriate and inconsiderate. The engagement within the community was not at the level that Arlington County expects to deliver to their residents. We are sorry. We are especially sorry to those residents who participated actively and voiced concerns and input, but felt left out of the process. We will strive to ensure that all members of the community are a critical part of the project moving forward.”²⁵²

²⁴⁹ [Ibid.](#)

²⁵⁰ <https://us11.campaign-archive.com/?u=c6b15e2b9edbf419372da47d&id=d16ebbe2d6>

²⁵¹ <https://www.arlnow.com/2016/12/22/peters-take-toward-a-new-model-of-arlington-civic-engagement/>

²⁵² <http://friendsofahparks.org/nelly-custis-park/>

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3.7.3. Bluemont Baseball Field Renovation public engagement was “not successful”.

While the solution compromise is a positive documented in Section 2.4, public engagement on the Bluemont Baseball Field Renovation²⁵³ was not ideal. Opponents to the renovation plan insisted that they were blindsided by the plan. ““Schwartz acknowledged that the County’s engagement process in planning for the renovations, which included a community meeting and digital communications, was not successful. The concerns of those opposed to the fence became known to staff and elected officials only after the County Board approved the construction contract in July 2016. “We are working to improve the County’s processes for engaging the community across County government,” Schwartz said. “I’ve asked our new Assistant County Manager for Communications and Public Engagement, Bryna Helfer, to report back to me in early 2017 with recommendations.””²⁵⁴

In this case, the County eventually worked with the community and negotiated a solution compromise on the field renovations.²⁵⁵ See Section 2.4 for the later, positive engagement example.

3.7.4. Significant issues at the Serrano lacked appropriate County attention.

““It’s sickening,” said NAACP President Julius “JD” Spain. “This is a dereliction of duty and someone needs to be held accountable.””^{256, 257}

At a public hearing in June 2022, one resident said “this was ongoing for years and the County did step in and listen to our residents. It did take long though and that’s how I feel about it. I think I should say that. It took long.”^{258, 259, 260, 261, 262, 263}

²⁵³ <https://arlingtonva.s3.dualstack.us-east-1.amazonaws.com/wp-content/uploads/sites/31/2016/10/Bluemont-Park-Presentation-Oct-25.pdf>

²⁵⁴ <https://www.arlnow.com/2016/11/10/bluemont-baseball-field-compromise-approved-county-promises-better-outreach/>

²⁵⁵ <https://www.arlnow.com/2016/10/31/county-revises-bluemont-baseball-field-plan-in-attempt-at-compromise/>

²⁵⁶ <https://www.arlnow.com/2021/05/06/rodents-mold-shoddy-maintenance-plague-affordable-apartment-building/>

²⁵⁷ <https://www.arlnow.com/2021/05/20/a-flurry-of-activity-descends-on-the-serrano-apartments-after-residents-decry-conditions-inside/>

²⁵⁸ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3ePk1Akv5AA&feature=share&si=ELPmzJkDCLju2KnD5oyZMQ&t=24047>

²⁵⁹ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3ePk1Akv5AA&feature=share&si=ELPmzJkDCLju2KnD5oyZMQ&t=21640>

²⁶⁰ <https://www.arlnow.com/2021/06/17/county-board-drills-into-ahc-about-serrano-apartment-conditions/>

²⁶¹ https://arlington.granicus.com/MetaViewer.php?view_id=2&clip_id=3924&meta_id=203933

²⁶² https://arlington.granicus.com/MetaViewer.php?view_id=2&clip_id=3924&meta_id=203935

²⁶³ https://arlington.granicus.com/MetaViewer.php?view_id=2&clip_id=3924&meta_id=203934

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Intense public scrutiny appeared to be required for the County Board and County Manager to take additional steps despite long term issues. Severity was so high that it garnered legislative and Virginia Attorney General attention.^{264, 265, 266, 267}

For more information related to the Serrano and affordable housing, please refer to Section 2.6. In detailing the positive actions taken, the section also implies the issues and corrective actions required to address the serious issues.

3.7.5. Engagement related to development appears to require tracking of minute details.

A neighborhood was impacted by a one word (net)²⁶⁸ change in site plan conditions related to utility undergrounding. The neighborhood was previously powered by utility poles running through the site being redeveloped but the developer wanted to eliminate unsightly poles at their location. While community benefits included utility undergrounding and the neighborhood changes were a direct result of the site redevelopment, neighbors later discovered that the developer and County agreed that only the site utilities would be undergrounded.

A resident said “we were misled about plans to relocate utilities: [developer] informed us and other neighbors that our utilities would be undergrounded, while in fact they worked with County staff to approve a change in the site plan placing a new utility pole directly in front of our house.” She went on to explain that “the process of engineering plan review and site inspection does not include a public engagement component” and “instead of the original language of *no new utility poles*, developers and county staff added the word *net* to justify adding a new pole in front of my house. The County should not allow developers to mislead the public about their plans, then claim that changes to these plans do not require consultation.”²⁶⁹

The County Ombuds said the project does come up on other site plans where similar conditions exist.²⁷⁰ He cited technicalities as to the purpose of the poles and that the site plan process is limited to the site plan boundaries despite impacts outside the site plan area. Additionally he stated that “from a perception standpoint, you can see how confusion would arise from the community... and it is a compounding of issues that has been frustrating for the residents there”.^{271, 272}

²⁶⁴ <https://www.arlnow.com/2022/01/18/new-ag-will-pursue-state-housing-discrimination-inquiry-into-serrano-apartments/>

²⁶⁵ http://arlington.granicus.com/GeneratedAgendaViewer.php?view_id=2&clip_id=3924

²⁶⁶ <https://www.arlnow.com/2021/12/21/del-lopez-files-bills-strengthening-tenant-protections-after-serrano-saga/>

²⁶⁷ <https://www.arlnow.com/2021/06/17/county-board-drills-into-ahc-about-serrano-apartment-conditions/>

²⁶⁸ https://arlington.granicus.com/MetaViewer.php?view_id=2&clip_id=3597&meta_id=183944

²⁶⁹ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=r0jfSpztBtl&feature=share&si=ELPmzJkDCLju2KnD5oyZMQ&t=1265>

²⁷⁰ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=r0jfSpztBtl&feature=share&si=ELPmzJkDCLju2KnD5oyZMQ&t=2404>

²⁷¹ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=r0jfSpztBtl&feature=share&si=ELPmzJkDCLju2KnD5oyZMQ&t=2478>

²⁷² <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=r0jfSpztBtl&feature=share&si=ELPmzJkDCLju2KnD5oyZMQ&t=2556>

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Mr. Karantonis said that the engineering issue requires attention because the type of problems related to undergrounding happen “way too often... it is quite a repeating complaint... it is a sudden, negative surprise... we need to be more attentive of how to mitigate the impact”.²⁷³

Mr. Dorsey expressed that while it may be seen as an engineering issue, it is also an engagement issue.²⁷⁴ He went on to explain that while what is required is a minimum expectation, “I think we need to figure out how to put a little bit more of the art into it and to recognize that if someone has an existing condition with no utility pole in front of their house and redevelopment is going to bring a new one to their house, they need to know about that. Part of what is driving this angst is not only was this something they weren't able to weigh in on and maybe seek an alternative solution, but they just weren't even notified. That's something that's not acceptable... We owe it to people to inform them of that.”

Mr. de Ferranti whole-heartedly agreed with Mr. Dorsey's suggested review of the process.²⁷⁵ Chair Garvey endorsed figuring out a way to enhance communication to avoid “nasty surprises”.²⁷⁶

However, the utility pole problem was not changed. Additionally, the existing community was forced to deal with limited enforcement of site plan conditions (including those related to safety); dumping and storing materials in unapproved locations; and low levels of community engagement by the developer. Additionally, there were unannounced “administrative” changes such as paving materials, design of pedestrian access and lighting. The site plan conditions, administrative changes and later, “clarifying” approvals are not publicly available via the project's page. County justifications have relied on vague wording rather than diagrams and drawings to justify actions. At other times, the County has relied on miscellaneous “standards” rather than drawing specifications.

The County repeatedly said they could not intervene because it was a civil matter, despite the County having a construction oversight role and one as an investor/lender. In the case of lighting, the ownership of new streetlights was transferred to the County, still without the ability and/or desire to resolve light levels to eliminate light trespass on neighboring

²⁷³ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=r0jfSpztBtl&feature=share&si=ELPmzJkDCLju2KnD5oyZMQ&t=2590>

²⁷⁴ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=r0jfSpztBtl&feature=share&si=ELPmzJkDCLju2KnD5oyZMQ&t=2669>

²⁷⁵ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=r0jfSpztBtl&feature=share&si=ELPmzJkDCLju2KnD5oyZMQ&t=2780>

²⁷⁶ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=r0jfSpztBtl&feature=share&si=ELPmzJkDCLju2KnD5oyZMQ&t=2844>

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homes.^{277, 278, 279, 280, 281, 282, 283} The developer's suggestion to reduce light impacts was exterior shutters on neighborhood homes which was not an acceptable community outcome.

The community is often inexperienced in the development process and does not often possess engineering, architectural and other certifications. Instead, the community relies on the County to be good advocates with a fair process. However, the process appeared to skew to favor the County and developers.

²⁷⁷ <https://www.darksky.org/light-pollution/>

²⁷⁸ <https://arlingtonva.s3.amazonaws.com/wp-content/uploads/sites/31/2020/02/SMP-FINAL-REPORT-2020.pdf>

²⁷⁹ https://www.insidenova.com/opinion/letters_to_editor/letter-new-arlington-street-lighting-not-meeting-dark-sky-needs/article_1604537a-bf85-11e5-8afc-1f3fe9b71211.html

²⁸⁰ https://www.darksky.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/05/Sample-letter-to-your-neighbor_DP.doc

²⁸¹ http://arlington.granicus.com/MetaViewer.php?view_id=44&event_id=1171&meta_id=166632

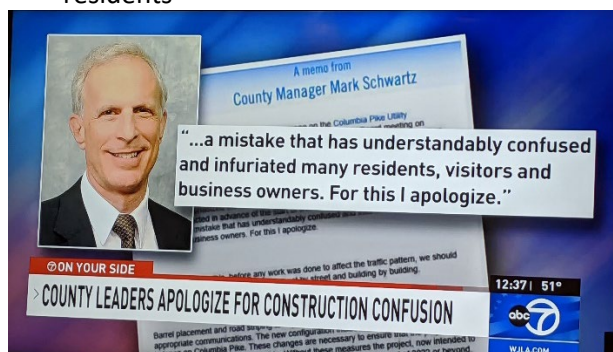
²⁸² <https://www.darksky.org/light-pollution/lighting-crime-and-safety/>

²⁸³ <https://www.darksky.org/light-pollution/>

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3.8. The County does not consistently comply with their own community notification and placard processes.

3.8.1. County construction and lack of notification hinders business and enrages residents²⁸⁴



"A construction project along Columbia Pike is causing confusion, congestion, and outrage near Four Mile Run in Arlington. It's also led to an apology from several top county leaders, who admit they failed to properly communicate and prepare people for the changes."²⁸⁵

"I am frustrated we've executed a project so poorly here," said then Arlington County Board Chair Christian Dorsey. "I wanted to make sure that we not only posted signs on the road itself, we also sent things via social media and would even go door to door to affected residents, to give people an opportunity to hear about the changes that were coming and to have their questions answered."²⁸⁶

3.8.2. County May Lack of Proper Community Notification of Use Permits.

At the February 2022 Recessed Board Meeting, it was revealed that 14 previously approved use permits and site plans had to be reconsidered because the County had not properly notified the public with required on-site placard notifications.^{287, 288}

The County Board's actions on items considered without proper placard notification were void. The Board was forced to properly post the notices and spend time with additional public hearings to reconsider the items. This also cost community members engagement time.

²⁸⁴ <https://wjla.com/news/local/arlington-county-leaders-apologize-for-construction-confusion-on-columbia-pike>

²⁸⁵ [Ibid.](#)

²⁸⁶ [Ibid.](#)

²⁸⁷ https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=R_wDD9aQGco

²⁸⁸ <https://www.arlnow.com/2022/02/16/typo-causes-hassle-for-county-prompts-critique-of-public-notice-laws-limits/>

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3.8.3. The County has very limited circulation of legal notices.

The February 2022 Recessed Board meeting errors prompted larger discussion on the purpose and methods of public legal notices. “Board Vice Chair Christian Dorsey said. “Many have long decried our practice of advertising in the Washington Times, given its relatively low circulation in the county. While it meets the legal requirements, it doesn’t necessarily meet the spirit of broad notice.””²⁸⁹ “[Board Chair Katie Cristol] said she “would love” to advertise with an online news source, but state law mandates that such notices be placed in print publications.”²⁹⁰ The Board discussed the Washington Times notifications as meeting the state's notice requirements despite low circulation. Delegate Patrick Hope said “The thing about the current law... [is] it flies in the face of putting notices in a place where people see them.”²⁹¹

Arlington should find a way for public notices to reach a larger audience and comply with the broad notice spirit of the law, perhaps by find a way to also post notices online. The Dillon rule²⁹² may require that the County work with legislators for permission to change notification requirements. However, the County may determine that print notification is the minimum required by law, with online notices in addition to reach larger audiences. The County’s legislative priorities will soon be submitted to the Commonwealth.²⁹³

3.8.4. The County appears to tell community what they’re going to do before County Board action.

Neighbors near the Buck/Quincy site have stated concern that placing buses on the Buck/Quincy site would lead to issues with noise during quiet hours.²⁹⁴ The Civic Association President stated that the site was not zoned for bus dispatch and storage.²⁹⁵ There was reportedly only one community meeting where DES “told residents what they were going to do. Questions were dismissed as soon as they were asked.”²⁹⁶

One community member wrote an opinion piece “*Obituary: The Arlington Way is Dead*”²⁹⁷. An commenter referred readers to a Sun-Gazette piece “*‘Arlogance’ rears its ugly head once more*”²⁹⁸ which describes “Arlogance” “as the self-satisfied contempt that one-party rule had allowed county officials to lord over the populace”.

²⁸⁹ <https://www.arlnow.com/2022/02/16/typo-causes-hassle-for-county-prompts-critique-of-public-notice-laws-limits/>

²⁹⁰ <https://www.arlnow.com/2022/02/16/typo-causes-hassle-for-county-prompts-critique-of-public-notice-laws-limits/>

²⁹¹ <https://www.arlnow.com/2022/02/16/typo-causes-hassle-for-county-prompts-critique-of-public-notice-laws-limits/>

²⁹² <https://law.lis.virginia.gov>

²⁹³ <https://www.arlingtonva.us/Government/Departments/CMO/Legislative-Affairs>

²⁹⁴ <https://www.arlnow.com/2022/05/13/county-board-to-consider-bus-storage-as-art-facility-construction-nears/>

²⁹⁵ <https://www.arlnow.com/2022/05/13/county-board-to-consider-bus-storage-as-art-facility-construction-nears/>

²⁹⁶ <https://nextdoor.com/p/PsCqXZ9XSXBD?view=detail>

²⁹⁷ <https://nextdoor.com/p/PsCqXZ9XSXBD?view=detail>

²⁹⁸ <https://sungazette.news/editorial-arlogance-rears-its-ugly-head-once-more/>

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Previous engagement efforts related to other site uses prompted Ms. Garvey to share that there is a disconnect between people's expectations and the County's when and how to engage when the County is working on something the community can't change.²⁹⁹

The community insisted that the County follow their own laws and policies.³⁰⁰ While JFAC looked at long-term uses of the site, the scope specifically excluded the ability for JFAC to look at short-term or temporary uses.^{301, 302} Despite the significant purchase price, proximity to Metro, and long-term uses discussed by JFAC, Chair Cristol wished there had been greater transparency from the beginning about the site being acquired for "back of the house" uses.³⁰³ Despite Ms. Garvey appearing to vote for approval and opposed, the item was considered as unanimously passed.³⁰⁴

The County's link to JFAC's Phase 3 report³⁰⁵ and other related information³⁰⁶ redirected to a general page on Commissions rather than to the appropriate content.

3.9. The County does not schedule public engagement opportunities at times which promote public participation

3.9.1. The County schedules critical engagement during or near holidays.

The Court House West Special GLUP Study³⁰⁷ process conducted the only Virtual Open House on Thursday, September 1, 2022. This was the Thursday before Labor Day during a period when even the County Board was on recess. The online engagement session was scheduled for Dec 14, 2021 – January 9, 2022.^{308, 309, 310} The online engagement for Clarendon Sector Plan update was Dec. 18, 2020 – January 8, 2021³¹¹. This holiday timing

²⁹⁹ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DWJ-nOGt-6Y&feature=share&si=ELPmzJkDCLju2KnD5oyZMQ&t=2767>

³⁰⁰ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=reTEgabplks&feature=share&si=ELPmzJkDCLju2KnD5oyZMQ&t=4900>

³⁰¹ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=reTEgabplks&feature=share&si=ELPmzJkDCLju2KnD5oyZMQ&t=11615>

³⁰² <https://arlingtonva.s3.amazonaws.com/wp-content/uploads/sites/5/2018/05/042518-JFAC-Letter-N-Bagley-Ballston-VA-Square-April-25-2018.pdf>

³⁰³ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=reTEgabplks&feature=share&si=ELPmzJkDCLju2KnD5oyZMQ&t=11899>

³⁰⁴ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=reTEgabplks&feature=share&si=ELPmzJkDCLju2KnD5oyZMQ&t=12393>

³⁰⁵ <https://commissions.arlingtonva.us/wp-content/uploads/sites/5/2018/02/JFAC-Ph-3-Feb-28-2018-R1.pdf>

³⁰⁶ <https://commissions.arlingtonva.us/wp-content/uploads/sites/5/2018/02/ES-Boundaries-Draft-WS-Final.pdf>

³⁰⁷ <https://www.arlingtonva.us/Government/Projects/Plans-Studies/General-Land-Use-Plan/Studies/Courthouse-West>

³⁰⁸ <https://www.arlingtonva.us/Government/Projects/Plans-Studies/General-Land-Use-Plan/Studies/Courthouse-West>

³⁰⁹ https://arlington.granicus.com/MetaViewer.php?view_id=2&clip_id=4123&meta_id=212225

³¹⁰ https://arlington.granicus.com/MetaViewer.php?view_id=2&event_id=1754&meta_id=212568

³¹¹ <https://www.arlingtonva.us/Government/Projects/Plans-Studies/Land-Use/Clarendon-Sector-Plan-Update/Documents>

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limits the ability of people to participate. The feedback on the Pentagon City Sector Plan was due on December 31, 2021.³¹²

A Digital Broadband study survey was mailed to some Arlington household mid-August, 2022. The written surveys were due to be returned by August 31, 2022. Again, this timing was during the Board's recess and at the end of summer. The limited timing limited engagement. Further, a digital "e-Checkup"³¹³ was offered without clarity of the prior written survey.

As the result, engagement was limited because many people were still on vacations or celebrating holidays.

3.9.2. The County may schedule only daytime sessions.

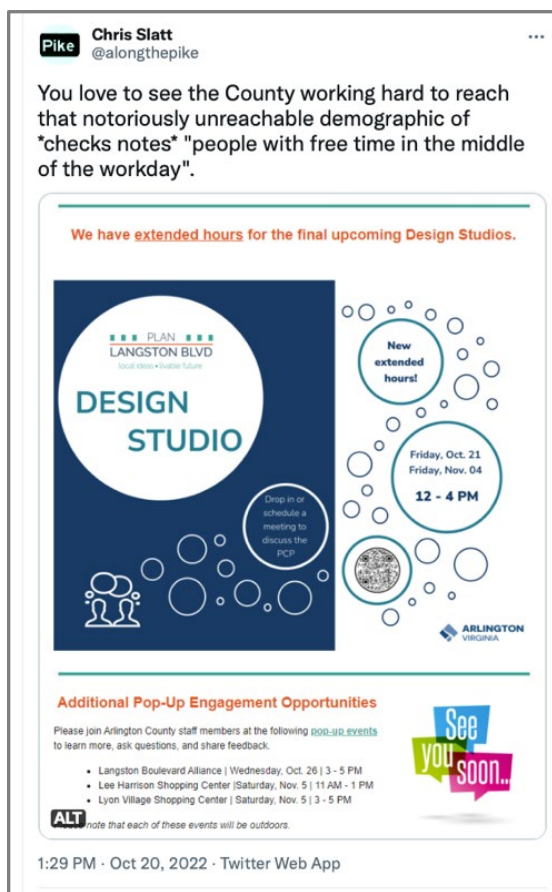
Many engagement timeframes allow for participation of limited members of the population. This may mean only daytime, only evening, only weekday, only weekend or an assortment of times poorly scheduled.

Please refer to the below Twitter post by Chris Slatt, Chair of the Transportation Commission. Mr. Slatt apparently noticed that all the listed engagement sessions are between 11 am and 5 pm. This limited timeframe may prevent members of the community from participating in any of the similarly timed sessions. While the times may be more convenient for staff, the times may not be convenient for a majority of the community.

³¹² https://www.arlingtonva.us/files/sharedassets/public/projects/documents/pentagon-city-planning-study/pentagoncitysectorplan_final_for_print.pdf

³¹³ <https://www.arlingtonva.us/Government/Departments/Community-Planning-Housing-Development/Digital-Equity/Broadband-Study>

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3.10. There appears to be no independent community advocate relating to County activities.

Arlington County's Ombuds is not independent, nor neutral despite the title's requirement and expectation to be such.

The ombuds is tasked with "handling complaints made concerning County services or activities". However, the Ombuds reports to the County Manager³¹⁴, who is able to influence Ombuds outcomes and diminish the Ombuds' role as a neutral party to resolve disputes. Per the Oxford English Dictionary, an Ombuds is "an official appointed to investigate individuals' complaints against maladministration, especially that of public authorities."

It is a conflict of interest for the County Manager to oversee this function, which often involves issues with County functions or services reporting to the County Manager. In addition, the County Manager has responsibilities for the Ombuds' performance evaluation and pay. Therefore, the County Manager is able to assert influence on outcomes and the Ombuds is unable to impartially represent the views of the community when there is a dispute with County policies, processes, and/or actions.

³¹⁴ <https://www.arlingtonva.us/Government/Departments/CMO/Constituent-Services>

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3.11. The County Board has increased reliance on Consent Agenda, Closed Sessions and Closed-door meetings with little accountability and delayed availability of minutes and other records.

3.11.1. There appears to be increasing use of Consent Agenda even when the item is not “non-controversial”.

The County's September 2022 Regular County Board Meeting had 43 items on Consent Agenda³¹⁵ the October 2022 Consent Agenda had 30³¹⁶. The items were approved en masse with limited, if any, discussion. In the past, the Community was able to have an item removed from Consent Agenda. However, current rules allow only a Board Member remove an item from the Consent Agenda.³¹⁷

An increasing number of County actions are being taken with no on-the-record discussion, limiting transparency. Consent agenda³¹⁸ is intended to be used for “non-controversial” topics. Even when the Staff reports that the community, Civic Association(s) and/or Advisory Groups have voiced concerns, the consent agenda is used. The community and civic association concerns by definition mean that it is controversial and not eligible for consent agenda. However, an apparent lack of clear, written, detailed criteria means that controversial topics are being added to the Consent Agenda, reducing public trust in the processes. The Board has privately stated that they are aware that consent agenda is being misused but the same actions persist.

3.11.2. Closed Sessions are not properly documented.

As of mid-October, 2022, there are still no minutes, audio or video links related to the Closed Sessions³¹⁹ on August 16, 2022; May 12, 2022; July 13, 2021; or January 6, 2021. There are a number of previous dates reflecting the same. Other dates are inconsistent as to the availability of information. Rather than announcing Closed Sessions in advance, Arlington sometimes includes them in another meeting.³²⁰ These sessions are especially hard for the public to find because there is no public announcement nor record on the County's Closed Sessions list.^{321, 322}

Additionally, Closed Sessions documentation appears to not have recorded all of the closed sessions conducted, even if the Closed Session was announced to the public. The

³¹⁵ http://arlington.granicus.com/GeneratedAgendaViewer.php?view_id=2&event_id=1754

³¹⁶ http://arlington.granicus.com/GeneratedAgendaViewer.php?view_id=2&clip_id=4145

³¹⁷ <https://www.arlingtonva.us/Government/Departments/County-Board/County-Board-Meetings/2022-County-Board-Meeting-Procedures>

³¹⁸ <https://www.arlingtonva.us/Government/Departments/County-Board/County-Board-Meetings/2022-County-Board-Meeting-Procedures>

³¹⁹ http://arlington.granicus.com/ViewPublisher.php?view_id=2

³²⁰ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=y7L5WEtQN8&t=16521s>

³²¹ http://arlington.granicus.com/ViewPublisher.php?view_id=2

³²² <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FWqR4Rw-XKU&feature=share&si=ELPmzJkDCLju2KnD5oyZMQ&t=9909>

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most obvious example is that the record reflects that Board would have gone almost a year (July 9, 2019 to July 2, 2020) without a closed session. Yet, during this period, there were public notices of Closed Sessions, including implied sessions related to personnel matters.³²³

In an effort to increase transparency and public confidence, the Board should ensure that Closed Sessions include proper public notification and documentation (minutes, video and audio).

See also Section 13.1.5.

- 3.12. The County limits their engagement guide to capital projects.

The County has developed a *Six Step Guide to Community Engagement for Capital Projects*. The *Six Step Guide*, if used, helps to ensure that a written project definition is created, stakeholders are identified, engagement level expectations are defined, engagement and communications strategies are created and implemented, inputs are reviewed and analyzed, projects are closed out and after-action reviews are conducted to determine and document lessons learned and enable improvements.^{324, 325}

A Community Engagement framework for non-capital projects does not exist though the same concepts apply. The County has not focused on identifying all stakeholders, engagement levels, how to reach the entire community, or how to gather lessons learned and regularly continuously improve. The PLACE³²⁶ engagement guide appears to have been applied more universally.

As the result, stakeholders, roles, engagement levels and other items are not always considered. The level of engagement is not consistently applied across project types. The engagement documents do not appear to be regularly posted if they are created, even for capital projects.

The *Six Step Guide* should be expanded to cover topics beyond capital projects and the associated documents should be publicly posted.

- 3.13. The County makes it difficult to participate in processes, even if one is actively trying to do so.

- 3.13.1. County's structure makes it difficult for the community to participate in engagement opportunities, i.e., short time frames, little notice, one participation time and/or language.

³²³ <https://www.arlnow.com/2020/02/13/county-board-considering-next-appropriate-steps-for-christian-dorsey/>

³²⁴ <https://arlingtonva.s3.dualstack.us-east-1.amazonaws.com/wp-content/uploads/sites/21/2018/03/Six-Step-Public-Engagement-Guide-for-Capital-Projects.pdf>

³²⁵ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CAQtHGlcI8A&feature=share&si=ELPmzJkDCLju2KnD5oyZMQ&t=5197>

³²⁶ https://arlington.granicus.com/MetaViewer.php?view_id=&clip_id=2438&meta_id=105775

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There is no set minimum timeline and method for advertising and promoting public input and participation request. The County does not list all engagement opportunities on the County's website³²⁷ and/or provides a very short notice or time to engage. As the result community has very short timeframes to engage or does not receive advance notice to participate in meetings. People who want to participate are unable to plan (work, childcare, life, transportation) to participate in the meeting, much less prepare.

3.13.2. Meeting materials are not always posted in advance.

While meetings require advance notice, often meeting materials are posted without enough advance notice to allow commissions and/or the public to opine verbally or in writing. In fact, some meetings include adding meeting materials at the last minute or later.

Adding an advance-posting policy would help with both transparency and confidence in government. While two articles^{328, 329} limit the application, broader application of the rule would enhance community participation, leading to better results.³³⁰

4. It appears to many residents that the Arlington County Board and County Manager have failed to try to achieve community consensus and have frequently dismissed concerns of individuals, civic groups, civic associations, multi-family residence associations, and the Arlington County Civic Federation, which historically have played an integral role in the county's decision-making processes.

4.1. The County Board and County Manager may not address safety concerns in a timely manner

4.1.1. Bicyclist killed, County still appears to disregard repeated requests to improve safety at S. Rolfe, Queen, Washington Blvd Intersection³³¹.

Arlington View, Penrose, and Columbia Heights requested improved pedestrian safety and restoration of Rolfe Street bus stop on the East bound side of Columbia Pike. A walk through was held with County Board Member Eric Gutshall and Director of Transportation, Dennis Leach, on November 30, 2018 during opening of bike trail. Washington Boulevard bike trail brings more multi-modal traffic into the intersection. Concerns appeared to be dismissed. Public requests continue to present. Meetings were held periodically with Columbia Pike Multimodal project lead, Susan Finotti and her team.

4.1.2. Street safety concerns appear to be unaddressed and dismissed.

³²⁷ <https://www.arlingtonva.us/Government/Topics/Engage>

³²⁸ <https://www.arlnow.com/2017/02/16/peters-take-improve-civic-engagement-by-adopting-a-72-hour-rule/>

³²⁹ <https://www.arlnow.com/2021/04/20/the-right-note-more-transparency-please/>

³³⁰ <https://www.arlingtonva.us/files/sharedassets/public/Commissions/Documents/Advisory-Group-Handbook-2014.pdf> Introduction

³³¹ <https://wtop.com/arlington/2018/05/pedestrian-hit-killed-arlington-county/>

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In the summer of 2020, DES-TEO added stop signs to the intersection of N Barton St and Fairfax Drive, which resulted in map applications increasing traffic patterns through the community resulting in an increase in pedestrian/cyclist/car incidents³³², including several children. In 2021 the County Board Chair, Matt de Ferranti, confirmed that the Arlington County Transportation Engineering & Operations (TE&O) team has received the multiple requests for investigation and is at work reviewing the material the community provided. DES-TEO Andrea Wilkinson communicated, "Your disappointment is noted." Several months later after no improvement, the police captain of SOS responded to community follow up suggesting to "stop calling. It is not that bad." Below email is an excerpt from Andrea Wilkinson (Transportation Engineer/C3 Officer, Customer Care & Communications (C3) Team, Transportation Engineering & Operations Bureau) to a community member on November 9, 2021:

I have attached the responses that I provided to the emails you sent to the TE&O Bureau, including one you directed to another email address, which was eventually forwarded to our team. For the latter one, you informed the DES Department Director that you had emailed DES-TEO and we had not responded; this was not true. You emailed the DES Contact Center, and once the email was forwarded to us at DES-TEO, I responded. You included TE&O on an email you sent to the County Board and one that you sent to the DES Department Director. As previously explained, once residents have contacted the County Board, staff communications are routed through the CMO so that Board members can stay apprised of any issues. Both of the emails that you sent – to the County Board and to the DES Department Director – were provided to the County Manager's Office and they confirmed that they were leading the response, especially as your demands were for policy changes and installation of measures outside of the TE&O Bureau's purview. Your follow-up email noting you had not received a response, on which DES-TEO was included, was also provided to the CMO, and the CMO resident liaison, Ben Aiken, personally responded to you. I have responded to every email you have sent to DES-TEO as possible per the County's protocol. Your disappointment is noted.

Eighteen months after the street safety issue was brought to the County's attention, the County has still taken no action.

4.1.3. Pedestrian safety improvements have "not been implemented fast enough"

There was another fatal crash near Nottingham Elementary School in October 2022.^{333, 334, 335} It is reportedly the third fatal crash in that two block area since 2014.^{336, 337}

³³² <https://www.arlingtonva.us/About-Arlington/News/Articles/2021/Police-Investigate-Critical-Crash-in-Clarendon>

³³³ <https://www.arlnow.com/2022/10/19/county-board-wants-swifter-action-after-most-recent-pedestrian-death/>

³³⁴ <https://wjla.com/news/local/arlington-county-85-year-old-pedestrian-crash-gwendolyn-hayes-accident-safety-neighbors-demand-changes-virginia-stop-sign-little-falls-road#>

³³⁵ <https://www.wusa9.com/article/news/local/arlington/elderly-woman-dies-after-being-struck-by-car/65-2defda8e-04a0-4d43-83a2-287ef8e20717>

³³⁶ <https://www.arlnow.com/2014/02/24/breaking-woman-struck-by-dump-truck/>

³³⁷ <https://www.arlnow.com/2019/09/11/just-in-pedestrian-dies-after-crash-near-nottingham-elementary/>

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There have been other pedestrian safety near schools and other locations in recent months.^{338, 339, 340}

Additionally, reports are that the community has made many appeals for additional pedestrian safety measures in the County.^{341, 342, 343} The October 2022 County Board Meeting implies that the changes have not been implemented fast enough.^{344, 345}

The Department of Environmental Services is responsible for traffic and safety engineering. DES has a significant role in designing the safety aspects of Vision Zero. The community is hopeful that there is near-term progress on resolving the safety issues in the area and throughout the County.

The current crash investigation was not complete at the time this text was written. Please see the County Board meeting,^{346, 347} Vision Zero^{348, 349, 350} and local media for additional information on community engagement related to the tragic incident. While understanding the need for planning and analysis, such planning was reported to have been underway for years prior to the most recent incidents.

- 4.2. Joint efforts expressing concerns appear to be disregarded, even when multiple Civic Associations and residents express concern.

The Courthouse West project³⁵¹ consists of a developer's application for a Special GLUP Study to transform the Courthouse West parking lot into a 16-story building, originally zoned for up to 4 stories. Four civic associations (Clarendon-Courthouse Civic Association³⁵², Lyon Village

³³⁸ <https://www.arlnow.com/2022/10/19/county-board-wants-swifter-action-after-most-recent-pedestrian-death/>

³³⁹ <https://www.arlnow.com/2022/08/02/breaking-a-woman-has-died-after-a-hit-and-run-crash-monday-evening/>

³⁴⁰ <https://www.arlnow.com/2022/05/12/arlington-evaluates-first-year-of-vision-zero-traffic-safety-plan/>

³⁴¹ <https://www.arlnow.com/2022/10/07/advocates-call-for-safer-conditions-after-bicycle-crash-on-s-carlin-springs-road/>

³⁴² <https://www.arlnow.com/2020/03/11/peters-take-pedestrian-safety-at-risk-on-carlin-springs-road/>

³⁴³ <https://www.arlnow.com/2022/09/14/county-locals-focus-on-drunk-driving-risky-intersections-after-fatal-crash/>

³⁴⁴ https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OowL3l_G2YM&feature=share&si=ELPmzJkDCLju2KnD5oyZMQ&t=2742

³⁴⁵ <https://www.arlnow.com/2022/10/19/county-board-wants-swifter-action-after-most-recent-pedestrian-death/>

³⁴⁶ https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OowL3l_G2YM&feature=share&si=ELPmzJkDCLju2KnD5oyZMQ&t=2742

³⁴⁷ <https://www.arlnow.com/2022/10/19/county-board-wants-swifter-action-after-most-recent-pedestrian-death/>

³⁴⁸ <https://www.arlingtonva.us/Government/Programs/Transportation/Vision-Zero>

³⁴⁹ <https://www.arlingtonva.us/Government/Programs/Transportation/Vision-Zero/Partnerships#section-3>

³⁵⁰ <https://www.arlnow.com/2022/03/07/what-arlington-the-hoboken-of-d-c-can-learn-from-the-city-about-pedestrian-safety/>

³⁵¹ <https://www.arlingtonva.us/Government/Projects/Plans-Studies/General-Land-Use-Plan/Studies/Courthouse-West>

³⁵² <http://www.clarendoncourthouseva.org>

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Civic Association³⁵³, Lyon Park Citizens Association³⁵⁴, and Ashton Heights Civic Association³⁵⁵) united in their appeal to the County Board for 6 stories maximum. On July 16, 2022, 10 out of 12 residents spoke before the County Board^{356, 357} against such height and density. Again, on September 17, 2022,^{358, 359} 7 of 11 residents who represented themselves supported 6 stories, citing unsuitability of the location, congestion, lack of facilities, traffic, surrounding structures and the impacts from a tall building on abutting low-rise residential neighborhoods. The Arlington Chamber of Commerce,³⁶⁰ the Apartment. & Office Building Association of Metropolitan Washington³⁶¹ and representatives of property owners³⁶² on that block supported maximizing the height per their special and/or financial interests. At the June County Board meeting, the President of the Lyon Village Civic Association noted how the process ran roughshod over the residents, contrasting it with past practice of the board. (See issues in the process documented in Sections 6.4.1 and 7.4.1)

The County Board ultimately decided on 14 stories, despite County Staff's unwavering support for a maximum of 12 stories^{363, 364, 365, 366} throughout the process. The County Board disregarded the four united Civic Associations who requested six stories, including the Civic Association within which the property is located, and the majority of the residents who spoke. Additionally, the County's own survey revealed that the highest number of participants wanted a maximum height of 6 stories/70 feet³⁶⁷. At the hearing, all members of the County Board zeroed in on the testimony of one resident³⁶⁸ who represented the needs of young professional renters despite other testimony refuting it. The County Board did not appear to address the needs or issues raised by other population in the area, including senior citizens and families.

4.3. County Board appears to dismiss engagement and concerns brought to their attention.

4.3.1. Old Glebe Civic Association President comments that "real public engagement involves collaboration".

³⁵³ <https://www.lyonvillage.org>

³⁵⁴ <https://lyonpark.org>

³⁵⁵ <http://ashtonheights.org>

³⁵⁶ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=P1q6gdLdKMK&feature=share&si=ELPmzJkDCLju2KnD5oyZMQ&t=14706>

³⁵⁷ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=P1q6gdLdKMK&feature=share&si=ELPmzJkDCLju2KnD5oyZMQ&t=15912>

³⁵⁸ https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pY_5oEluops&feature=share&si=ELPmzJkDCLju2KnD5oyZMQ&t=3254

³⁵⁹ https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pY_5oEluops&feature=share&si=ELPmzJkDCLju2KnD5oyZMQ&t=4324

³⁶⁰ <https://www.arlingtonchamber.org>

³⁶¹ <https://www.aoba-metro.org>

³⁶² https://arlington.granicus.com/MetaViewer.php?view_id=2&clip_id=4137&meta_id=212784

³⁶³ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=P1q6gdLdKMK&feature=share&si=ELPmzJkDCLju2KnD5oyZMQ&t=15226>

³⁶⁴ https://arlington.granicus.com/MetaViewer.php?view_id=2&clip_id=4123&meta_id=212225 p 23

³⁶⁵ https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pY_5oEluops&feature=share&si=ELPmzJkDCLju2KnD5oyZMQ&t=4081

³⁶⁶ https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pY_5oEluops&feature=share&si=ELPmzJkDCLju2KnD5oyZMQ&t=4111

³⁶⁷ <https://www.arlingtonva.us/files/sharedassets/public/commissions/documents/lrpc/chw-dec-2021-jan-2022-online-engagement-session-survey-responses.pdf>

³⁶⁸ https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pY_5oEluops&feature=share&si=ELPmzJkDCLju2KnD5oyZMQ&t=4324

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The Old Glebe Civic Association³⁶⁹ President spoke publicly at the May 2022 County Board meeting about concerns of the County's lack of community engagement, "real public engagement involves collaboration"³⁷⁰

Instead of acknowledging the concerns and vowing to do better, the County Board generally defended what they considered to be "unprecedented levels" of engagement outright dismissing what was brought to their attention³⁷¹.

4.3.2. Public Art Master Plan contained offensive references.

The Public Art Master Plan was presented to the County Board with incorrect and offensive references to and about Green Valley,³⁷² a historically Black community. County did not communicate with the affected community on the offensive passages within the Public Art Master Plan.^{373, 374, 375}

Due to quick efforts by Green Valley Civic Association,³⁷⁶ many of the incorrect provisions were changed before the County Board voted on the plan. However, the County needs to ensure that such offensive passages are not used in the future.

³⁶⁹ <http://www.oldglebe.org>

³⁷⁰ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=reTEgabplks&feature=share&si=ELPmzJkDCLju2KnD5oyZMQ&t=753>

³⁷¹ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=reTEgabplks&feature=share&si=ELPmzJkDCLju2KnD5oyZMQ&t=2316>

³⁷² <https://greenvalleyciv.org/about/>

³⁷³ https://arlington.granicus.com/MetaViewer.php?view_id=2&clip_id=3990&meta_id=206588 (pages 214-215)

³⁷⁴ <https://www.arlnow.com/2021/11/09/green-valley-residents-express-concerns-about-updated-arts-master-plan/>

³⁷⁵ <https://sungazette.news/letter-public-art-plan-is-affront-to-green-valley/>

³⁷⁶ <https://greenvalleyciv.org>

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4.4. County Board diminishes the role of the community and their input, even if the community is directly impacted.

4.4.1. County Board member dismisses community input regarding Four Mile Run Valley Initiative.

County-appointed working group leadership inquires with County Board on role within working group. County Board member informs the community leader that her job is to "look pretty."³⁷⁷

4.4.2. Insignificant community engagement occurred regarding the Arlington Transit Operations and Maintenance Facility.

In September 2020, the County Board addressed the awarding of a contract for the planning and design of the Arlington Transit Operations and Maintenance Facility³⁷⁸. Board chair, Libby Garvey, said that only experienced, knowledgeable people should be involved in the details of the project and the community should stay in its lane concluding that "public engagement" would be limited to only the "aesthetic elements of the buildings and perimeter treatments."^{379, 380, 381, 382, 383}

Despite the County Board comments, the impacted community (Green Valley) continued to successfully influence larger changes to the project, including accommodations for electric vehicles (buses), improved use of density, and better storm water management, among other issues.

4.4.3. County Board's view of leadership responsibilities appears too limited.

Quote by Vice Chair Christian Dorsey: "As a realist that, [consensus] is difficult, as reflected by the various signage we have in the room, when on some of the issues we have in the community, the perspectives are yes or no, save/destroy. It is tough to build consensus when the extremes are so rigid in terms of what it is they want. I don't say that to criticize, it's just that its reality. In order to have consensus, you actually need to have people are going to come together and agree on a certain set of values. And when it comes to issues like growth and development in Arlington, we're just not there... those efforts that we described as being consensus oriented excluded a lot of people from the

³⁷⁷ https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/has-arlington-lost-its-way/2018/11/09/91191b8e-dc58-11e8-85df-7a6b4d25cfbb_story.html

³⁷⁸ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=y7L5WEtQN8&feature=share&si=ELPmzJkDCLju2KnD5oyZMQ&t=20804>

³⁷⁹ https://www.insidenova.com/opinion/letters_to_editor/letter-arlington-government-again-tries-to-marginalize-green-valley/article_1f169fee-0289-11eb-ae80-b3a96d69fb56.html

³⁸⁰ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=y7L5WEtQN8&feature=share&si=ELPmzJkDCLju2KnD5oyZMQ&t=22072>

³⁸¹ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=y7L5WEtQN8&feature=share&si=ELPmzJkDCLju2KnD5oyZMQ&t=21997>

³⁸² <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=y7L5WEtQN8&feature=share&si=ELPmzJkDCLju2KnD5oyZMQ&t=21845>

³⁸³ https://arlington.granicus.com/MetaViewer.php?view_id=2&clip_id=3793&meta_id=197397 p. 2

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conversation on the base of race, economic ability, status as a renter or owner, and as we move to this period where we're bring everybody into this conversation, it gets more difficult. But until we figure out how to come together on the same set of values to agree and accept a certain set of facts, to be open, to be open to the perspectives that come from others as a way to reconsider maybe the perspectives that perhaps we have ourselves, it's going to be really difficult to have that consensus."³⁸⁴

The County Board sets the County tone. The examples Mr. Dorsey provided are division caused by bifurcating positions led by the County. The County could choose less polarizing positions. However, the bifurcated and polarized positions are causing fracture in the community. Per a public comment speaker, the community's perspective on weighing in was "why bother or it's not going to make an iota of difference or their mind is already made up they have an agenda that they want to push regardless."³⁸⁵ Less polarizing County Board and County Manager positions are likely to cause less community fracture and fewer bifurcated positions. Perhaps the feedback in this document could help shape the "set of values" Vice Chair Dorsey suggested (above).

4.4.4. Clarendon Safety and Innovation Zone community feedback appeared to go unaddressed.

During the June 2021 County Board Recessed meeting, Ms. Cristol stated³⁸⁶ that Safety and Innovation Zone (SIZ)^{387, 388} concerns expressed by the Emergency Preparedness Advisory Commission and Information Technology Advisory Commission gave her a "little bit of a pause", the concerns expressed were highly discounted. The project, and later also an MOU, were approved by the Board with a vote of 4-1³⁸⁹. The letter from the Commissions was not made available to the public.³⁹⁰

Staff has not fully addressed the ongoing concerns. The project has been extended by Staff beyond the Board-authorized timeframe. Staff determined that they would run the project operationally through the County Manager rather than provide ongoing updates on that and similar projects to the Board. The Privacy Oversight Panel was disbanded. The public no longer has any access to meetings regarding the SIZ or related privacy projects.

³⁸⁴ https://youtube.com/watch?v=pY_5oEluops&feature=share&si=EMSikaIECMiOmarE6JChQQ&t=2394

³⁸⁵ https://youtube.com/watch?v=pY_5oEluops&feature=share&si=EMSikaIECMiOmarE6JChQQ&t=1317

³⁸⁶ <https://youtube.com/watch?v=3ePk1Akv5AA&feature=share&si=EMSikaIECMiOmarE6JChQQ&t=20955>

³⁸⁷ <https://www.arlingtonva.us/files/sharedassets/public/projects/documents/technology/safety-and-innovation-zone-board-presentation-updated.pdf>

³⁸⁸ <https://www.arlingtonva.us/Government/Projects/Project-Types/Technology/Safety-and-Innovation-Zone-Demonstration-Project>

³⁸⁹ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3ePk1Akv5AA&feature=share&si=ELPmzJkDCLju2KnD5oyZMQ&t=21312>

³⁹⁰ http://arlington.granicus.com/GeneratedAgendaViewer.php?view_id=2&clip_id=3924

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The County Board is tasked with setting and monitoring County policy.^{391, 392} Staff's decision to keep the privacy and experimental technology solely within the purview of the County Manager and Staff results in the elected County Board losing oversight of the important privacy and experimental technology issues that would allow them to set and monitor related policies. Additionally, the public loses transparency into the project and related privacy considerations. Public trust in government erodes. By eliminating the Privacy Oversight Panel and public meetings, transparency is reduced. The public will become more skeptical of technology innovation in Arlington, which may limit patronage to areas within Arlington who use such types of technology. The community is less able to hold the County Board, County Manager, and Staff accountable for actions and decisions.

A conference session shared the following description of the Safety and Innovation Zone: "Throughout the process of launching and implementing this pilot, important lessons were learned about bringing the right people to the table, leveraging local academia to determine best practices and verify data, and gaining consensus to increase enthusiasm, support, and partnership across multiple stakeholders."³⁹³ The information has not been presented to the community despite being shared with other jurisdictions.

Despite the session description, community engagement has missed the mark. If the County has made award submissions, the content is not available to the public.

- 4.5. See Example 13.1.1, where County Manager, Mark Schwartz, appears to deny and present misleading information in response to concerns raised by residents.
5. The current Arlington County Board, County Manager and staff conduct processes frequently led by outside consultants that, from the perspective of many affected residents, lack transparency and seem to be designed to reach a single, predetermined conclusion (e.g., Sector Plan updates, Public Spaces Master Plan update, Site Plan approvals, increased density and other mechanisms) while dismissing or appearing to fail to address substantive community concerns expressed during the process.
 - 5.1. Processes appear to be predetermined, even contracted with the developer, before a community engagement process begins, yet the community is never made aware of this predetermined outcome.

5.1.1. West Rosslyn Planning Study (WRAPS)

A process, which included a much needed Rosslyn park, showed that before the community engagement process began, the County Manager had already signed off on a

³⁹¹ <https://www.arlingtonva.us/Government/County-Board/About-the-County-Board>

³⁹² <https://www.arlnow.com/2021/12/15/peters-take-arlington-county-a-nine-year-perspective-on-the-future/>

³⁹³ https://fall.smartcitiesconnect.org/program/index_2022.html#detail

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letter of intent³⁹⁴ for the project and most of its specifications.^{395, 396} The letter of intent was only discovered after the process had taken place.

Despite the uncovering of this letter of intent and predetermined process, “The County Board approved the West Rosslyn Planning Study (WRAPS)³⁹⁷ ...with very minor changes. Four of the five Board members said that they owed the residents of Rosslyn an apology.”³⁹⁸ And, “Sadly, most neighbors had already given up hope of being heard by their County Board on this issue. It was a small consolation that board members talked about “lessons learned” and apologized for their handling of the planning of western Rosslyn.”³⁹⁹

5.2. County Board appears to disregard poor and incomplete planning, even when staff states it.

5.2.1. Radnor-Ft. Myer heights appeared to lack community notification and well-defined policy guidance.

Residents of a townhouse community next to older garden apartments in Radnor Ft. Myer Heights (the Marbella⁴⁰⁰) were told in February 2022 “highest and best use” should be considered more than “by-right potential”⁴⁰¹ as the Board rolled out its first-ever award of unlimited bonus density for affordable housing.^{402, 403, 404, 405} This unanimous vote came despite staff noting in the Board report that “lacking well-defined planning and urban design guidelines or other applicable policy guidance, the review of this development proposal faced several key challenges”.^{406, 407}

The Planning Commission Presentation to the Board included a unanimous motion to recommend better notification of proposed projects by on-site billboards while they are still conceptual.⁴⁰⁸

³⁹⁴ <https://s26551.pcdn.co/wp-content/uploads/2015/06/2013-01-15-Executed-County-Penzance-LOI.pdf>

³⁹⁵ <https://www.arlnow.com/2015/06/25/peters-take-un-wrapping-western-rosslyn/>

³⁹⁶ https://arlingtonva.s3.amazonaws.com/wp-content/uploads/sites/31/2014/06/WRAPS_RevisedWorkingGroupCharge_2014-0513-formatted.pdf

³⁹⁷ <https://www.arlingtonva.us/Government/Projects/Plans-Studies/Land-Use/WRAPS>

³⁹⁸ <https://www.facebook.com/Save-Rosslyn-Highlands-Park-836645906401390/>

³⁹⁹ <https://www.facebook.com/Save-Rosslyn-Highlands-Park-836645906401390/>

⁴⁰⁰ <https://www.arlingtonva.us/Government/Projects/Project-Types/Site-Plan/1300-1305-N-Pierce-St>

⁴⁰¹ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8dCOoYwFw&feature=share&si=ELPmzJkDCLju2KnD5oyZMQ&t=9112>

⁴⁰² https://arlington.granicus.com/MetaViewer.php?view_id=2&clip_id=4040&meta_id=208816

⁴⁰³ <https://www.arlingtonva.us/About-Arlington/News/Articles/2019/County-Board-Revises-Bonus-Density-Provisions-to-Encourage-Affordable>

⁴⁰⁴ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wzjggcgiQkQ>

⁴⁰⁵ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8dCOoYwFw&feature=share&si=ELPmzJkDCLju2KnD5oyZMQ&t=9112>

⁴⁰⁶ https://arlington.granicus.com/MetaViewer.php?view_id=2&clip_id=4040&meta_id=208816

⁴⁰⁷ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8dCOoYwFw&t=9112s>

⁴⁰⁸ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8dCOoYwFw&feature=share&si=ELPmzJkDCLju2KnD5oyZMQ&t=4264>

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Even when staff says that the project is lacking what is necessary for good planning, the County Board approves the project.

5.2.2. The Residential Parking Program (RPP) was recently under review⁴⁰⁹, with Board approval of changes in 2021 despite what appeared to be limited community engagement and knowledge.

During multi-year RPP review, changes to residential parking rules were not allowed. While normally Site Plan Reviews would include potential RPP changes, the freeze meant that RPP impacts by new development was not allowed to be considered. SPR is approving lower parking ratios for new construction. Yet, neighborhood concerns related to the lower parking ratio impacts on neighborhood parking could not be addressed through RPP changes during the freeze period. Lower parking ratios are even more likely near public transportation, with the logic that people will use public transportation. Yet not all residents near metro completely eliminate car ownership. The County does not have a mechanism to revisit neighborhood parking hours, signage, etc. after approval and the end of the RPP review. Even on streets with limited parking, changing parking restrictions outside of the SPRC process is very difficult. Additionally, at least 16 RPP change applications were put on hold during the review and now must comply with more strict change requirements.^{410, 411, 412}

The RPP changes make it even more difficult to change parking restrictions in residential areas. While it is impacting parking for residences, even residences without driveways who are reliant on street parking, the new thresholds for change outside the SPRC project are very limiting. This could push out seniors, those with disabilities and other existing and future residents who may need to rely on personal vehicles. It also reduces overall community satisfaction.

5.3. Processes appear to be opaque, seemingly pre-determined, lack community consensus and engagement, as well as impact analysis even for hugely consequential decisions.

5.3.1. Missing Middle appears to change focus toward increased density.

One of the largest changes in zoning in decades, branded as the “Missing Middle”, the County changed its initial objective part way through the process. The processes seems riddled with a lack of transparency and data, and the community engagement opportunities⁴¹³ are calculated, controlled and are to convey rather than to collect

⁴⁰⁹ <https://www.arlnow.com/2021/02/22/county-board-approves-new-residential-permit-parking-program/>

⁴¹⁰ <https://www.arlnow.com/2019/01/07/parking-emerges-as-key-concern-as-virginia-square-american-legion-redevelopment-advances/>

⁴¹¹ <https://sungazette.news/arlington-board-oks-residential-parking-permit-revamp/>

⁴¹² https://www.arlingtonva.us/files/sharedassets/public/transportation/documents/rpp_administrativeguidelines_10182021.pdf

⁴¹³ <https://sungazette.news/letter-more-outreach-needed-on-missing-middle/>

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insights. Furthermore, the County's own surveys and feedback illustrate that the County is misrepresenting the community's consensus and strongly oppose the proposed Plan. The initiative's scope changed drastically over two years:

- December 2019: Board has a hearing and publishes a press release to kickoff Missing Middle, stating how they "emphasized that neither an across-the-board rezoning, nor an elimination of single-family zoning, would be the right fit for Arlington." ⁴¹⁴
- Board Chair Katie Cristol's inaugural address January 2022, where she talks about triplexes and never mentions 4, 6 or 8 plexes... ⁴¹⁵
- April 28, 2022: Staff releases 85 pages of its plan for across-the-board rezoning that eliminates all single-family zoning, and consultant's report. "Allow townhouses and buildings with 2-8 units in zoning districts currently limited to single-household development (R-5 to R-20)" ⁴¹⁶
- May 2, 2022: Staff holds its only public Q&A on the Missing Middle Framework, with 74 minutes for questions. ⁴¹⁷
- April-June 2022: Staff carry out what Board Vice Chair Christian Dorsey calls, an "unprecedented and quite creative" engagement that "hit all of the elements of what effective engagement means" "at a level of depth and accessibility unlike any I can remember." ⁴¹⁸
- July 12, 2022: Staff reveals results from the County's survey (from its "unprecedented" engagement for 30 months). Only 295 people had a "positive" "general opinion" of the County's Missing Middle Plan. Those opposing or critical outnumber supporters 3:1. ^{419, 420, 421}
- Thursday, August 11, 2022: the County opens 11 micro town halls ("community conversations") for only 15-20 people each (220 total involvement in a county of 250,000 people, with no control or certification to ensure that only county

⁴¹⁴ <https://www.arlingtonva.us/About-Arlington/News/Articles/2019/Arlington-County-to-Begin-Missing-Middle-Housing-Study-in-2020>

⁴¹⁵ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kKjN2tC7qx0>

⁴¹⁶ https://www.arlingtonva.us/files/sharedassets/public/housing/documents/missing-middle/mmhs-phase-2-public-presentation_05.02.pdf (p.13)

⁴¹⁷ https://teams.microsoft.com/#/l/meetup-join/19:meeting_ZjlwNGU0MmItNTIkOC00YTVmLTkwNTctNmNINzhmNzc1ZGM2@thread.v2/0?context=%7B%22Td%22:%2280354804-1fdf-428e-9f5f-5091e994cf54%22,%22Oid%22:%2223002100-e08d-40a6-bfaf-f2c5f978d344%22,%22IsBroadcastMeeting%22:true%7D&btype=a&role=a&anon=true&deeplinkId=fcd7c915-e6e8-4624-af1a-d24a8765f6ad

⁴¹⁸ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?t=1723&v=jcYojkudmBY&feature=youtu.be>

⁴¹⁹ <https://www.arlingtonva.us/files/sharedassets/public/housing/documents/missing-middle/mmhs-phase-2-public-engagement-details-analysis.pdf> (pg 18)

⁴²⁰ <https://www.civfed.org/newContent/2022-05/2022-05%20ACCF%20PSCComm%20Res%20Extend%20Missing%20Middle%20Comment%20Period%202022-05-10%20APPROVED.pdf>

⁴²¹ <https://sungazette.news/candidate-housing-survey-rigged-to-get-county-answers-it-wants/>

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residents are participating); to occur up to 2 months away. All community options to participate are reserved within 72 hours.

- Friday, August 19, 2022: the County quietly expands the micro town halls, in a vaguely worded email⁴²², to 30 people (330 max). They fill up in 72 hours over a late August vacation-filled weekend.
- August 23, 2022: online petition against the Board's plan tops 3,000⁴²³

5.4. Arlington County appears to misrepresent their projects and processes.

5.4.1. "Maintenance" Capital Improvement Projects (CIP); Virginia Highlands Park⁴²⁴ may have extend beyond "maintenance".

Arlington County appears to have mis-represented the project as a "maintenance" CIP project. And in doing so very likely violated a series of ordinances, policies and even public engagement procedures. In 2014⁴²⁵, at Virginia Highlands Park, DPR claimed improperly and inappropriately that the extensive work it authorized to be performed was "maintenance." Maintenance projects are clearly defined as not working outside the scope of the existing facilities or infrastructure and therefore would also contain special exclusions regarding stormwater runoff and Chesapeake Bay regulations since these projects would not disturb land or change the imperviousness of the surface or would alter the uses and therefore would also not need to involve the community in a typical engagement process.

However, the Virginia Highlands CIP "maintenance" project included:

- Approximately \$3 million in funding
- 100,000 sq ft of land disturbance
- Estimated 17,000 sq ft of new paved areas just for the maintenance project. Increase of 11,300 sf. of paved athletic courts (up from 48,100 sf.) and an addition of 5,300 sf. of sidewalk/plaza space (up from 3,400 sf.).
- New facilities (soccer field and youth court) added
- Numerous site amenities such as electronic reservation system, 18 new benches, bleachers, shade sails, etc...
- A complete redesign of the east side of park
- And much more...

5.4.2. Calling a process a "Study," and then changing it to a "Sector Plan" at the end of the process. Pentagon City Study/ Sector Plan.

⁴²² <https://content.govdelivery.com/accounts/VAARLINGTON/bulletins/328a080>

⁴²³ <https://www.change.org/p/arlingtonians-opposed-to-upzoning>

⁴²⁴ <http://friendsofahparks.org/virginia-highlands-park/>

⁴²⁵ <http://friendsofahparks.org/sample-page/environmental-regulations-and-cip-maintenance-documents/>

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The County labeled a process called the Pentagon City Study⁴²⁶. Residents asked throughout the process how this “study” was going to be applied and what its goal and intention was. When questioned, staff said they were just seeing what is possible.

Arlington County's Pentagon City Planning Study: Documents page⁴²⁷:

- October 12, 2021 - Pentagon City Planning **Study** Virtual Open House (still a Study)
- November 2, 2021 - Pentagon City Planning **Study** Virtual Discussion (still a Study)
- November 24, 2021 - Pentagon City Sector **Plan** v3 (suddenly a plan 18 days later)
- February 7, 2022 - Pentagon City Planning **Study** Virtual Listening Session (a Study again to pretend that they still can make changes)
- February 12, 2022 - Approved as "Pentagon City Sector **Plan**" 5 days later

This creates the appearance that the County intentionally misled the community by not properly calling it a Sector Plan from the onset.

5.4.3. Pentagon City Study's 18-month process appeared to talk mainly about connectivity and minor details about sidewalk widths and so on.

The last few months of the process before the vote, staff shared a presentation showing 18 high-rise buildings on the River House lot⁴²⁸, tripling the existing density. When River House residents were made aware of this, only by their fellow neighbors, they protested that they were never told about these significant changes⁴²⁹. Staff and County Board repeatedly replied that they were not part of the process and that there were a few yard signs a nearby park asking them to participate in a study with no mention of River House or tripling the density. Landowners had tried multiple times to increase and further develop the River House lot under a special GLUP with neighborhood concerns.^{430, 431, 432, 433}

The community perceived that the Pentagon City “study” later called a “Sector Plan” was really an attempt to pass significant density under the misnomer of a “study” instead of the special GLUP process.⁴³⁴

⁴²⁶ <https://www.arlingtonva.us/Government/Projects/Plans-Studies/Land-Use/Pentagon-City-Planning-Study/Documents>

⁴²⁷ [Ibid.](#)

⁴²⁸ https://arlingtonva.s3.amazonaws.com/wp-content/uploads/sites/31/2021/07/FocusGroup_July29_DraftPlan.pdf

⁴²⁹ <https://www.change.org/p/arlington-county-board-riverhouse-neighbors-for-sensible-density>

⁴³⁰ https://www.arcaonline.org/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2022/02/ARCA_Submission_CountyBoardVote_PCSP_9FEB22_v2.pdf

⁴³¹ <https://www.arlnow.com/2022/02/11/pentagon-city-sector-plan-to-reach-county-board-on-saturday-amid-some-vocal-opposition/>

⁴³² https://www.civfed.org/newContent/2022-06/2022-06%20ACCF%20PSCComm%20Res%20GLUP_Planning_Input%20APPROVED.pdf

⁴³³ <https://www.arlnow.com/2022/10/17/jbg-smith-files-plans-to-turn-riverhouse-parking-lots-into-more-housing/>

⁴³⁴ <https://www.arlingtonva.us/Government/Projects/Plans-Studies/Land-Use/Pentagon-City-Planning-Study/Documents>

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- The "**Study**" started in Jan 2020, just before COVID.
- Monthly focus groups were conducted with a preselected group, heavy on developer representatives and special interests start in Sept 2020. Focus group sessions were managed by an outside firm with very general presentations on concepts but no actual plans. The focus was on what the community wants - walkability, bike lanes, sitting spaces⁴³⁵. The River House lot was not the focus of the discussions.
- Initial Version of Draft **Plan** - July 29, 2021⁴³⁶. The first time anyone actually sees triple density on the River House lot - 1.5 years after the study started and 10 months after the "community engagement" started.

5.5. General perception by long-term residents that the County processes are now almost always pre-determined before even being presented to the public.

5.5.1. Longtime civically engaged residents speak openly about what appears to be the County's predetermined processes.

Washington Post, "The cake is often half-baked and people's ability to impact what's happening is often more marginal" compared to other projects, said Christer Ahl, the former chair of the Crystal City Citizens Review Council, which represents residents of that neighborhood. "The county, landowners and developers have loads of opportunities behind the scenes to discuss what would be agreeable before the community gets involved."⁴³⁷

The County will not acknowledge or reveal that a process, in part or in its entirety, has already been determined before it's presented to the public for their review and "input."

⁴³⁵ [Ibid.](#)

⁴³⁶ https://arlingtonva.s3.amazonaws.com/wp-content/uploads/sites/31/2021/07/FocusGroup_July29_DraftPlan.pdf

⁴³⁷ <https://www.washingtonpost.com/dc-md-va/2022/04/22/amazon-headquarters-penplace-arlington-plan/>

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5.5.2. Police Practices Review: Consultant's Report release delayed by County Manager.

The Arlington County Civic Federation passed a resolution^{438, 439} to request immediate action by the County staff to deliver External Assessment by paid external consultants, despite on-time report delivery of a separate report by community volunteers. County executives stated that the report or draft report was in County possession six months past the consultant's deadline. Yet, it was not released to the public by the County Manager until more than two months after the final report's listed date.^{440, 441} Then Board Chair Matthew de Ferranti said the report would be released "next week" (over a period of months) when asked for an update. A report was finally released by the County Manager approximately 13 months after it was due from the consultant, with no explanation to the Civic Federation or public regarding contractual and/or payment implications of the report delinquency. Even when the final report was available to the County, per Mark Schwartz "While HH worked over the past year, the report was not completed until a few months ago. The delays in completion were due to changes in personnel at HH."^{442, 443}

The public wants to know that the County has implemented and enforced contractual obligations for missed contractor/consultant deadlines. Additionally, momentum gained through the Police Practices Review was slowed. The report was obsolete by the time it was released to the public because the delays allowed most of the recommendations to already be implemented. For example the Community Oversight Board⁴⁴⁴, County Budget⁴⁴⁵ and Capital Improvement Plan (CIP)⁴⁴⁶ were approved without the public having benefited from the report contents and been able to provide input. The community questions County transparency when reports are released months after promised and received.

⁴³⁸ <https://www.civfed.org/newContent/2021-06/2021-06-ACCF-PubSvcCmte-Res-External-Police-Consultant-APPROVED.pdf>

⁴³⁹ https://www.arlingtonva.us/files/sharedassets/public/departments/documents/rev.01.12.2022_final-transmittal-letter.pdf

⁴⁴⁰ <https://www.arlingtonva.us/files/sharedassets/public/departments/documents/hillard-heintze-administrative-policy-and-data-review-of-the-arlington-county-pd-10-04-21.pdf>

⁴⁴¹ https://www.arlingtonva.us/files/sharedassets/public/departments/documents/rev.01.12.2022_final-transmittal-letter.pdf

⁴⁴² *Ibid.*

⁴⁴³ <https://www.arlingtonva.us/files/sharedassets/public/departments/documents/hillard-heintze-administrative-policy-and-data-review-of-the-arlington-county-pd-10-04-21.pdf>

⁴⁴⁴ <https://www.arlingtonva.us/Government/Commissions-and-Advisory-Groups/Community-Oversight-Board>

⁴⁴⁵ <https://www.arlingtonva.us/files/sharedassets/public/budget/documents/fy-2023/fy-2023-adopted/fy23-adopted-all-in-one-budget.pdf>

⁴⁴⁶ <https://www.arlingtonva.us/Government/Programs/Budget-Finance/CIP/Adopted-FY-2023-FY-2032-Capital-Improvement-Plan>

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5.6. Appearance of failure to accurately represent feedback and data.

The community perceives that the County cherry picks feedback, misrepresenting “consensus” and providing no evidence to support a project’s conclusions. Staff’s conclusions to projects do not appear to be validated by publicly recorded feedback and often lack data. Instead, the County refers to the feedback they overheard or did not record, appearing to justify the results.

5.6.1. Pentagon City Study/Sector Plan.

Despite repeated requests for changes in the draft Within the Pentagon City Study/Sector Plan,⁴⁴⁷ staff continued to exclude the majority of community recommendations and did not address many of their concerns. Staff stated that they did not address these resident concerns due to a large number of opposing viewpoints. When residents demanded to see this “opposing feedback,” staff shared all 10 public responses⁴⁴⁸ along with three from Venable, the National Landing BID and JBG Smith. Of those 13 comments, none “opposed” the community’s concerns and instead often echoed the concerns and validated community input. Staff was asked to again validate the conclusions and reasons for not addressing community concerns and was provided with the below statement via screenshot.

Staff could not produce any evidence to support their conclusions and recommendations. They made broad-sweeping and unsubstantiated assertions that they had tremendous feedback and consensus, opposite of the residents, when in fact staff could not provide evidence to show it. Residents, including nearly 2,500 people^{449, 450} and even data-analysis on inequity in open space⁴⁵¹ contradicted much of the project’s conclusions and recommendations. County Board did not hold the staff accountable, did not take the community’s outrage into consideration and voted 5-0 to proceed with the project.^{452, 453}

⁴⁴⁷ <https://www.arlingtonva.us/Government/Projects/Plans-Studies/Land-Use/Pentagon-City-Planning-Study/Documents>

⁴⁴⁸ https://arlington.granicus.com/MetaViewer.php?view_id=2&clip_id=4040&meta_id=208837

⁴⁴⁹ <https://www.change.org/p/arlington-county-board-riverhouse-neighbors-for-sensible-density/c>

⁴⁵⁰ <https://aurorahighlands.org/news/pcps-draft-comments/>

⁴⁵¹ <https://www.arlington-analytics.com/papers/OPS22202.pdf>

⁴⁵² <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8dCOoYwFw&feature=share&si=ELPmzJkDCLju2KnD5oyZMQ&t=9744>

⁴⁵³ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8dCOoYwFw&feature=share&si=ELPmzJkDCLju2KnD5oyZMQ&t=36916>

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From: Matt Mattauszek <Mmattauszek@arlingtonva.us>

Date: 10/29/2021 7:12 PM

To: [REDACTED]

CC: [REDACTED]

Between the documents that have been posted on our website and the PDF I sent to Ben earlier today, we consider that request satisfied.

Throughout the entire study, we have not recorded feedback collected during Focus Group meetings, our many office hours, the discussions held by the biophilia subcommittee, or the other venues where feedback was provided. The range of comments date back to much earlier this year where many of the Draft Plan's building blocks were initially developed and scrutinized by various stakeholders. As a result, we're not just focusing on comments that may have been raised in the last few weeks or since this summer. The mere absence of an email, meeting transcript, or formal letter where alternative perspectives may have been shared does not disprove their existence or indicate staff/consultants were not made aware of them. I realize that may be a frustrating reality but I assure you we are sharing information in fully transparent manner. Our goal is to continue to highlight where we have a difference of opinion or competing priorities so that they can be fully considered when tradeoffs may be necessary.

Speaking for myself, I tend to be widely available to various stakeholders given my broad involvement within 22202 activities. Some of the instances where feedback was shared with me did not originate from scheduled or coordinated events – but were rather opportunistic and largely based on my availability where folks would just spontaneously bring up the study. Some of those individuals would rely on other meetings as opportunities to share their thoughts, some I would run into as part of my monthly site visits in the area, and others preferred phone calls as opposed to email communication. I did not ask all of them to email me a summary of what was discussed which, in hindsight, perhaps would have been more helpful given where we find ourselves. Other staff who are heavily engaged in this area would occasionally find themselves in similar circumstances. I say all this to further reinforce the benefit of the summary format which allows us to share what we collectively heard, regardless of the method by which it was received.

Matt

From: [REDACTED]

Sent: Friday, October 29, 2021 6:19 PM

To: Matt Mattauszek <Mmattauszek@arlingtonva.us>

Cc: [REDACTED]

Subject: Re: Reminder: Comments on the Pentagon City

EXTERNAL EMAIL

Hi Matt,

Two weeks ago at the Open House for the second PC Study Planning draft you were asked by multiple people to provide all the feedback comments you received. The first draft solicited feedback via an **email response**. I've counted a **total of 10 individual/community member responses** and 3 from Venable, the BID and JBG for a **grand total of 13 responses on the first PC Planning Study draft**, totaling 52 pages (including some duplicate comments). The remainder are the presentation slides with minor typo/edit suggestions and some comments. The 13 comments do not seem to "counter" the concerns and issues that have been raised by the community for many members, in fact a number of them actually reinforce and validate the issues.

I asked in my email below if this is all? Where is the other feedback that you received, that according to you, "countered" the concerns and feedback being expressed by the community as the reason why no substantive changes were made from the first to the second draft or why even a number of them were not acknowledged in the [summary format](#) that was shown?

Do staff and the consultants have recordation of all this "significant feedback" that they received via all the other unofficial formats as you stated, "meetings, informal chats, and phone calls"? And if so, I believe that all the feedback that you received be posted for everyone to view, was the actual request made by the participants of the October meeting.

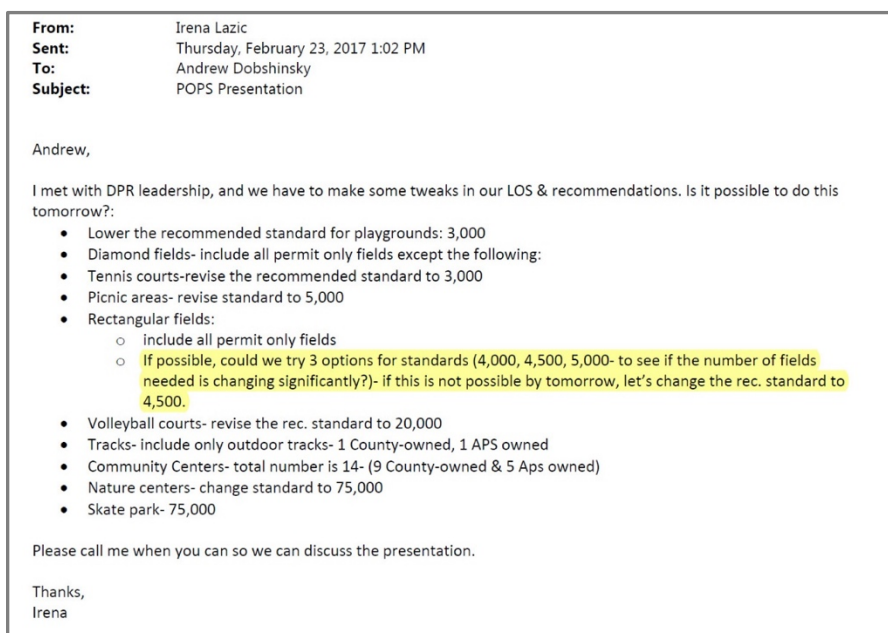
Thank you,
[REDACTED]

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5.6.2. Consultants appear to not produce data-driven analysis based on their own independent review and suggestion.

Instead, staff frequently works with consultants to produce reports and even figures representing the results that the county (staff/County Manager or County Board) want to achieve.

Public Spaces Master Plans⁴⁵⁴ staff could not validate how they achieved the Level of Service numbers. In fact, their own internal data were not aligned with the numbers that they were showing in the process for the Public Spaces Master Plan. The results of a FOIA request (below) showed that staff had been asking the consultants to arbitrarily adjust the Level of Service figures to meet a certain result. After an extensive presentation in the Civic Federation in January 2019,⁴⁵⁵ a resolution passed^{456, 457, 458} demanding that the County use real data in the Public Spaces Master Plan process for field need.



⁴⁵⁴ <https://www.arlingtonva.us/Government/Projects/Plans-Studies/Comprehensive-Plan/Public-Spaces-Master-Plan>

⁴⁵⁵ <https://vimeo.com/311702790#t=3544s>

⁴⁵⁶ <https://www.civfed.org/newContent/2019-01/2019-01%20ParksRec%20PSMP%20LoS%20Res%202019-01-08%20APPROVED.pdf>

⁴⁵⁷ <https://www.civfed.org/newContent/2019-01/2019-01%20ParksRec%20PSMP%20LoS%20Res%20Support%20Doc.pdf>

⁴⁵⁸ <https://www.civfed.org/newContent/2019-01/2019-01%20ParksRec%20PSMP%20LoS%20Letter%20to%20County%20Board%202019-01-13.pdf>

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Community perception is that there is little confidence in process and even what appears to be a “data-driven” result when there is evidence to support that the “data” is being arbitrarily tweaked by the consultants at the request of staff to adjust to a pre-determined result⁴⁵⁹.

6. The current community engagement process is perceived by many to marginalize or stifle substantive criticism from residents about proposed County policies by such methods as not recording public comments, using “push poll” surveys that are structured to support a single point of view, providing on-line only presentations that do not allow for two-way communications, encouraging advocacy group support, not recording or posting public minutes, and failing to include some letters from the public record.

6.1. Staff appears to ask select community leaders to “control” the community.

6.1.1. Staff seems to make implied threats that they will not work with the residents who object and vocalize their concerns over a Plan.

County planner sends the following message to community leaders, excluding the concerned residents mentioned:

⁴⁵⁹ <https://thearlingtonway.org/2020/01/20/vindication-for-advocates-calling-for-transparency-open-data-and-equitable-public-spaces/>

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From: Matt Mattauszek <Mmattauszek@arlingtonva.us>
Date: Thu, Jan 27, 2022, 10:40 PM
Subject: Pentagon City Sector Plan updates

[REDACTED]

All,

Good evening. Hope you're doing well. I figured it would be much easier to just send a single email and make sure you all can see the same information.

First, thank you for carefully reviewing this significant amount of material and submitting all of your comments to us in late December. Our core staff team has developed responses to your respective feedback which you can find in the three attached PDFs. More broadly, we have also developed a [comprehensive summary of all responses and changes made to the Sector Plan](#) which has been posted to our study website. You can also find a copy of our [draft staff report for February](#) as well as the [new \(4th\) version of the Sector Plan](#) on that same webpage. I believe we were able to incorporate a larger number of comments into this new version of the Plan and it really benefits from many of your thoughtful suggestions.

I would also like to take this opportunity to address a growing pattern in recent communications that I have either been a part of, or have been made aware of. As you no doubt may have guessed, it involves the group of residents who are actively voicing concerns against recommendations in our Sector Plan related to the RiverHouse property. I appreciate the heightened level of interest and pledge to work with the group's representatives to identify any outstanding (and appropriate) adjustments to the Sector Plan. This, of course, can only occur if such adjustments are either reasonable or do not fundamentally conflict with the consensus we have carefully developed through a broad spectrum of stakeholders over this 18-month long study. If we work together, I suspect there may be a few elements which can still be considered further before the Plan becomes finalized.

However, the specific tactics that continue to be applied, along with the misleading statements about our process and mischaracterization of our recommendations is simply not helpful. In fact, it is completely counter-productive and only minimizes the chances of us reaching any compromises on issues that may still be up for debate. One thing I want to make perfectly clear is that removing the RiverHouse property from the Sector Plan is not an acceptable option that staff will support. Further efforts to suggest this is a viable path forward will ultimately prove unsuccessful. The County Manager and I have scheduled a meeting with this group's representatives for this Monday and I hope we can use that conversation to reset and focus on something productive that addresses the underlying issues here. I remain hopeful this could lead to some progress and, at minimum, greater awareness of the many priorities this Plan has to balance.

Hope this helps in your ongoing conversations and any further distributions of this email that may be warranted.

MATT MATAUSZEK
Master Planner, Crystal City/Pentagon City Planning Coordinator
ARLINGTON COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY PLANNING, HOUSING & DEVELOPMENT (CPHD)
2100 Clarendon Blvd., Suite 700 | Arlington, VA, 22201 | 703.228.0493

From: Scott Miles [REDACTED]
Date: Friday, January 28, 2022 11:14 AM
To: Matt Mattauszek <Mmattauszek@arlingtonva.us>

[REDACTED]

Hi Matt –

This message is disturbing. The negative characterization of residents without citing specific examples is not only unhelpful, but also damaging to this process and future county processes.

Can you please clarify the "specific tactics" you object to? What are the "misleading statements"? What is the "mischaracterization of recommendations"? No doubt some of that could exist, and some of those descriptions are debatable. But making these blanket assertions effectively lumps any Arlington citizen with complaints into an outcast category, maligning them and dismissing valid concerns and opinions. I'm not even part of the group I believe you're referring to – at least I don't think I am - but given the vague assertions, who knows? That is a problem.

Further, why was this message delivered to community leaders, who have worked tirelessly to help represent the residents most impacted by this Plan? Your message also made clear staff will decide what is "up for debate," not residents, and staff will determine the "chances of us reaching any compromises."

Combined with the ambiguity of what is considered inappropriate and misinformation, this reads as an implied threat that community leaders are expected to join in minimizing the voice of residents and opinions you may not like, otherwise our outstanding community priorities have little chance of being considered. That would be completely inappropriate, and I hope it does not impair their ability to faithfully represent all our residents.

This process has already been an abject failure in public engagement. That is my opinion, of course, but I can provide a slew of examples if desired. Please do not make it any worse than it already is by further maligning and dismissing residents.

It should go without saying that I appreciate the ongoing communication, the complexity of this engagement, and the need to balance a wide range of priorities. I look forward to reviewing the latest information provided and continuing to work to ensure that all community priorities are adequately reflected in the Plan before it is submitted for adoption. I expect no Plan would be put forward without the explicit review and consensus of the residents directly affected.

In the interest of transparency, I am copying the group I believe you're referring to, as well as the County Board.

Sincerely,
Scott Miles

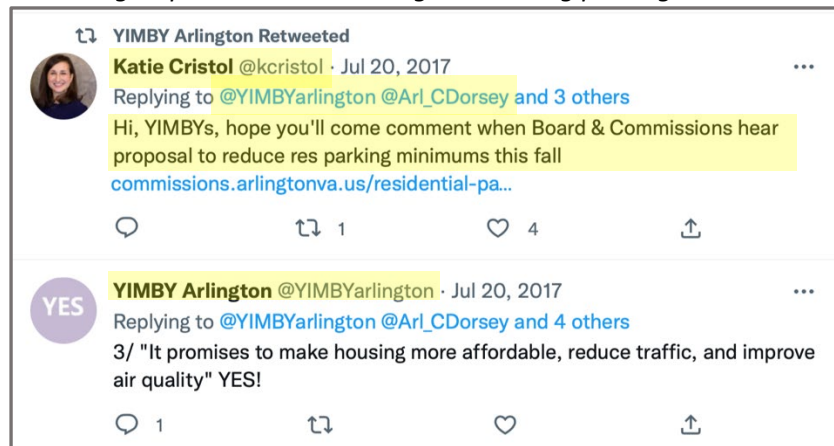
A response (above) from the former President of the Civic Association, Scott Miles, called staff's message "disturbing;" and cited that the "negative characterization of residents without citing specific examples is not only unhelpful, but also damaging to this process and future county processes..." Additionally stating, "this reads as an implied threat that community leaders are expected to join in minimizing the voice of residents and opinions you may not like, otherwise our outstanding community priorities have little chance of being considered."

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6.2. The County Board, County Manager and Staff use techniques to skew the results of processes and to make them falsely appear that there was inclusive and transparent engagement as well as a consensus.

6.2.1. County Board and staff appear to work with advocacy group(s) to pass plans and initiatives despite general community concerns.

6.2.1.1. *Katie Cristol Tweet encouraging the advocacy, pro-development "YIMBY" group to attend a meeting on reducing parking.*



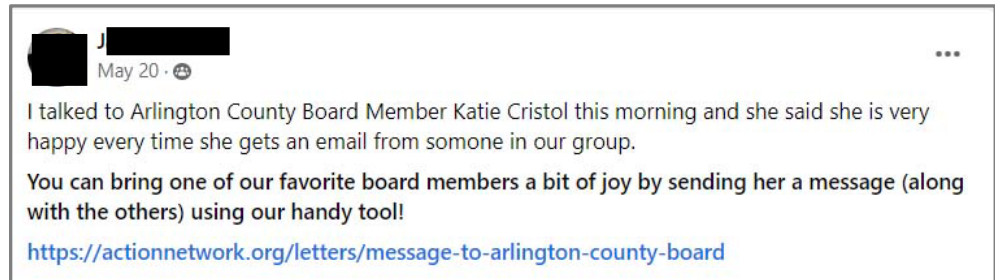
YIMBY group is being encouraged to attend a meeting^{460, 461} on a topic that had limited community education, outreach, or input to Arlington residents. This engagement appears to prioritize the engagement of the advocacy group rather than to develop community consensus by addressing community concerns. It also appears to seek the advocacy group support to dilute or counterbalance the input of others in the community.

⁴⁶⁰ <https://twitter.com/kcristol/status/888067982450143232?t=yksPpISKr0sPSt69hwR3fg&s=07&fbclid=IwAR0-11YTEmzWBiujiWlTfSsYhhWbLdHeaiUsE8ZOQhVm68d6zKbc8cmLgH0>

⁴⁶¹ <https://twitter.com/YIMBYarlington/status/888052408999448577>

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6.2.1.2. Katie Cristol's efforts reportedly encourage advocacy group participation.⁴⁶²



6.2.2. YIMBY group members appear to provide “cover” for the County Board elected officials to approve projects that are heavily contested by communities.

“This is a situation [Pentagon City Sector Plan] where I think just a few more voices, even if it's not a majority of speakers, will give the County Board the push it needs...” –B, active in YIMBYs of NOVA Facebook group.⁴⁶³

“...if we keep it positive and focus on the facts we will give the County Board enough cover to pass the [Pentagon City Sector] plan in the next couple of weeks.” – L, Alexandria resident, founder of YIMBYs NOVA in the YIMBYS NOVA Facebook group.

“Let's hope all we have to do is cover the spread, so to speak” – L, Alexandria resident, founder of YIMBYs NOVA in the YIMBYS NOVA Facebook group.

⁴⁶² <https://www.facebook.com/groups/novayimbys/permalink/1048963446058525/> (group membership required to see the message)

⁴⁶³ <https://www.facebook.com/groups/novayimbys/>

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Can you speak at Arlington's Planning or Housing Commission next week?
 Density in Pentagon City is getting organized against you. You don't have to live in Pentagon City to be an advocate for increased density. The Commission needs to hear voices of support! Please sign up to speak at the Planning Commission (Feb 2) or Housing Commission (Feb 3) to advocate for more homes on surface parking lots near transit! We need you -
 You can sign up here:
 Planning Commission Meeting - February 2
https://www.arlingtonva.us/_Planning-Commission/Speaker
 Housing Commission Meeting (both items) - February 3
https://www.arlingtonva.us/_Housing-Commission/Speaker
 I also encourage folks to sign up on my Google form so we can coordinate messaging. I'll also arrange a time to do a Commission 101, so you know what to expect if you've never given public comment before it's easy!
<https://forms.gle/mc2k4w008KqL06>

WE NEED YOU!



shared a link.

Last night the Arlington County Planning Commission *unanimously* advanced the Pentagon City sector plan. A number of our members spoke and did a wonderful job. The other side's ignorance, negativity, and bombast seemed to backfire. If we keep it positive and focus on the facts we will give the County Board enough cover to pass the plan in the next couple of weeks.



This is a situation where I think just a few more voices, even if it's not a majority of speakers, will give the County Board the push it needs. For the board meeting, you'll need to keep an eye on when it's your turn to speak, but you can definitely be doing other things around the house while you wait (one of the benefits of virtual public engagement!)

YIMBYs of
 NOVA
 7 minutes ago · 📷

Apparently there are about 100-plus NIMBY speakers signed up for tomorrow's Arlington County Board meeting on the Pentagon City Sector Plan. I implore you, please seriously consider signing up to address the board if you live in Arlington. Get in touch with J. [redacted] and we can let you know when it is your turn to speak. I want us to have a good day tomorrow. Thousands of housing units are at stake. Let's hope all we have to do is cover the spread, so to speak.

👍 2 2 comments

Like Comment Send

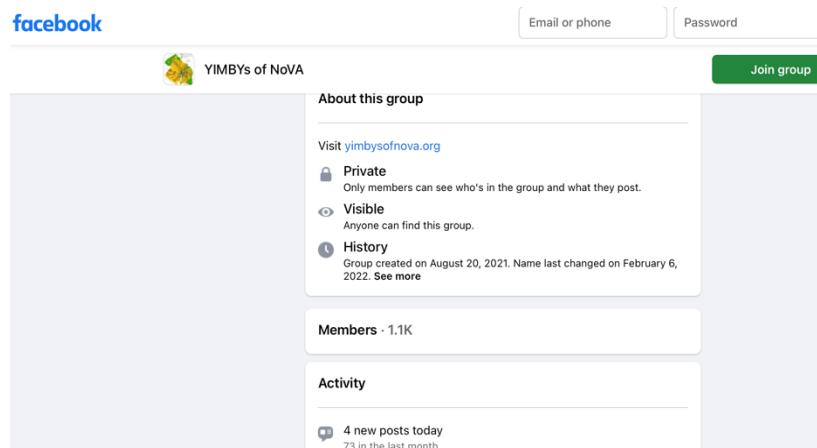
Chris Slatt
 3+ hours of public comment is not unheard of. ALL 2 minute speakers get to go before any 3... See more

This engagement appears to demonstrate the advocacy group's understanding of their role in providing "cover" to the Board to dilute or counterbalance the input of others in the community.⁴⁶⁴ Screenshots rather than content links are provided because access to

⁴⁶⁴ https://www.insidenova.com/opinion/letters_to_editor/letter-who-is-actually-behind-arlington-missing-middle-proposal/article_9e7cff2e-08e2-11ed-bdb2-8f0471d208fc.html

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the messages requires membership to a private Facebook group.⁴⁶⁵ The screenshot, captured in 2023, indicates that the YIMBYS of NoVA Facebook group is still active. Additionally, group members sometimes use the hashtag #YIMBYsOfNoVA on Twitter.



6.3. County Board appears to strategically appoints Commissioners from an advocacy group (YIMBYS of NOVA).

- County Board mobilizes YIMBYS of Arlington group to attend community meetings. See example in Section 6.2.1.1.
- The YIMBY of NOVA group strategized to attend County Board meetings to provide "cover" for the County Board to pass heavily contested projects (example in 6.2.2), including non- Arlington resident participation, (example in Section 8)
- County Board appoints members of the YIMBY of NOVA group to key Planning⁴⁶⁶ and Transportation Commissions⁴⁶⁷ including the Chair positions. Commissions have dismissed resident input and engagement in their decision-making.⁴⁶⁸ See examples in 4.2 and Section 7.

See additional example of in Section 9 of an undisclosed, non-residency with misleading consensus comment to Arlington County Planning Commission.

6.4. County survey questions often appear to be biased, worded to lead to a specific answer outcome and sent to a limited number of people.

6.4.1. Courthouse West Survey potential missteps.

⁴⁶⁵ <https://www.facebook.com/groups/novayimbys/>

⁴⁶⁶ <https://www.arlingtonva.us/Government/Commissions-and-Advisory-Groups/Planning-Commission/Members>

⁴⁶⁷ <https://www.arlingtonva.us/Government/Commissions-and-Advisory-Groups/Transportation-Commission/TC-Members>

⁴⁶⁸ https://www.insidenova.com/opinion/letters_to_editor/letter-who-is-actually-behind-arlington-missing-middle-proposal/article_9e7cff2e-08e2-11ed-bdb2-8f0471d208fc.html

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The project appears to demonstrate a number of missteps in engaging with the community including: no direct notification to local residents and a general online survey⁴⁶⁹ did not validate that respondents were Arlington County residents. The survey itself only allowed selection between 3 options set by County Staff models: 6 story multi-use structure, 12 story and 16 story. The majority of the respondents selected 6 story. There was no option allowed for selecting the current zoning which allows 1-4 stories nor was there an opportunity for comments. See examples 4.2, 7.4.1.

6.4.2. Expert review of County surveys appear to show questions confirm survey writer biases.

“Joan Fitzgerald, a local resident who works in surveying populations, says county survey questions are often worded to confirm the biases of the survey writers, while the questions can be jargon-dense.”⁴⁷⁰ “That said, responses from people who understand the jargon are valuable when the county is hammering out policy details, argues Chris Slatt, a transportation advocate who highlighted the lopsided demographic response to the survey via Twitter.”⁴⁷¹

Questions often appear worded to lead to a specific outcome. Diverse perspectives may not be consistently sought or included. Use of jargon seems to result in questions and/or topics to be understood by a limited number of individuals.

6.4.3. Arlington County's 2022 Community Survey⁴⁷² with limited participants.

There were approximately 1,300 survey “participants”. It is unclear how perspective respondents were identified to reduce biases. The definition and numbers of “participants” invited to respond and “respondents” is unclear. Yes, “We encourage everyone who receives an invitation to participate to do so.”⁴⁷³

Among the areas for improvement identified^{474, 475, 476, 477, 478} are:

- Transparency of the County's decision-making process
- Efforts to manage and plan for growth and development

⁴⁶⁹ <https://www.arlingtonva.us/files/sharedassets/public/commissions/documents/lrpc/chw-dec-2021-jan-2022-online-engagement-session-survey-responses.pdf>

⁴⁷⁰ <https://www.arlnow.com/2022/03/29/historic-preservation-survey-targeting-equity-and-inclusion-nets-mostly-white-older-respondents/>

⁴⁷¹ *Ibid.*

⁴⁷² https://www.arlingtonva.us/files/sharedassets/public/topics/documents/executive-summary_2022-resident-satisfaction-survey_final_05.17.22.pdf

⁴⁷³ <https://www.arlingtonva.us/About-Arlington/News/Articles/2022/Arlington-Measuring-Community-Satisfaction-in-County-Services>

⁴⁷⁴ <https://www.arlingtonva.us/Government/Departments/CMO/Resident-Satisfaction-Survey-2022-Results>

⁴⁷⁵ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4EHQEW1U3fE&feature=share&si=ELPmzJkDCLju2KnD5oyZMQ&t=3527>

⁴⁷⁶ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4EHQEW1U3fE&feature=share&si=ELPmzJkDCLju2KnD5oyZMQ&t=3655>

⁴⁷⁷ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4EHQEW1U3fE&feature=share&si=ELPmzJkDCLju2KnD5oyZMQ&t=3813>

⁴⁷⁸ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4EHQEW1U3fE&feature=share&si=ELPmzJkDCLju2KnD5oyZMQ&t=4088>

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- Promoting availability, accessibility, and quality of affordable childcare and mental health services

It is difficult to determine whether the results were from a truly random sample/response and whether all segments were able to participate.

Few community members were aware of the survey and opportunity to participate. The Board seems to discount the community's responses regarding the lack of transparency. Therefore, the community's perspective is that there may be limited actions based on the feedback. The County should develop a plan to improve each identified area for improvement as well as each area within the survey as part of the Board's duty⁴⁷⁹ to monitor the implementation of policy.

6.4.4. Policy impact on seniors and the disabled appears to have limit notice despite easily available contact information.

The County is proposing changes to the Specialized Transportation for Arlington Residents (STAR)⁴⁸⁰ program, which serves Arlington residents who have difficulty using public fixed route transit due to the effects of age, disability or environmental conditions⁴⁸¹. Despite having the names, addresses and contact information for users/riders, the County has not reached out to the users to ensure they are aware of the proposed policy changes and related feedback form⁴⁸². As a result, those who are most impacted by the changes may not be able to provide feedback on the proposed policy changes. This may further erode faith and trust in government.

6.4.5. The Residential Parking Program (RPP) survey's methods and results appear to lack transparency.

Residents sought to understand which people received the survey and associated details about those individuals, access to see the survey, and the methodology in how the survey participants were chosen. There was additional complexity due to the County's failed website conversion (Section 13.2). Ultimately, the survey raised many questions about the county's goals and commitments to fair parking in Arlington⁴⁸³. The community also felt that the survey was biased and survey availability was not well communicated.⁴⁸⁴

The outcome resulted in a significant change to the number of permits each home can receive and a change in the fees associated with residential parking in Arlington. These

⁴⁷⁹ <https://www.arlingtonva.us/Government/County-Board/About-the-County-Board>

⁴⁸⁰ <https://www.arlingtontransit.com/star/>

⁴⁸¹ <https://www.arlingtontransit.com/star/star-rider-guide/#what>

⁴⁸² <https://www.arlingtontransit.com/star/proposed-star-policy-changes-for-fy-2023/>

⁴⁸³ https://arlington.granicus.com/MetaViewer.php?view_id=2&event_id=1614&meta_id=200960

⁴⁸⁴ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Bxm3YX9RV1k&feature=share&si=ELPmzJkDCLju2KnD5oyZMQ&t=4837>

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policy changes may have been based primary on a survey^{485, 486} sent to 60,000 of which there were 4,539 respondents⁴⁸⁷. There appears to be little to no information on its validity and accuracy.

7. The citizen-commissioner appointment process and objectives lack transparency for member and Chair selection and seems to result in commissions that lack a diversity of opinion or thought and do not necessarily reflect the views of the public at large.

- 7.1. The process for Advisory Group appointments appears to not be transparent and appears subject to Board/County Manager favoritism.

While vacancies are listed, it is not clear how members are appointed, nor how to get appointed to Commissions such as Planning or Transportation.

The County does little to advertise availability of Advisory Group openings and does not appear to actively seek candidates of diverse opinions.

Advisory Group Chairs make recommendations to the Board regarding potential appointments, also creating the ability for Chairs to only put forth those with similar viewpoints.⁴⁸⁸

Community sentiment is that the Board and County Manager will only make appointments if the individuals support the County's positions, especially for the more influential/powerful Advisory Groups.⁴⁸⁹ This perception reduces faith in the Advisory Group system and processes.

- 7.2. Appearance of Favoritism of Commission Chairs and Commissioners by County Board.

As shown in the examples of 6.2 where one advocacy group is favored by the County Board, those same select individuals also participate or head several Advisory Commissions, which are similarly ignoring the concerns of residents.

- 7.3. Chair of the Arlington County Planning Commission on Twitter.

Appointed by the County Board to Commissioner and then Chair, Daniel Weir's Twitter account prominently states his position in the County. Regarding a significant change to county-wide zoning policies, Weir Tweets, "When Black Lives Matter, just, you know. Somewhere else." (screenshot below) referring to the yard signs opposing the zoning changes.

⁴⁸⁵ <https://arlingtonva.s3.amazonaws.com/wp-content/uploads/sites/31/2019/07/Household-Survey-Summary-for-RPP-Review.pdf>

⁴⁸⁶ <https://www.arlnow.com/press-releases/residential-parking-permit-review-household-survey-and-on-street-parking-occupancy-results-now-available/>

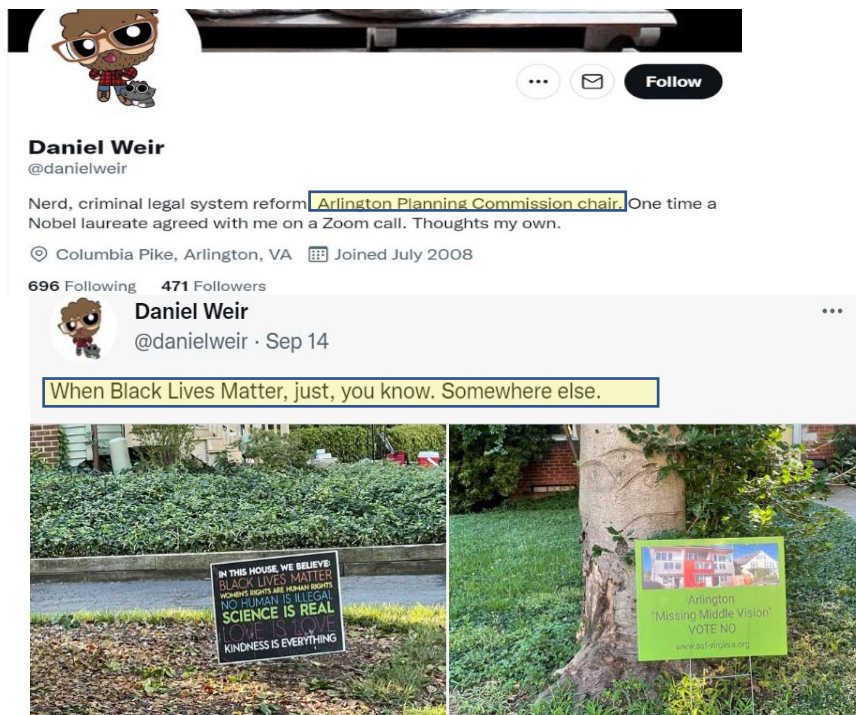
⁴⁸⁷ https://s26551.pcdn.co/wp-content/uploads/2019/07/Survey-Results_Infographic_ENG_FINAL.pdf

⁴⁸⁸ <https://www.arlingtonva.us/Government/Commissions-and-Advisory-Groups>

⁴⁸⁹ https://www.insidenova.com/opinion/letters_to_editor/letter-who-is-actually-behind-arlington-missing-middle-proposal/article_9e7cff2e-08e2-11ed-bdb2-8f0471d208fc.html

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Opponents to the zoning changes reference new construction townhomes high prices, such as \$935k on 2134 S Nelson; \$925k on S Taylor Court; and \$930k 24th Road S. Median household income in 2020 dollars for Black or African American Arlingtonians is \$64k and is \$135k for White Arlingtonians.⁴⁹⁰ See also October 2020 affordable housing and racial concerns in section 3.6.2 for Columbia Pike housing.



Weir is active in the YIMBYs of NOVA group. See additional examples in section 7 and 8 about process disruption and collaboration with the County Board.

⁴⁹⁰ <https://www.arlingtonva.us/Government/Projects/Data-Research/Demographics/Race-Ethnicity-Dashboard> data pull as of 9/18/2022

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7.4. Commissioners appear to discount residents and favor special interests and developers

7.4.1. Special Land Use Study--Courthouse West

Special Land Use Study--Courthouse West⁴⁹¹ appeared to favor a developer and their attorney during testimony. A Commission and County Board appeared to discount residents' concerns and included what the community felt was a biased and misrepresented survey⁴⁹²

7.4.2. Planning Commission recommended building height higher than staff recommendation despite community concerns.

In their Court House West study,⁴⁹³ County Staff stated that though the zoning change would allow 16 stories they recommend a height cap of 12 stories be adopted. Despite speakers from the County citing issues with the process and survey (see details in example 4.2), the Planning commission nonetheless voted 4-2 in favor of the developers' request for 16-story height limits, against staff recommendation of 12⁴⁹⁴ and the community's recommendation for a maximum of 6. Further, several in the community believe one of those votes was invalid as the Planning Commission has not published new procedures for electronic voting in new hybrid meeting formats.⁴⁹⁵

7.5. Commissions and committees which ask too many questions of the County either cease to exist or are deferred indefinitely.

7.5.1. Two County Board Advisory Groups were eliminated in July 2022 with little public notice or debate.

The Emergency Preparedness Advisory Commission (EPAC) and Aquatics Committee (AC) were eliminated in July 2022. The Staff Liaison informed EPAC members in June 2022 that there would be no future meetings, despite the Board not yet publicly considering the issue. The Board Liaison for both Commissions, Vice Chair Dorsey, also informed Commissioners that the Commissions would cease prior to Board action.

⁴⁹¹ <https://www.arlingtonva.us/Government/Projects/Plans-Studies/General-Land-Use-Plan/Studies/Courthouse-West>


⁴⁹² <https://www.arlingtonva.us/Government/Projects/Plans-Studies/General-Land-Use-Plan/Studies/Courthouse-West>

⁴⁹³ <https://www.arlingtonva.us/Government/Projects/Plans-Studies/General-Land-Use-Plan/Studies/Courthouse-West>

⁴⁹⁴ <https://www.arlingtonva.us/Government/Projects/Plans-Studies/General-Land-Use-Plan/Studies/Courthouse-West>

⁴⁹⁵ <https://www.arlingtonva.us/Government/Commissions-and-Advisory-Groups/Planning-Commission>

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Hannah Winant <hwinant@arlingtonva.us>  Jun 15, 2022, 8:11 PM

Hi all,

Thank you to those who attended tonight's meeting and to all of you for your ongoing commitment to this commission and to the betterment of the County. As Will explained, EPAC meetings and associated staff support are ending after tonight to allow the County's public safety cluster time to refine its plan for the upcoming community resilience group. We will be in touch with details as they are finalized – and appreciate your patience and support in the meantime.

Have a safe, healthy and relaxing summer, and again, thank you for your service to our community.

Best,
Hannah

Neither item was on the Board's agenda, so the public was not given the opportunity to comment. Rather than being a numbered agenda item, the vote on EPAC demise was taken during the Board Member update and the existing Commission seemed to be barely mentioned.⁴⁹⁶ The Commissions were reportedly told by Vice Chair Dorsey that the County is not interested in assistance with setting policy and is no longer interested in monitoring the implementation of policy.⁴⁹⁷ EPAC will be replaced with an Advisory Group to a department head (Committee), however little action appears to have been taken to further that group since the Commission was eliminated.⁴⁹⁸

The Board no longer has community advisors providing an independent view on County issues related to policy and monitoring the implementation of policy. "The [County] Board will not receive neutral, outside advice on such county issues, making them more reliant on the manager and staff for decisions."⁴⁹⁹ This also reduces the Board roles to create and monitor the implementation policy⁵⁰⁰. It leaves the County Manager with increased ability to perform the responsibilities of the Board and Manager.⁵⁰¹

Additionally, Mr. Dorsey said that part of the reason to change the format was to eliminate quorum requirements and set meeting dates.⁵⁰² Along with eliminating those requirements, the meetings will no longer be required to be open to the public and transparency will be reduced.

⁴⁹⁶ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Cqwe1gTyxlw&feature=share&si=ELPmzJkDCLju2KnD5oyZMQ&t=1515>

⁴⁹⁷ <https://www.arlingtonva.us/Government/County-Board/About-the-County-Board>

⁴⁹⁸ <https://sungazette.news/elimination-of-emergency-preparedness-panel-causes-some-brushback/>

⁴⁹⁹ [Ibid.](#)

⁵⁰⁰ <https://www.arlingtonva.us/files/sharedassets/public/Commissions/Documents/Advisory-Group-Handbook-2014.pdf> p 10

⁵⁰¹ <https://sungazette.news/editorial-the-choice-for-arlington-county-board/>

⁵⁰² <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Cqwe1gTyxlw&feature=share&si=ELPmzJkDCLju2KnD5oyZMQ&t=1700>

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7.5.2. Safety and Innovation Zone Privacy Oversight Panel Eliminated.

The County Manager created a Safety and Innovation Zone^{503, 504} to experiment with unproven safety technology in the County. Significant concerns were raised by Commissions and the public⁵⁰⁵, but the County Board approved the project without requiring that the concerns were addressed. Privacy Oversight Panel was created to: Provide support with development and implementation of the project's privacy risk management objectives and risk mitigation. The project used outside partners (Comcast,⁵⁰⁶ US Ignite,⁵⁰⁷ and the Commonwealth Cyber Initiative (CCI)⁵⁰⁸) and foreign technology (Juganu). Additionally, project goals appear to be beyond the Board-approved public safety scope.^{509, 510, 511, 512, 513, 514, 515}

The Privacy Oversight Panel was intended to provide oversight of project privacy risk mitigation efforts throughout pilot program, verifying County activity alignment with commitments and raising any new areas of privacy risk consideration.

However, the Privacy Oversight Panel was eliminated the day after EPAC was eliminated (see Section 7.5.1). The general community has not been notified. Staff appears to no longer plans to discuss the project or similar initiatives with the public.⁵¹⁶ Staff has not publicly provided a one year update to the Board as per prior approvals.^{517, 518}

There is no evidence that the privacy principles have been used in the evaluation or

⁵⁰³ <https://www.arlingtonva.us/Government/Projects/Project-Types/Technology/Safety-and-Innovation-Zone-Demonstration-Project>

⁵⁰⁴ <https://www.arlnow.com/2021/01/28/new-smart-streetlights-in-clarendon-could-improve-emergency-response-times/>

⁵⁰⁵ https://www.insidenova.com/news/arlington/doubts-linger-over-clarendon-technology-pilot-program/article_f41e62ac-d354-11eb-bd00-479a0389faf1.html

⁵⁰⁶ <https://corporate.comcast.com/smart-solutions>

⁵⁰⁷ <https://www.us-ignite.org/community/arlington-va/>

⁵⁰⁸ <https://cyberinitiative.org>

⁵⁰⁹ <https://vimeo.com/630614922#t=5922s>

⁵¹⁰ https://arlington.granicus.com/MetaViewer.php?view_id=2&clip_id=3859&meta_id=200520

⁵¹¹ https://arlington.granicus.com/MetaViewer.php?view_id=2&clip_id=3859&meta_id=200519

⁵¹² https://arlington.granicus.com/MetaViewer.php?view_id=2&clip_id=3923&meta_id=203769

⁵¹³ https://www.arlingtonva.us/files/sharedassets/public/projects/documents/technology/safety-and-innovation-zone-board-briefing-20210615_final-1.pdf

⁵¹⁴ <https://www.arlingtonva.us/files/sharedassets/public/projects/documents/technology/safety-and-innovation-zone-board-presentation-updated.pdf>

⁵¹⁵ <https://www.us-ignite.org/community/arlington-va/>

⁵¹⁶ <https://www.arlingtonva.us/Government/Projects/Project-Types/Technology/Safety-and-Innovation-Zone-Demonstration-Project>

⁵¹⁷ https://www.arlingtonva.us/files/sharedassets/public/projects/documents/technology/safety-and-innovation-zone-board-briefing-20210615_final-1.pdf

⁵¹⁸ <https://www.arlingtonva.us/files/sharedassets/public/projects/documents/technology/safety-and-innovation-zone-board-presentation-updated.pdf>

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monitoring of privacy related to the AT&T/JBG Smith Smart City project at National Landing.^{519, 520}

There is no longer community insight into privacy issues related to County smart city technology experimentation. Additionally, there is no way to know if and/or when privacy principles are being applied despite impacts on the community. Transparency has been greatly reduced. The nature of Arlington's population requires that issues related to privacy are very carefully considered.

See Section 4.4.4.

7.5.3. Temporary shut down of Joint Facilities Advisory Committee (JFAC)⁵²¹; County Manager asserts that members are going beyond their "expertise" and scope.

County Manager's note to the County Board is revealed to the public⁵²², "The work in [JFAC's] outline, to be done well, and to be accurate and thorough, requires staff from virtually every department to be involved, including department heads. "Such a plan requires subject matter expert advice, along with citizen input beyond the JFAC members. In addition, the outline focuses on areas that I see as squarely within my purview as Manager."⁵²³ While JFAC was again allowed to meet, the scope has been reduced and JFAC still appears to be unable to focus on their long-range planning purpose.^{524, 525, 526}

7.5.4. Removing representatives from the Disability Advisory Commission and Commission on Aging from the Transit Advisory Committee to "increase more diversity".

The Transit Advisory Committee,⁵²⁷ which reports to the County Manager announced in September 2022 that they are proposing a change to their bylaws⁵²⁸ to eliminate representation membership by the Transportation Commission, Commission on Aging, and Disability Advisory Commission. Furthermore, they are doing so to "increase diversity" despite losing representation for the disabled and aging.

⁵¹⁹ https://about.att.com/story/2021/5g_smart_city.html

⁵²⁰ <https://northernvirginiamag.com/home/home-design/2021/10/15/national-landing-smart-city/>

⁵²¹ <https://www.arlingtonva.us/Government/Commissions-and-Advisory-Groups/Joint-Facilities-Advisory-Commission>

⁵²² https://arlingtonva.s3.amazonaws.com/wp-content/uploads/sites/5/2020/11/JFAC_CM_Message_2020-11-12.pdf

⁵²³ <https://thearlingtonway.org/2020/11/20/short-term-thinking-schwartz-short-changes-arlington-again/>

⁵²⁴ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FI-LwGOVUQ&feature=share&si=ELPmzJkDCLju2KnD5oyZMQ&t=2752>

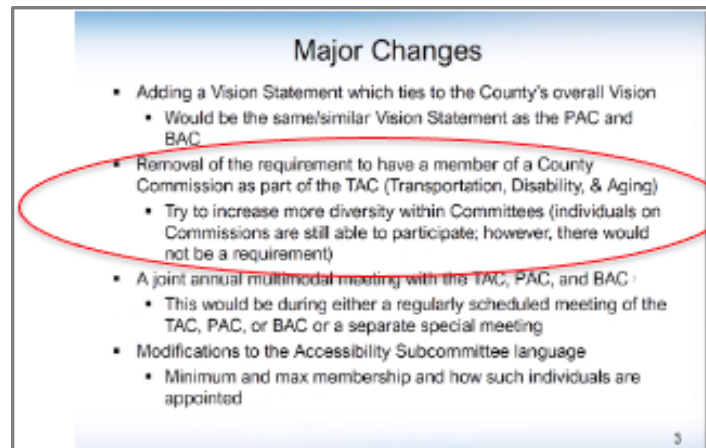
⁵²⁵ <https://www.arlnow.com/2017/07/06/peters-take-planning-for-arlington-future-after-the-jfac-work-session/>

⁵²⁶ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=reTEgabplks&feature=share&si=ELPmzJkDCLju2KnD5oyZMQ&t=11615>

⁵²⁷ <https://www.arlingtonva.us/Government/Commissions-and-Advisory-Groups/Transit-Advisory-Committee>

⁵²⁸ https://www.arlingtonva.us/files/062c37ec-ae3f-45a4-9589-82e899f18149/2022_09_Proposed-TAC-Charter-Changes.pdf

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This will reduce representation of the disabled and aging when considering transit-related issues such as STAR, metro entrances, accessibility, and other topics. This means that programs and or facilities may be designed without taking specialized needs into consideration. The result could be reducing the ability to take action while properly addressing the needs of the impacted population and considering universal designs. In addition to impacting services, this could increase expenses, such as when the accessible entrance to the new H-B Woodlawn had to be redesigned and reconstructed via a bond at an estimated cost of \$11.39M.⁵²⁹ Additionally, the move will reduce the ability for the Commissions to advise the Board on related policies and how they are being implemented.

⁵²⁹ https://www.insidenova.com/news/arlington/one-piece-of-arlington-school-bond-package-draws-questions-brushback/article_68b7d482-1ae9-11ec-8e85-475a7ca0f3a9.html

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7.6. Commissions' effectiveness appears to have diminished since the start of the pandemic.

7.6.1. The County used the COVID emergency as an excuse to diminish the use and effectiveness of Advisory Groups.

At the start of the COVID emergency, the County took a position of not allowing Commissions to meet. When they were finally allowed to meet, the criteria were onerous.^{530, 531, 532, 533, 534, 535, 536, 537, 538}

The Advisory Group Handbook states that "Members are Board-Appointed leaders in the community who "bring the skills, talents, knowledge and perspectives needed" to make our County better."⁵³⁹ The pandemic, a time with limited resources and significant needs, was a time to expand rather than diminish use of community volunteers.

⁵³⁰ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Kfb7IJANrBI&feature=share&si=ELPmzJkDCLju2KnD5oyZMQ&t=563>

⁵³¹ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Kfb7IJANrBI&feature=share&si=ELPmzJkDCLju2KnD5oyZMQ&t=2630>

⁵³² <https://www.arlnow.com/2018/12/19/morning-poll-moving-on-from-the-arlington-way/>

⁵³³ <https://www.arlnow.com/2020/04/03/county-commission-meetings-cancelled-until-further-notice/>

⁵³⁴ <https://thearlingtonway.org/2020/07/04/the-arlington-county-boards-trumpist-approach/>

⁵³⁵ https://www.insidenova.com/news/arlington/arlington-board-rejiggers-rules-for-commission-meetings-in-covid-crisis/article_93dd697c-b967-11ea-9ece-0ba80786e832.html

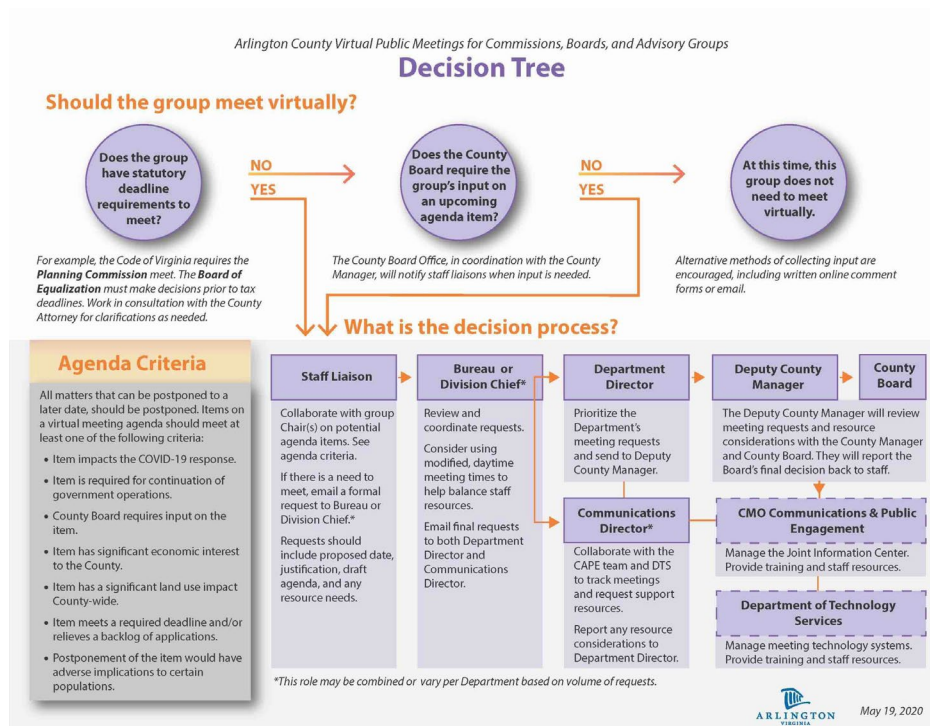
⁵³⁶ <https://10988493703797958236.googlegroups.com/attach/33f895b32bf5f/Commissions,%20Commitees,%20Boards,%20and%20Advisory%20Groups%20Letter%20to%20the%20Arlington%20County%20Board%20-%20June%209,%202020.pdf?part=0.1&view=1&vt=ANaJVrHF-74lQqjN1uQXxrZ1-M9bq-R>

⁵³⁷ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7lwjqM5e7wU>

⁵³⁸ https://arlingtonva.s3.amazonaws.com/wp-content/uploads/sites/21/2020/05/Handout_ACG-VirtualPublicMeetings_DecisionTree_May2020-scaled.jpg

⁵³⁹ <https://www.arlingtonva.us/files/sharedassets/public/Commissions/Documents/Advisory-Group-Handbook-2014.pdf> Introduction

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7.6.2. County Auditor does not inform Commissions of topics related to Commission.

The County Auditor^{540, 541, 542} does not advise Commission leadership when issues related to their Commission are being considered in an audit. The County Auditor should inform Commissions of audit timing and presentations as a courtesy, consistent with Commissions advising on policy and monitoring the implementation of policy.⁵⁴³ Additionally, it would provide Commissions with the opportunity to provide comment and better track the outcomes which relate to policy.

7.7. There appears to be selective enforcement of Commissioner and Commission Chair term limits.

The County Board selectively enforces Commissioner and Commission Chair term limits. The Advisory Group Handbook (2014)^{544, 545} specifies that term limits exist for Commission appointments. The Transportation Commission page states that "The Transportation

⁵⁴⁰ <https://www.arlingtonva.us/Government/Departments/County-Board/County-Auditor>

⁵⁴¹ https://arlingtonva.s3.amazonaws.com/wp-content/uploads/sites/22/2016/03/http_law.lis_virginia.gov_vacode_title15.2_chapter7_section15.2-709.pdf

⁵⁴² <https://www.arlingtonva.us/files/sharedassets/public/county-board/documents/final-revised-auditor-board-charge-4-20-2021.pdf>

⁵⁴³ <https://www.arlingtonva.us/files/sharedassets/public/Commissions/Documents/Advisory-Group-Handbook-2014.pdf>

⁵⁴⁴ <https://www.arlingtonva.us/files/sharedassets/public/Commissions/Documents/Advisory-Group-Handbook-2014.pdf>

⁵⁴⁵ http://arlington.granicus.com/GeneratedAgendaViewer.php?view_id=2&clip_id=2801

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Commission members are “No fewer than seven and no more than 13 members are appointed by the County Board to three-year terms, and a chairman is designated by the County Board annually.”⁵⁴⁶

However, the term limits are selectively enforced with loose tracking of official appointment dates⁵⁴⁷. Appointment information prior to 2018 is not readily available via the County Board Appointments site.⁵⁴⁸ The community believes that some Commissioners seem to have lifetime appointments (requiring continual, official reappointments). County Board members have reportedly privately confirmed the same.

- 7.8. Advisory Group Member conflict of interest, financial, and real estate disclosures do not appear to be transparent.

"Advisory Groups" may advise the County Board or County Manager. Both are required to disclose specific conflicts of interest⁵⁴⁹. However, the County's interpretation does not appear to specifically consider lobbying activities such as YIMBYs of Northern Virginia. Some members of the community see this activity as a potential conflict of interest.

Additionally, some Commissions require financial disclosures⁵⁵⁰ but it is unclear whether that policy is enforced.

The Commonwealth also requires “members of planning commissions, boards of zoning appeals, real estate assessors, and all county, city and town managers or executive officers shall make annual disclosures of all their interests in real estate located in the county, city or town in which they are elected, appointed, or employed.”⁵⁵¹

The Commonwealth requires disclosures maintaining the highest trust in their public officers and employees as well as to assure the public that the judgment of public officers and employees will be guided by a law that defines and prohibits inappropriate conflicts and requires disclosure of economic interests. In other words, to ensure the public that decisions will be made in a way that is free from conflicts of interest.

The Virginia Conflict of Interest and Ethics Advisory Council has a publicly searchable Ethics Council database containing conflict of interest disclosures filed by a member of the General Assembly, state employee or other executive branch board member as well as lobbyist information (registration and disclosures).⁵⁵²

⁵⁴⁶ <https://www.arlingtonva.us/Government/Commissions-and-Advisory-Groups/Transportation-Commission/TC-Members>

⁵⁴⁷ <https://www.arlnow.com/2019/05/13/podcast-transportation-commission-chair-chris-slatt/>

⁵⁴⁸ <https://www.arlingtonva.us/Government/Commissions-and-Advisory-Groups/Appointments>

⁵⁴⁹ <https://www.arlingtonva.us/files/sharedassets/public/Commissions/Documents/Advisory-Group-Handbook-2014.pdf>

⁵⁵⁰ https://arlington.granicus.com/MetaViewer.php?view_id=2&meta_id=168015

⁵⁵¹ <https://law.lis.virginia.gov/vacodepopularnames/state-and-local-government-conflict-of-interests-act/>

⁵⁵² <http://ethicsearch.dls.virginia.gov/#tabs1-conflict>

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Arlington County does not make the forms publicly available via the internet. The public only has access to the forms via the County Clerk's office. However, the forms should be available via internet to improve accessibility and transparency.

Conflict of Interest parameters appear to be shared with the public primarily when a Commissioner, such as a Planning Commissioner, owns property in or near a property under consideration. However, the disclosures appear to rely on self-identification of a potential conflict of interest.

As a result, the community questions whether additional conflicts of interest exist, particularly if an Advisory Group considers issues related to an advocacy group or has significant impacts to the community. Refer to Section 7.3.

7.9. Advisory Groups may fail to create and/or publicly post an *Annual Report and Annual Plan*.

Some Advisory Groups are required to submit an *Annual Report and Annual Plan*⁵⁵³ to document what transpired in the last year and is planned for the next. However, few of these reports appear to be posted in a way to be transparently made publicly available or preserved as a public record. This may also limit public understanding of functions and priorities.

8. It appears that the County frequently conducts a planning review process without two-way engagement with residents and residents report that in some planning reviews, paid developer staff have the opportunity for two-way engagement at the table with planners while residents are limited to short, one-way comments. The information presented to planners can thus be considered "unbalanced" and "skewed".

8.1. Engagement process appears to be "unbalanced" and "skewed".

County Board and staff support, even encourage, advocacy groups to use tactics to skew Arlington's public engagement process, including not disclosing that they are not Arlington residents or falsely claiming public support on projects and positions.

8.1.1. Non-Arlingtonian weighs in on Arlington process without disclosing non-Arlington residency and other issues.

The Founder of the YIMBYs of NOVA group, an Alexandria resident, writes to the Arlington County Planning Commission without disclosing that he is not an Arlington resident. He also uses a Facebook group's numbers as supporters for his initiatives without disclosing it to the group. Even members of that Facebook group pushback on misleading tactics that skew Arlington's public engagement process.

⁵⁵³ <https://www.arlingtonva.us/Government/Commissions-and-Advisory-Groups/Planning-Commission/Annual-Reports>

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Despite these misleading participation methods, the County Board has asked and even relied on these advocacy groups to participate in order to “push” a project through.



Dear Arlington Planning Commission:

Regarding the Special General Land Use Plan Study (GLUP) for the property at 2500 Wilson Boulevard – staff provided the following guidance about the site, which the 850+ members of YIMBYs of Northern Virginia strongly dispute:

“When considering the potential for additional building height in this location, staff remains concerned about the proximity of this site to adjacent lower-density residential areas. Staff is also mindful of the potential precedent of allowing greater building height at the edges of Metro Station Areas absent a comprehensive study to determine planning guidance for where taller building heights may be appropriate along the entire Rosslyn-Ballston Corridor. For these reasons, staff still considers a maximum building height of 12 stories appropriate in this location.”

Our understanding is that restricting the height of this building to 12 stories might make the project financially unviable. In other words, nothing may be built if the commission and County Board accept the staff recommendation. That risk is, candidly, alarming given the acute need for housing in Arlington and the Capital region, particularly in areas rich with opportunity and close to transit.

The difference between 12 and 14 or 16 stories seems almost academic and simply does not merit fierce debate or analysis paralysis. This is a chance for you as decision makers to demonstrate how seriously you take the housing affordability crisis and need for sustainable development in Arlington.

The most problematic aspect of staff's comment is the suggestion that single-family homes must be insulated or protected from tall buildings. This is a moot point in an area that already has many high-rise structures. However, it also unfortunately risks playing into an ugly narrative of class prejudice. Apartment buildings and their residents are not a threat, blight, or burden, for single-family homeowners or anyone else. Most Arlingtonians reside in multi-family buildings. They are not second-class citizens. Writing to you the day after we celebrated our independence, it strikes me that any suggestion to the contrary is un-American. Allowing tall buildings near single-family homes would be an excellent precedent to set. We will need to find a new balance to build all of the housing we know we need.

Unfortunately Arlington does not have a more comprehensive plan in place to approve this tall residential building a few blocks from two metro stations. However, you can still approve this GLUP with the high density appropriate to the site. We hope that common sense and smart, sustainable growth policy will prevail.

Sincerely,

L. [Redacted]
Founder, YIMBYs of Northern Virginia

Member of YIMBY group, calling out misleading representation by Founder.

Saying that 850+ members dispute this project should be changed. Unless you poll the group or take a vote, I believe it is only your opinion. Once a board is elected, then perhaps you could use numbers of registered members. I am not sure where I stand on this issue. I appreciate learning in this Facebook group but do not like being assigned a position on a topic just because I am in a group.

8.1.2. Story summarized potential Code of Ethics and Process Guidelines violation.

Nelly Custis Park: Staff appears to coach and prepare a resident for a public meeting to speak out against fellow community members, spreads misinformation and attempts to skew results among other egregious actions.

The ArlNow column summary of events ⁵⁵⁴;

- County staff failed to follow Arlington's code of ethics,
- Committees failed to follow their own process guidelines,
- Persons with special interests undisclosed in the NCAC approval process worked nearly exclusively with staff, and
- Numerous efforts were pursued (both publicly and with staff) to exclude, discredit and even falsely campaign against residents including stakeholders, working group members and active civic volunteers.

⁵⁵⁴ <https://www.arlnow.com/2016/12/22/peters-take-toward-a-new-model-of-arlington-civic-engagement/>

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The serious community engagement issues highlighted by all these recent controversies include⁵⁵⁵:

- Lack of a needs assessment including demographic information,
- Prematurely deciding that a proposed project is needed at all,
- Properly defining the nature of the proposed project and alternatives to it,
- Providing adequate public notice to close-by residents and all stakeholders,
- Need for properly designed community surveys,
- Undue influence exercised by organized special interests, and
- Lack of fair and neutral stewardship by County staff.

County Manager was notified of these and other issues early on and initially dismissed concerns. Ultimately as the evidence of serious process issues was shared more broadly, the County Manager and the Director of the Parks Department publicly apologized.⁵⁵⁶

9. Certain types of meetings exclude public attendance—even when the planning is holistic in nature (not a specific site plan)—permitting developers, approved “stakeholders” and staff to meet and consider planning during “office hours” outside public access in a way which limits public discussions public and skirts public “sunshine” laws.

9.1. The County appears to design county-led meetings which may circumvent the public from accessing meeting notes and records and attending meetings. These activities may violate under Freedom of Information Act and Virginia Sunshine Laws § 2.2-3712 (G).⁵⁵⁷

9.1.1. Pentagon City Sector Plan (PCSP): Preventing the public and alternates to observe county-led meetings and take meeting minutes.

Public perception is that the majority of meetings held on the PCSP process were closed to public and did not produce published meeting notes what was discussed in the meetings. It was closed to the public for observation and even alternate representatives to the process were not allowed to observe.

Staff emails (below) explaining closed county meetings with developers, staff and a small handful of residents are “by-design” to have no meeting notes and invite-only format.

⁵⁵⁵ [Ibid.](#)

⁵⁵⁶ [Ibid.](#)

⁵⁵⁷ <https://law.lis.virginia.gov/vacode/title2.2/chapter37/section2.2-3712/>

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From: Matt Mattauszek @
To: Scott Miles, AHCA President
Cc: [REDACTED]

5/1/2021 10:13 AM
Gmail - Important

Scott,

I think the underlying issue here is that we are not in agreement the existing process needs correcting. Let me explain further so that you have the benefit of understanding why that may be the case.

Last summer, staff worked closely with County leadership and the Planning Commission to establish a review process for this study. The Focus Group concept emerged as a fundamental element of that pre-planning work as it allowed each interest group to identify a representative to closely participate throughout the planning process. Our introductory emails, along with the first Focus Group meeting in September, captured this broad list of individuals and confirmed their role within our study (see attached excerpt). Consistent with those goals, these individuals have been continually bringing up issues important to their respective groups and helping us share information that was discussed in our monthly meetings. We have all recognized this approach is the most efficient way to conduct such a planning effort.

Our Focus Group meetings were never structured to be publicly available, which is why they are not recorded or have meeting notes, and instead rely on an invite-only format (by design). Recognizing there is broad interest in these meetings, however, we also have a practice of posting all of the materials on our [study document page](#) the same day to ensure everyone has immediate access to the same information in a timely manner.

Specifically, as it relates to any alternates, I am simply repeating the same message I have provided to others who in the past have requested an additional presence in our meetings. It would be unfair to those individuals for us to suddenly change that approach at this point in our planning study by allowing another stakeholder group to have multiple attendees. Keep in mind, the individuals who made those earlier requests accepted our feedback and were still able to successfully follow the planning study without any issues. Our typical meeting day and times were originally selected to minimize (if not avoid) known daytime scheduling conflicts. Part of the reason this approach has been working is that we rely and expect each stakeholder representative to regularly discuss and engage with their own groups about the very issues covered by the Focus Group. We have been very fortunate in that the individuals who have been participating thus far have been doing an incredible job in fulfilling their responsibilities and contributing to this effort.

[REDACTED] is fully aware of the upcoming Focus Group dates for the month of May and I'm sure will be able to coordinate with [REDACTED] well ahead of time if there is a need for her to step in. Given the significant overlap between what has been presented to the Focus Group and what has been shared in the broader Public Workshops, I feel confident [REDACTED] will feel very familiar with the topics on our agendas if/when [REDACTED] needs her to participate.

Matt

From: Matt Mattauszek
To: Scott Miles, AHCA President
Cc: [REDACTED]

4/30/2021 4:05 PM
Gmail - Inbox

Hi Scott,

Thanks for the update and providing the bio (very impressive). Happy to add [REDACTED] to our listserv for the Focus Group communications as [REDACTED]'s backup.

One point of clarification I need to note (assuming I'm understanding your message correctly) – perhaps it's unnecessary, but I'd rather be safe. "Backups" or "alternates" are only invited to and participate in the actual Focus Group meeting **if** the main representative is not able to. We've dealt with this in the past with other stakeholder groups and have provided a consistent response in each case. This is particularly important given the already significant size of that group and our ability to hold meaningful and productive conversations throughout this study. The phrases I highlighted below suggest we need to clarify that our process does not distinguish between active and inactive participation or observation. This is a long-winded way of saying that [REDACTED] would only be receiving an invitation to join a Focus Group meeting if/when [REDACTED] indicates to us he cannot attend and would like [REDACTED] to join in his place.

Hope that helps.

Matt

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9.2. Arlington charges substantial fees for Freedom Of Information Act (FOIA) Requests. The FOIA archive is not comprehensive.

9.2.1. The County Charges Significant Fees for FOIA Requests and May Fail to Provide Information.

FOIA Request invoices have been over a thousand dollars.^{558, 559, 560} Some topics may be off limits.⁵⁶¹

Responses, or lack thereof, may show that the County fails to meet the spirit of the law. In one example, a resident asked for a copy of the post card and number sent to a specific zip code (reference C001092-080422). Only a copy of the post card was provided.^{562, 563} The resident then submitted a second, very detailed and larger request (C001327-092822)⁵⁶⁴ when the first did not result in a full response. This increased the amount of time the community and County needs to spend responding to such requests. The limited sample size of 25 in the FOIA system makes it difficult to see trends in requests and responses.

Additionally, the lack of comprehensive FOIA responses may cause the community to seek further accountability and recourse beyond the County.⁵⁶⁵

9.2.2. FOIA requests prior to October 2021 are not accessible to the public.

The County's FOIA page states that "The archive of County FOIA responses dating prior to October 2021 has not been migrated to the new website. The FOIA response website archive consisted of 255 requests dating from 2016 – 2021. Currently, County staff are evaluating ways to migrate the archive for public reference purposes, but that work has not been scheduled."⁵⁶⁶

⁵⁵⁸ <https://www.arlnow.com/2018/09/11/arlington-often-charges-hefty-fees-to-see-public-records-or-fails-to-respond-to-requests/>

⁵⁵⁹ <https://www.arlingtonva.us/Government/Programs/FOIA>

⁵⁶⁰ [https://arlingtoncountyva.govqa.us/WEBAPP/rs/\(S\(wuv1k1kyc5u1piu0fpihuiaz\)\)/supporthome.aspx](https://arlingtoncountyva.govqa.us/WEBAPP/rs/(S(wuv1k1kyc5u1piu0fpihuiaz))/supporthome.aspx)

⁵⁶¹ <https://www.virginiamercury.com/2018/07/30/the-right-to-know-just-because-youre-allowed-to-doesnt-mean-you-have-to/>

⁵⁶² <https://sungazette.news/letter-county-leaders-not-acting-in-good-faith-on-missing-middle/>

⁵⁶³ [https://arlingtoncountyva.govqa.us/WEBAPP/rs/\(S\(h2aah1bm01tnxff1mizs3hi1\)\)/RequestArchiveDetails.aspx?rid=1883&view=1](https://arlingtoncountyva.govqa.us/WEBAPP/rs/(S(h2aah1bm01tnxff1mizs3hi1))/RequestArchiveDetails.aspx?rid=1883&view=1)

⁵⁶⁴ [https://arlingtoncountyva.govqa.us/WEBAPP/rs/\(S\(q5mzbrk55xgov253ebe4n3xd\)\)/RequestArchiveDetails.aspx?rid=2244&view=1](https://arlingtoncountyva.govqa.us/WEBAPP/rs/(S(q5mzbrk55xgov253ebe4n3xd))/RequestArchiveDetails.aspx?rid=2244&view=1)

⁵⁶⁵ <https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/2022/04/29/why-naacp-branch-asked-justice-investigate-arlington-county/>

⁵⁶⁶ <https://www.arlingtonva.us/Government/Programs/FOIA>

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The County should make the prior requests and responses available, which would be consistent with the stated purpose of the FOIA database creation^{567, 568} and prior award.⁵⁶⁹

9.3. See Example 13.1.1 for additional examples of issues with Open Data Portal⁵⁷⁰ and data/information requests.

10. The outcome of land-use planning and development processes appears to focus almost exclusively on increasing density and satisfying developers' goals and interests without providing specific metrics to document an equitable focus on achieving a balanced outcome that mitigates negative community impacts and enhances the long-term livability of both existing and new residents.

10.1. Requests and concerns about density impacts appear to be discounted.

10.1.1. Density Impacts may not be addressed.

At the June 2022 County Board meeting residents expressed concerns of density impacts to overcrowding schools and many other facilities and services before further along with the plan, "Before we do anything that's going to bring a tremendous amount of additional density negatively impact our schools, please take the time to do the studies, walk the neighborhoods and talk to the residents."^{571, 572}

The County Board moved the Missing Middle framework forward and disregarded the request to ensure facilities, services, and impact analysis were conducted.

10.1.2. Plan Langston Boulevard may not include infrastructure needs caused by densification.

Arlingtonians for our Sustainable Future (ASF)⁵⁷³ has voiced criticism of the Preliminary Concept Plan for Langston Boulevard corridor because the County has not committed itself to providing infrastructure upgrades required by of the impact of densification. They are of the opinion that Arlington needs to use a proffer model^{574, 575} because the existing Site Plan Review Process fails to adequately calculate the impact of densification. Their

⁵⁶⁷ https://www.insidenova.com/news/arlington/arlington-government-now-putting-foia-responses-online/article_32772190-2b1e-11e6-9fd2-5728571d2b71.html

⁵⁶⁸ <https://www.arlingtonva.us/About-Arlington/News/Articles/2016/Arlington-Now-Posting-FOIA-Responses-Online>

⁵⁶⁹ <https://www.opengovva.org/blog/2016-open-government-award-winners>

⁵⁷⁰ <https://data.arlingtonva.us/home>

⁵⁷¹ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5iANgRCYo5k>

⁵⁷² <https://www.arlnow.com/2017/06/08/peters-take-long-term-planning-needed-for-new-schools/>

⁵⁷³ <https://www.asf-virginia.org>

⁵⁷⁴ <https://www.asf-virginia.org/key-issues-development>

⁵⁷⁵ <https://www.arlnow.com/2018/05/18/despite-public-pressure-county-unlikely-to-press-developers-for-schools-parks-contributions/>

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criticism is of the Preliminary Concept Plan, not of the Langston Boulevard Alliance Mentioned in Section 2.3.

The Preliminary Concept Plan (PCP)⁵⁷⁶ proposed is within the parameters of the County's Site Plan Review process⁵⁷⁷ whereby community benefits, including infrastructure needs caused by densification, are negotiated with the developer on a site-by-site bases. The county so far has made no commitment to invest in major stormwater, school, park, or other infrastructure needs caused by densification. It is going to rely on ad hoc site plans or private development to coordinated infrastructure such as water and wastewater systems and mass transit. Hence the LHA will still need to work on the county staff to detail public investment that will be required to accommodate the additional density.

The below reply from the County to the ASF letter⁵⁷⁸ discounted the recommendation of considering a proffering system as opposed to the Site Plan Review process the County presently uses.

From: CountyBoard@arlingtonva.us [mailto:CountyBoard@arlingtonva.us]
Sent: Monday, March 21, 2022 10:35 AM
To: [REDACTED]
Subject: RE: ASF Letter | Plan Langston Blvd Process

Dear Mr. H [REDACTED] and Members of Arlingtonians for Our Sustainable Future,

Thank you for writing to the County Board to share your concerns regarding the Plan Langston Boulevard process. My colleagues and I read your letter on the day it was received, and we appreciate you sharing your concerns.

Currently, the County's planning staff are incorporating the resident and stakeholder feedback that was gathered throughout the Plan Langston Boulevard process as they prepare the Preliminary Concept Plan. Board members expect that this draft will reflect the community's feedback on the Land Use Scenario Analysis and Neighborhood Area Concepts. As you are aware, the community as a whole has stressed the importance of environmental sustainability, new publicly accessible open spaces, and new stormwater infrastructure throughout, which my colleagues and I fully support. In addition, members of the community have expressed a desire for new affordable housing units and a more diverse housing supply, which we see as critical to improving the area's housing affordability. The rankings of these objectives ranged across the five neighborhood areas, and we recognize that different neighborhoods have different needs and priorities.

We understand your concerns regarding small-scale, ad-hoc infrastructure improvements. Infrastructure improvements – large and small scale – can be implemented effectively and holistically through the site plan process, and we welcome your continued engagement as the process continues.

The Planning team is continuing to prepare the draft Preliminary Concept Plan (PCP), and staff remains committed to sharing materials with the community before the planned April 24th Earth Day event. Staff expects to announce meeting dates by the week of March 28th, and the Board looks forward to reviewing it and engaging extensively with the community. We hope that the plan will clarify remaining questions or concerns and provide opportunities for specific feedback. It is our desire that the PCP will appropriately balance the priorities of the neighborhoods with the region's growing demand for development and infrastructure investments.

Thank you again for continuing to share your feedback and concerns regarding this process. Plan Langston Boulevard is an ongoing process that will have many opportunities for feedback, refinements, and adjustments. We look forward to your continued engagement to ensure that Langston Boulevard is a sustainable, vibrant corridor.

Sincerely,

Katie Cristol	Matt de Ferranti
Chair, Arlington County Board	Member, Arlington County Board
	County Board Liaison, Plan Langston Boulevard

10.1.3. The County Board approved an expansion to Virginia Hospital Center in 2018 without doing “enough to fully engage the community”.

“The Board had also urged VHC executives to do more outreach in the community and ease concerns about everything from traffic to the size of the new facilities. The hospital held several community meetings with nearby civic associations and other neighbors since

⁵⁷⁶ https://www.arlingtonva.us/files/sharedassets/public/projects/documents/plan-langston-blvd/plb_pcp_08182022_final.pdf

⁵⁷⁷ <https://www.arlingtonva.us/Government/Programs/Building/Review-Processes/Site-Plan>

⁵⁷⁸ https://www.asf-virginia.org/files/ugd/a48bae_6bd25e1a23e8454faca3870f9d165ec3.pdf

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the Board's last vote, but the Board still expressed plenty of concern that the hospital didn't do enough to fully engage the community."^{579, 580} Additionally, the article continues: "“You continually throughout this process pushed the envelope every step of the way...but ultimately I think there's a cost extracted for that,” Gutshall said. “And I'd strongly encourage you to look at what are the things that you can do to build a stronger relationship with the surrounding community to begin to lay the groundwork for the next time you come back for whatever the next phase of this is going to be.”” The item passed County Board approval, 3-2.

However, even community engagement requirements documented in site plan conditions do not appear to normally be enforced on behalf of the community. When asked about site plan conditions in other parts of the County, the County Board, County Manager and Staff have said their emphasis is on safety concerns.

- 10.2. The County appeared to disregard calls to action and countywide consensus requesting that the County meet the needs of residents.

- 10.2.1. A call to preserve the Febrey Lothrop property had nearly 1,500 supporters⁵⁸¹.

Even a cost-benefit analysis for the Febrey Lothrop property was conducted by a resident to show the benefits of the preservation, because Arlington County would not conduct or share any analysis it had done.⁵⁸²

County Manager and Board dismiss calls to preserve and use the property for community needs, “Designation of a majority of the 9-acre site as its own historic districts had been proposed by the Historical Affairs and Landmark Review Board (HALRB), but County Board members slow-walked the timeline to consider the measure – purposely, in the eyes of some preservation advocates – leaving plenty of time for the owner of the parcel to receive the necessary permits to tear the buildings down.”⁵⁸³

The area was a missed opportunity for park land acquisition, as highlighted in the Civic Federation 2016 Resolution for Increased Park Land Acquisition.⁵⁸⁴ The area expects 40 single family homes starting at \$2m, with significant loss of old growth, stormwater reducing trees due to the construction.⁵⁸⁵

⁵⁷⁹ <https://www.arlnow.com/2018/11/28/despite-persistent-design-complaints-county-board-approves-virginia-hospital-center-expansion/>

⁵⁸⁰ <https://www.arlnow.com/2018/09/12/planning-commission-looks-to-pump-the-breaks-on-vhc-expansion/>

⁵⁸¹ <https://sign.moveon.org/petitions/save-the-historic-febrey-lothrop-rouse-estate>

⁵⁸² <https://arlington-analytics.com/papers/RouseProperty.pdf>

⁵⁸³ https://www.insidenova.com/news/arlington/arlington-manager-forget-about-historic-designation-for-rouse-estate/article_9c8265ac-93d0-11eb-8cb3-b7910cc956f4.html

⁵⁸⁴ <https://www.civfed.org/about-us/committees/parks/>

⁵⁸⁵ <https://www.arlnow.com/2022/07/26/work-continues-on-the-former-site-of-the-febrey-lothrop-house-in-dominion-hills/>

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10.3. County does not consistently apply of its own policies, including those related to equity and sustainability, in order to advance agenda.

10.3.1. Biophilic policy appears to be misused in process. Creator of the biophilic policy called County out for misuse and appears to be disregarded.

On December 17, 2019, Arlington County adopted a Biophilic City resolution.^{586, 587} Caroline Haines, Former Parks and Recreation Commission⁵⁸⁸ Chair, member of the Natural Resources Plan Update,⁵⁸⁹ champion of the Biophilic City resolution and contributor to Biophilic Arlington⁵⁹⁰ paper, called out county staff in public engagement meeting Pentagon City Study/Sector Plan as misusing biophilic principles when the staff asserts that the implementation of “nature themes” such as using stamped leaf pattern concrete or exterior facades of buildings with nature murals, rather than implementing living environment/nature into design. These concerns were echoed throughout the process by residents as well.

County disregards these concerns and proceeds to call the Plan “biophilic” despite concerns and evidence to the contrary.

10.3.2. A resident created an analysis on equitable access to open green spaces but it appears to have not been addressed.

It used scenarios from the Pentagon City Study/Sector Plan's⁵⁹¹ proposed density increases, “*The Pentagon City Planning Study Reduces Open Public Green Space*: If the plans articulated in the Pentagon City Planning Study materialize, Pentagon City residents—particularly its lower-income residents—will end up with some of the worst access to open public green space in the county.”⁵⁹²

The County Board and Staff disregarded the analysis and did not address the inequities, going against their own Equity Policy⁵⁹³ in order to further increase density and developer's goals.

10.3.3. The County Board's Equity Resolution questions appear to not be applied to all County business.

⁵⁸⁶ <https://arlingtonva.s3.amazonaws.com/wp-content/uploads/sites/22/2019/12/Biophilic.pdf>

⁵⁸⁷ <https://www.arlingtonva.us/Government/Commissions-and-Advisory-Groups/Biophilic-Arlington>

⁵⁸⁸ <https://www.arlingtonva.us/Government/Commissions-and-Advisory-Groups/Parks-Recreation-Commission/Parks-Recreation-Commission>

⁵⁸⁹ <https://www.arlingtonva.us/Government/Projects/Natural-Resources-Management-Plan>

⁵⁹⁰ <https://arlingtonva.s3.amazonaws.com/wp-content/uploads/sites/5/2020/02/PRCwebBioArl.pdf>

⁵⁹¹ <https://www.arlingtonva.us/Government/Projects/Plans-Studies/Land-Use/Pentagon-City-Planning-Study>

⁵⁹² <https://arlington-analytics.com/papers/OPS22202.pdf>

⁵⁹³ <https://arlingtonva.s3.amazonaws.com/wp-content/uploads/sites/21/2020/02/Equity-Resolution-FINAL-09-21-19.pdf>

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The County's equity lens applies the stakeholder questions of "(1) Who benefits? (2) Who is burdened? (3) Who is missing? (4) How do we know?"⁵⁹⁴. Another reference includes "What Do/Did We Do?"⁵⁹⁵ to the above questions. These are the minimum criteria for all stakeholder and community engagement. However, the County is only selectively asking themselves the questions and is not known to share the information with the public.⁵⁹⁶

Stakeholder groups do not appear to be consistently considered when making County decisions. Public confidence in government and processes is eroding.

10.3.4. The Planning Commission recommended that the County Board⁵⁹⁷ deny a use permit for a below-grade parking structure with a lighted synthetic turf field above; the Commission input appeared to be overruled when the Board approved the project.

The Planning Commission made the recommendation for 1601 Wilson Boulevard because, among other things: "The Planning Commission finds that (1) the proposed use permit, specifically the proposed field at 180 feet elevation and the corresponding proposed parking garage, (1) fails to conform to the West Rosslyn Area Plan; (2) fails to conform to the Rosslyn Sector Plan; and (3) is not in substantial accord with the Arlington County Comprehensive Plan."^{598, 599} The County Board determined that requirements for government organizations are different than they would be for an independent or commercial interest.⁶⁰⁰ The motion for use permit amendment County Board approval passed 4-1.⁶⁰¹

⁵⁹⁴ <https://arlingtonva.s3.amazonaws.com/wp-content/uploads/sites/18/2020/02/5.-FY21P-Managers-Message-Equity.pdf>

⁵⁹⁵ <https://www.arlingtonva.us/Government/Topics/Equity>

⁵⁹⁶ [Ibid.](#)

⁵⁹⁷ Item 37: http://arlington.granicus.com/GeneratedAgendaViewer.php?view_id=2&clip_id=4123

⁵⁹⁸ https://arlington.granicus.com/MetaViewer.php?view_id=2&clip_id=4123&meta_id=212214

⁵⁹⁹ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=P1q6gdLdKMk&feature=share&si=ELPmzJkDCLju2KnD5oyZMQ&t=4489>

⁶⁰⁰ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=P1q6gdLdKMk&feature=share&si=ELPmzJkDCLju2KnD5oyZMQ&t=8372>

⁶⁰¹ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=P1q6gdLdKMk&feature=share&si=ELPmzJkDCLju2KnD5oyZMQ&t=8535>

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10.4. Civic Associations' concerns over impacts to facilities are often disregarded and unaddressed.

10.4.1. The Aurora Highlands Civic Association's infrastructure density impact concerns appeared to be discounted and unaddressed.

"Impact of Increased Density on Existing Facilities: The [Pentagon City Phased Development Site Plan]⁶⁰² alludes to potential new facilities, such as expanding Virginia Highlands Park, a potential new school, potential low level transportation improvements, etc. But it does not contain a clear analysis about how many people would be expected to join the neighborhood under different development scenarios and timelines, how those new residents could impact the capacity of existing public facilities and how the county will ensure standards and services are met. The PDSP should include this discussion, including a review of what facilities currently serve the area in key sectors, like schools, recreation, sewers, etc., and what their current use capacity is and how the county will respond to new development scenarios by increasing those services. For example, while it's positive that a new school is mentioned, though at a very high level, there is not detail about what level of new students would trigger its creation. Yes, separate processes exist for these decisions, but this should be a holistic planning document."⁶⁰³

Despite requests from these community-led Civic Associations, the County appears to not follow up on or address concerns raised by the communities in which they are to serve.

10.5. Even with an historic number of opposed residents who are vocal in person and on petitions, the County Board discounts their concerns and moves their agenda forward.

10.5.1. Pentagon City Sector Plan.

Nearly 2,500 people oppose the Pentagon City Sector Plan and hundreds of residents expressed concern about lack of planning for community needs, especially insufficient parkland and the Plan's reduction of green space on River House.

Below⁶⁰⁴ are just some of the many comments in the change.org petition opposing the plan based on a lack of planning for the community needs.

- "The Pentagon City Plan is another egregious example of the County failing to assess fully the impact of higher density on its finances, infrastructure, environment, and schools. Arlington's Planning Commission and staff are broken, and the Board needs to hit the brakes and correct course." -- JZ

⁶⁰² <https://www.arlingtonva.us/Government/Projects/Plans-Studies/Land-Use/Pentagon-City-Planning-Study>

⁶⁰³ <https://aurorahighlands.org/news/pcps-draft-comments/>

⁶⁰⁴ <https://www.change.org/p/arlington-county-board-riverhouse-neighbors-for-sensible-density/c>

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- “Increasing density without addressing the already strained surrounding infrastructure (like overcrowded schools limited green space for community activities and sports) is irresponsible and destructive.” -- JC
- “I will be moving out of the area if this plan is approved. I moved here for the green space and community. If it becomes overcrowded with buildings and people, I will no longer wish to stay.” -- M
- “I prefer the green and open space to massive amounts of people and congestion.” -- A
- “I'm a resident of the Pentagon City neighborhood and this "development" would destroy the neighborhood.” -- JS
- “I agree with the countless residents who enjoy the quality of life in this area which already is being destroyed by the massive building going on. There is no green space left unturned and yes, I think it's not necessary at all and simply greed of landowners cashing in...Another poster wrote "enough is enough" and those are my thoughts exactly! I've been here for 8 years and it's painful to see everything built up so the sun and sky are blocked and the trees are gone...” -- K
- “The Riverhouse community is known for its balance between nature, green spaces and services. This plane would affect the quality of life without an appropriate planning.” -- R
- “The loss of greenspace and the increase in congestion, noise, and chaos is unacceptable. If this proposal goes through, I will most certainly be moving out of the area. The Riverhouse community is comfortable as is. The need for more housing at the expense of the amenities, will make the property worth less to those of us who value a pleasant place to live.” -- M
- “Tree canopy and green space needs protection. More buildings with removal of trees and green space means more potential for serious flooding.” -- S

County did not address and remedy the situation to ensure equitable access to green space proportioned to the density increases and refused to provide any assurances that it would ever be addressed.

County-wide concerns over the lack of planning for the expressed needs, services, and infrastructure for the community.

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4 hours ago

They won't do the cost benefit because they already know the answer. They need to make more parks (where to get the land), they need to build more schools (where to get the land), parking will be a nightmare, it will lead to overcrowded everything.

They built the palace of a pool in the wrong spot and it is not doing well financially. What else is Arlington planning to screw up.

Putting up a historic marker does little to keep history here. I am still disappointed Arlington has largely bulldozed off its history and that no good history museum exists. The county board's rejection of historic preservation of the 9 acre Febrey-Lothrop estate and house that could have become a great historical learning site last April shows the county board always values development above history, preservation, green space.

<https://www.arlnow.com/2021/04/20/county-board-kills-historic-designation-process-after-failure-to-save-febrey-lothrop-estate/>



The proposal that Arlington is considering will ruin the county. Where is the new parkland for all these people. The new schools. Parking. Trees. This is a horrible proposal that staff should be ashamed of and the county board should have rejected a year ago. More wasted time and money.

Arlington County Matters 33 minutes ago

Since county planning staff apparently wont do their jobs, here is an analysis of the missing middle from the arlington analytics blog.

arlington-analytics.com
arlington-analytics.com

1 comment

Like Comment Send

defense, the plans show streets being created that literally go through peoples houses. Considering how expensive land is I'm not sure how those roads would be created without using eminent domain. I think plan Langston blvd has the same issues as a lot of arlington's big projects— it's a great idea but then really badly implemented by people who know nothing about the area. You have "parks" being created that are just rebrands of existing not useable green space (like incredibly steep hills that go into a busy street). Duplexes being proposed over a stream. Another "park" is a ridge that has a huge drop above a stream. Streets that cut through peoples houses, proposed up zoning that makes it seem like you want to tear down recently constructed missing middle housing (townhomes) to build apartments. Then when people try to offer feedback to improve the plan, they get called nimbys.

Ya gotta read the fine print in the local ordinances. Now the county affordable housing is pushing way more 60% and 80% area median income. We killed a laughable proposal in the east end of ColumbiaPike where many of our last market rate affordable units (MARKS) are located on the Pike. The county was proposing 80-120% AMI - in exchange for height - so they could tear down our MARKS to build new condos instead of rentals. Number of "affordable" units to be determined at some later date by the CB. Shocking.

My real estate taxes increased over \$5,000 last year alone. Clearly, they aren't spending it on infrastructure as they rubber stamp wild density increases. This board is the most disappointing one I've encountered in the over 30 years I've lived in this neighborhood.

The County Board won't do the studies so they can claim plausible deniability. The question about the total uselessness of MMH is what do they know and when did they know it.

Puh-LEEZE, M... The job of the County planning staff is to create favorable conditions for initiatives backed by the Board and by themselves! Analysis of the financials would damage those conditions, not improve them. Get a grip on yourself! County staff is doing exactly what it is supposed to do!

THERE IS NO MISSING MIDDLE. THAT IS BOGUS. WHAT THEY WANT IS TO SQUEEZE SHODDY OVERCROWDED APARTMENTS ON SINGLE FAMILY LOTS. THIS WILL OVERBURDEN THE SCHOOLS, MAKE TRAFFIC WORSE, OVERLOAD THE SEWERS AND OVERWHELM ALL PUBLIC SERVICES DECREASING THE QUALITY OF LIFE HERE.

2d 34 Like Reply Share

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There appears to be no evidence that the County intends to plan for the facilities and services to meet the density that the County has approved and continues to approve.⁶⁰⁵
606

11. There is no accurate, measurable public accounting of the value of the “community benefits” developers offer as part of the site plan process and likewise no accurate public accounting of the value of the density and other benefits that property developers receive in return, leaving the public in the dark as to whether or not what is received is of roughly equivalent value.

11.1. There appears to be a lack of transparency and consistency regarding how community benefits are established with density increases as well as followed in implementation. Repeated requests for transparency on these concerns appear to be disregarded.

11.1.1. Amazon HQ2 Penn Place Site Plan Approval appears to lack transparency of analysis and community benefits.

During the Amazon HQ2 PenPlace site plan approval process⁶⁰⁷, residents requested information to understand how the County was calculating an historic level of bonus density and what that would mean to community benefits. “Going forward, it is vital that the county reveal to the public, as part of site plan negotiations for all development, the underlying dollar value of the benefits of the bonus density being awarded and the community benefits promised in return⁶⁰⁸. It is the Board’s mandate to insist on such transparency”⁶⁰⁹ The County refused to make transparent the calculations it supposedly had conducted for the PenPlace development. Residents then worked to create an analysis of what benefits costs and density⁶¹⁰ and found that the County’s “offer falls short \$380 million to \$1.1 billion of the value of that density.” County Board Vice Chair Christian Dorsey calling the analysis provided by residents absent “suspect methodologies.”

But Vice Chair Dorsey refused to publish any information to dispute the residents’ analysis or provide the transparency in community benefits that was initially requested. Source: April 23, 2022, County Board Meeting.⁶¹¹

⁶⁰⁵ <https://www.arlnow.com/2022/02/11/pentagon-city-sector-plan-to-reach-county-board-on-saturday-amid-some-vocal-opposition/>

⁶⁰⁶ https://www.arcaonline.org/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2022/02/ARCA_Submission_CountyBoardVote_PCSP_9FEB22_v2.pdf

⁶⁰⁷ <https://www.arlingtonva.us/Government/Projects/Project-Types/Site-Plan/Pen-Place-2021>

⁶⁰⁸ <https://www.arlnow.com/2018/05/18/despite-public-pressure-county-unlikely-to-press-developers-for-schools-parks-contributions/>

⁶⁰⁹ <https://www.asf-virginia.org/key-issues-development>

⁶¹⁰ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cpDD2mJXNe8>

⁶¹¹ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MnWNLUI4zDs&feature=share&si=ELPmzJkDCLju2KnD5oyZMQ&t=2406>

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Vice Chair Dorsey also stated that the complex conversation “also kind of underscores why we don’t have these conversations fully in the public.”⁶¹²

Even for historic levels of density and multi-billion dollar developer projects, benefits are not disclosed and conversations are not in public.⁶¹³

11.1.2. Initial proposals for the "Buck" (now "Quincy") site included a land swap with Arcland Properties that would have given Arcland what appeared to be the most useable portion of the property.

The land swap proposal would have resulted in Arcland, a developer, receiving the most usable space on the parcel to construct a self-storage facility^{614, 615}. While that swap did not occur, the site has not had the benefit of strategic planning for community uses. Arlington has paid large sums for land near Metro but misuse it for bus parking and storage of vehicles and materials. Parking and storage should be reserved for less expensive properties and/or locations further from Metro. While the County has made a small allotment to study future uses in the CIP, no money has been allotted for development.^{616, 617, 618, 619, 620, 621} Ms. Garvey raised the need for a discussion about the “Arlington Way 2.0”⁶²² to work on community expectations.

Arlington bought a parcel near Metro with significant land use restrictions yet is using the site for industrial and storage purposes. The County is not realizing the potential of the location despite the large cost to taxpayers. The community does not feel that the County is listening to and addressing resident concerns.

11.1.3. Pentagon City Sector Plan appears to lack transparency of community benefit-to-density calculations.

“Community Benefits: The [Pentagon City Sector Plan] listed community benefits should clearly be listed as not fully inclusive of what a site plan’s benefits actually end up being. A developer should not see the PDSP’s suggestions here as a maximum to be pointed to and fulfilled, but rather a minimum to be built on.”⁶²³

⁶¹² <https://northernvirginiamag.com/culture/news/2022/05/04/hq2-phase-approval/>

⁶¹³ <https://www.virginiamercury.com/2018/11/21/how-hard-a-bargain-did-virginia-drive-on-amazon-secrecy-pledge-could-make-it-tough-to-find-out/>

⁶¹⁴ <https://www.arlnow.com/2017/06/28/jfac-settles-on-three-options-for-buck-vhc-properties/>

⁶¹⁵ <https://www.arlnow.com/2016/11/30/county-considering-land-swap-self-storage-facility-across-from-w-l/>

⁶¹⁶ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DWJ-nOGt-6Y>

⁶¹⁷ <https://www.arlnow.com/2017/06/01/peters-take-no-to-self-storage-use-of-buck-property/>

⁶¹⁸ <https://www.arlnow.com/2015/05/05/county-buys-land-in-virginia-square-for-30-million/>

⁶¹⁹ <https://www.arlnow.com/2019/05/29/classrooms-police-cars-and-more-proposed-for-buck-site/>

⁶²⁰ <https://www.arlnow.com/2021/12/15/county-to-temporarily-relocate-some-art-bus-operations-to-va-square-property/>

⁶²¹ <https://www.arlnow.com/2015/05/05/county-buys-land-in-virginia-square-for-30-million/>

⁶²² <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DWJ-nOGt-6Y&feature=share&si=ELPmzJkDCLju2KnD5oyZMQ&t=2812>

⁶²³ <https://aurorahighlands.org/news/pcps-draft-comments/>

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"Overall, we really want to understand what is being required, what is optional, what data that is based on (or if not data, what standards) and who is responsible for what and when. This could look like a chart or table of proposed changes/improvements that cover those points."⁶²⁴

The County appeared to disregard the requests for transparency in community benefit-to-density calculations for all its projects.

The County did not provide clarity regarding how community benefits are calculated, how/when they will be delivered and so on for the Pentagon City Sector Plan with a multi-billion dollar approval of density for developers.

11.2. Independent review of developer's meeting site-plan conditions/ community benefits is not followed through by the County Board or County Manager.

11.2.1. Consultant Report on Site Plan Conditions (2005 or 2006) recommendations appear to have not been implemented.

"The county government hired a consultant to determine whether site-plan conditions were being met in 2005 or 2006. The consultant delivered the report and, while some recommendations for improving the tracking process were adopted, a number never were addressed... "Some [recommendations] have been implemented, but a whole lot haven't," Schwartz acknowledged."⁶²⁵

In 2022, the County Manager acknowledged that the County Manager and Board did not fully address "a whole lot" of recommendations in the previous consultant report regarding ensuring site plan conditions and benefits are met.⁶²⁶

11.2.2. Audit of site plan conditions and benefits has not been conducted.

In 2022, the County expanded the County's allowed audit positions to help bolster the auditor function⁶²⁷. While the FY2023 Audit Plan includes an audit area for site plan conditions and benefits, the County Auditor resignation⁶²⁸ and search may result in this audit being delayed and/or dismissed.^{629, 630} This item was also on the Auditor's FY 2022

⁶²⁴ <https://aurorahighlands.org/news/ahca-feedback-to-current-pentagon-city-planning-study-scenarios/>

⁶²⁵ <https://sungazette.news/auditor-may-mull-whether-site-plan-conditions-are-carried-out/>

⁶²⁶ [Ibid.](#)

⁶²⁷ <https://www.arlingtonva.us/files/sharedassets/public/budget/documents/fy-2023/fy-2023-adopted/fy23-adopted-all-in-one-budget.pdf> p. 7

⁶²⁸ <https://www.arlnow.com/2022/05/16/county-auditor-departs-as-county-board-wishes-him-good-fortune/>

⁶²⁹ <https://www.arlingtonva.us/files/sharedassets/public/commissions/documents/audit/june-2022/draft-annual-audit-work-plan-fy-2023-for-audit-committee-review.pdf>

⁶³⁰ <https://sungazette.news/auditor-may-mull-whether-site-plan-conditions-are-carried-out/>

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Work Plan⁶³¹, FY 2021 Work Plan⁶³², FY 2020 Work Plan⁶³³ and the FY 2019 Work Plan⁶³⁴,⁶³⁵. Comments in the FY 2019 Work Plan indicate that it was added based on public feedback. However, it was also listed in the FY 2018 Audit Horizon⁶³⁶ and a 2016 article regarding the departure of the first County Auditor^{637, 638}. Records prior to FY 2018 are not available on the County Auditor page.

The County Auditor page⁶³⁹ reflects that the FY2023 Audit Plan was approved on June 21, 2022. However, the Audit Plan approval is not included in the Board Minutes⁶⁴⁰ nor linked on the County Auditor page.

Annual Work Plans are provided below.

- Annual Audit Work Plan for FY 2023 - Approved June 21, 2022
- Annual Audit Work Plan for FY 2022 - Approved June 15, 2021
- Annual Audit Work Plan for FY 2021 - Approved June 16, 2020
- Annual Audit Work Plan for FY 2020 - Approved June 18, 2019
- Annual Audit Work Plan for FY 2019 - Approved June 19, 2018
- Annual Audit Work Plan for FY 2018 - Approved June 20, 2017

⁶³¹ <https://www.arlingtonva.us/files/sharedassets/public/commissions/documents/audit/county-auditor-annual-audit-work-plan-fy-2022-as-approved-6-15-21.pdf>

⁶³² <https://arlingtonva.s3.amazonaws.com/wp-content/uploads/sites/22/2020/07/FINAL-Annual-Audit-Work-Plan-FY-2021.pdf>

⁶³³ <https://arlingtonva.s3.amazonaws.com/wp-content/uploads/sites/22/2019/07/Annual-Audit-Work-Plan-FY-2020-Approved.pdf>

⁶³⁴ <https://arlingtonva.s3.amazonaws.com/wp-content/uploads/sites/22/2018/06/Annual-Audit-Work-Plan-FY-2019.pdf>

⁶³⁵ <https://www.arlnow.com/2018/06/11/county-auditor-plans-to-review-economic-development-incentives-purchasing-practices/>

⁶³⁶ <https://arlingtonva.s3.amazonaws.com/wp-content/uploads/sites/22/2016/03/FINAL-Audit-Work-Plan-for-FY-2018.pdf>

⁶³⁷ <https://www.arlnow.com/2016/06/15/arlington-countys-new-auditor-is-leaving-the-job/>

⁶³⁸ <https://www.arlnow.com/2016/05/02/arlington-county-auditor-seeks-resident-suggestions-concerns/>

⁶³⁹ <https://www.arlingtonva.us/Government/Departments/County-Board/County-Auditor>

⁶⁴⁰ https://docs.google.com/gview?url=https%3A%2F%2Farlington.granicus.com%2FDocumentViewer.php%3Ffile%3Darlinton_19499a6b1636fb5a65d271b5d3177177.pdf%26view%3D1&embedded=true

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12. The County continues to enact further restrictive rule and limitations on public speaking.

12.1. Virtual Commission meeting participation has been reduced.

“Despite little likelihood COVID will be disappearing, the community has learned to address it, so “the need for those emergency authorities has dwindled,” the County Manager said.”⁶⁴¹ As a result of the County Manager’s action to end the emergency declaration, all Board Advisory Commissions must meet in person with minor exceptions. However, the County Manager’s Advisory Committees, which are under different guidelines, may continue to meet virtually.^{642, 643, 644}

12.2. Public comments have been heavily restricted.

12.2.1. The Board Changed Public Comment Requirements Which Appears to Limit Public Comment.

The Board changed public comment requirements at the County’s July 2022 Meeting, closing public comment sign up to 8:15 am the morning of Board meetings.^{645, 646} The Board further restricted public comments during the January 2023 Organizational Meeting.^{647, 648, 649}

The Sun Gazette article: *Editorial: Putting the squeeze on public comment in Arlington?*⁶⁵⁰ notes that: “actions taken by the Arlington School Board and County Board over the summer (when nobody was looking) should be disconcerting for those who value a robust community conversation.” The article goes on to say that the action gives the appearance “that today’s elected officials don’t want to hear what the public has to say or (perhaps as importantly) don’t want others in the community to hear what their neighbors have to say. And if that’s true, it’s another sign of the growing disconnect between today’s political leaders in the community and the public they are, in theory at least, supposed to be serving.”⁶⁵¹ Previously, the public could submit a public comment speaker form until

⁶⁴¹ <https://sungazette.news/arlington-covid-state-of-emergency-to-end-in-mid-august/>

⁶⁴² <https://law.lis.virginia.gov/vacode/2.2-3708.2/>

⁶⁴³ <https://law.lis.virginia.gov/vacode/title2.2/chapter37/section2.2-3707/>

⁶⁴⁴ <https://law.lis.virginia.gov/vacode/44-146.21/>

⁶⁴⁵ <https://www.arlingtonva.us/Government/Departments/County-Board/County-Board-Meetings/Speaking-at-a-Monthly-County-Board-Meeting>

⁶⁴⁶ https://www.insidenova.com/news/arlington/arlington-county-board-adjusts-rules-on-public-comment-at-its-meetings/article_61e4c30c-18d3-11ed-ab4c-c37abd7700ba.html

⁶⁴⁷ <https://youtu.be/ji7tiLOXyQc?t=927>

⁶⁴⁸ https://arlington.granicus.com/MetaViewer.php?meta_id=215184

⁶⁴⁹ <https://www.arlnow.com/2023/01/17/arlington-warns-of-shortened-public-speaking-times-ahead-of-missing-middle-hearing/>

⁶⁵⁰ <https://sungazette.news/editorial-putting-the-squeeze-on-public-comment-in-arlington/>

⁶⁵¹ [ibid.](#)

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“prior to the last public-comment speaker wrapping up comments, usually something that occurs about 9 a.m. or slightly later.”⁶⁵²

12.2.2. Public Comment is not allowed at some Advisory Group Meetings

In particular, the Planning and Transportation Commissions do not accept general public comment during meetings. For example, the public is required to provide written comment to inform the Advisory Groups of outcomes that may require process improvements. This may limit Commission awareness of problems experienced by the community related to their approvals and conditions which may benefit the community.

13. There is a lack of data transparency, accessibility, and properly working systems such as policies, processes, broken website links, website links to meetings, documents, historic content, minutes and video resulting in significant impediments to residents' ability to view, research, and participate in County activities in a transparent way.

13.1. County appears to lack data transparency and accessibility.

13.1.1. FOIA Concerns raised over Open Data Portal.

FOIA Concerns raised over Open Data Portal⁶⁵³ and the County's Award as a “Digital Leader” are denied and dismissed by County Manager, who provided misleading evidence, and is later called out.⁶⁵⁴

In 2017, a former Arlington County Commissioner noticed that Arlington County won an award for The Top 5 Counties for Digital Government -- Arlington, VA #4.^{655, 656} However, this seemed wholly inappropriate given the state of the Open Data Portal and access to even the most basic data. She wrote to the County Board and provided a few suggestions on improving it. County Manager Mark Schwartz replied to those suggestions denying almost all the issues that were shared and disregarded the suggestions. She replied back to Mr. Schwartz with details outlining how his reply was not only inappropriate for not acknowledging the suggestions, but bordered on negligent for providing misleading screenshots of data categories, which in actuality had little to no data associated with them as evidence that the County had a functioning and relatively complete Open Data Portal.⁶⁵⁷

⁶⁵² [Ibid.](#)

⁶⁵³ <https://data.arlingtonva.us/home>

⁶⁵⁴ <https://docs.google.com/document/d/1-toakP1lXlgZqMThIW5y45-10wfrlu3XETjFNP2jKXI/edit?usp=sharing>

⁶⁵⁵ <https://www.arlingtonva.us/About-Arlington/News/Articles/2017/Arlington-Named-Top-Digital-County-for-2017>

⁶⁵⁶ <https://www.arlingtonva.us/About-Arlington/News/Articles/2021/Arlington-Receives-Top-Digital-Counties-Award-for-2021>

⁶⁵⁷ <https://docs.google.com/document/d/1-toakP1lXlgZqMThIW5y45-10wfrlu3XETjFNP2jKXI/edit?usp=sharing>

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13.1.2. The Open Data Advisory Group (ODAG) appears to have been effectively eliminated.

The Open Data Advisory Group⁶⁵⁸ (ODAG) was a County Manager Advisory Group created in 2017 to enable the Arlington community to help inform government policy development and decision making through the use of data-driven analysis. However, this group has not met since 2019. All member appointment terms have expired.^{659, 660}

The County Manager is no longer receiving feedback to inform government policy development and decision-making through the use of data-driven analysis. Additionally, the privacy impact considerations are no longer being performed.

For information on the creation and purpose of ODAG, please refer to Section 2.10.

13.1.3. Board financial disclosure and conflict of interest documents are not available via the Open Data Portal.

Though on file in the County Board Clerk's office, the Board's financial disclosure documents^{661, 662, 663}, should be available in the Open Data portal. "Publishing these documents online would increase the ability of citizens and other interested parties to research and understand potential conflicts of interest in a timely manner."^{664, 665, 666, 667}

Additionally, while each Board Member is required to disclose conflicts of interest^{668, 669, 670, 671}, disclosure information is rare⁶⁷² and hard to find. These disclosures should be easily accessible to the public and stated during meetings.

13.1.4. The County Manager, Staff, contractors, and consultants should also disclose conflicts of interest in a publicly transparent manner.

⁶⁵⁸ <https://www.arlingtonva.us/Government/Commissions-and-Advisory-Groups/ODAG>

⁶⁵⁹ <https://www.arlingtonva.us/Government/Commissions-and-Advisory-Groups/ODAG>

⁶⁶⁰ <https://www.arlingtonva.us/Government/Commissions-and-Advisory-Groups/ODAG/Members>

⁶⁶¹ http://ethics.dls.virginia.gov/2017_2.0_FDS_FINALa.pdf

⁶⁶² https://arlington.granicus.com/MetaViewer.php?view_id=2&meta_id=168015

⁶⁶³ https://www.insidenova.com/news/politics/more-transparency-sought-for-arlington-financial-disclosure-filings/article_57767a46-68b7-11eb-9330-a7e521c292af.html

⁶⁶⁴ <https://www.arlnow.com/2020/01/09/the-hurtt-locker-resolutions-for-arlington-county-government/>

⁶⁶⁵ <https://wjla.com/news/local/arlington-christian-dorsey-addresses-controversy-after-resigning-from-the-metro-board>

⁶⁶⁶ <https://www.arlnow.com/2019/12/20/exclusive-dorsey-says-he-should-have-revealed-bankruptcy-earlier/>

⁶⁶⁷ <https://www.arlnow.com/2020/02/13/county-board-considering-next-appropriate-steps-for-christian-dorsey/>

⁶⁶⁸ <https://law.lis.virginia.gov/vacodepopularnames/state-and-local-government-conflict-of-interests-act/>

⁶⁶⁹ <http://ethics.dls.virginia.gov/conflict-of-interest.asp>

⁶⁷⁰ http://ethics.dls.virginia.gov/2018%20SLSOEI%20_Sample.pdf

⁶⁷¹ <http://ethicsearch.dls.virginia.gov/#tabs1-conflict>

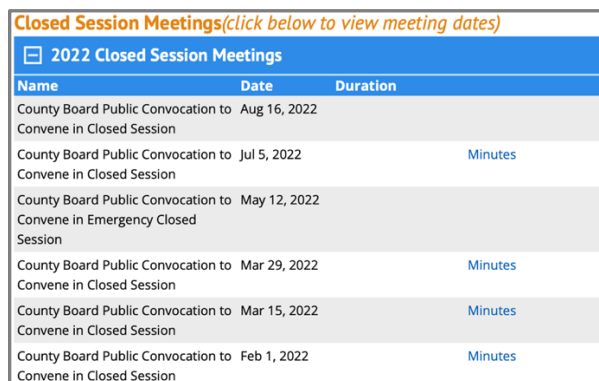
⁶⁷² https://arlington.granicus.com/MetaViewer.php?view_id=2&clip_id=3655&meta_id=188502

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It is unclear whether the County Manager, staff, consultants, and contractors are required to make financial^{673, 674} and conflict of interest⁶⁷⁵ disclosures. Such disclosures do not appear to reach the public. Commissioners are required to make such disclosures to the public verbally during meetings. At minimum, such disclosures should be made during public meetings and in reports. This open disclosure and transparency will increase public trust.

13.1.5. Meeting minutes and associated links are not available.

The County does not consistently post meeting minutes and the associated audio and video links for County Board and Advisory Group meetings. Additionally, there can be significant delays in posting the information and meeting link errors may prevent public participation. Even when information is posted, the document may not contain the associated content or minutes.⁶⁷⁶ The below screenshot was captured October 2022.⁶⁷⁷



Closed Session Meetings (click below to view meeting dates)		
2022 Closed Session Meetings		
Name	Date	Duration
County Board Public Convocation to Convene in Closed Session	Aug 16, 2022	
County Board Public Convocation to Convene in Closed Session	Jul 5, 2022	Minutes
County Board Public Convocation to Convene in Emergency Closed Session	May 12, 2022	
County Board Public Convocation to Convene in Closed Session	Mar 29, 2022	Minutes
County Board Public Convocation to Convene in Closed Session	Mar 15, 2022	Minutes
County Board Public Convocation to Convene in Closed Session	Feb 1, 2022	Minutes

See also Section 3.11.

13.2. County website redesign and associated problems make it harder for residents to find information.

Arlington County migrated their website October 2021. At one point, the County was working to fix their estimate of 6,634 links broken after the website redesign. Additionally, ArlNow reported that “The changeover to the new site caused links from both search engines and websites like ARLnow to break. As of [November 16, 2021], one link-checking website listed nearly 900,000 broken links to arlingtonva.us pages.”⁶⁷⁸ Many historic links remain broken as of September 2022. In fact, a quick check using the same broken links tool⁶⁷⁹ on October 17, 2022

⁶⁷³ https://arlington.granicus.com/MetaViewer.php?view_id=2&meta_id=168015

⁶⁷⁴ <https://law.lis.virginia.gov/vacode/title2.2/chapter31/section2.2-3115/>

⁶⁷⁵ <https://law.lis.virginia.gov/vacodepopularnames/state-and-local-government-conflict-of-interests-act/>

⁶⁷⁶ http://arlington.granicus.com/MinutesViewer.php?view_id=2&clip_id=3793

⁶⁷⁷ http://arlington.granicus.com/ViewPublisher.php?view_id=2

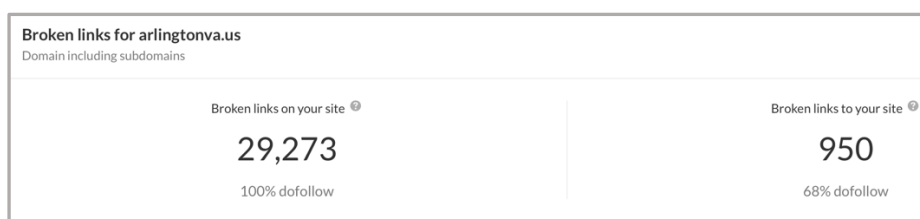
⁶⁷⁸ <https://www.arlnow.com/2021/11/16/broken-links-on-countys-new-website-still-frustrating-some-residents/>

⁶⁷⁹ <https://ahrefs.com/broken-link-checker>

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resulted in the tool finding nearly 30,000 broken links on the arlingtonva.us site alone. Staff and vendor did not appear to utilize available tools commonly used for other large website migrations. Information previously available is no longer accessible. Staff appears to be relying on public to search for topics, such as the Columbia Pike Multimodal, Washington Boulevard Bike Trail, or previous Form Based Code approved projects. While some of the links have been fixed, it seems others are now broken. This is violation of Arlington’s published Open Data Principals and various efforts on transparency.^{680, 681, 682, 683}

It is difficult for the community to find historic and other information. Additionally, links in county documents and historic articles remain broken and continue to break. This makes it more difficult for the community to find information and conduct the research required for county projects. The challenges make it more likely that the public will need to file a Freedom of Information Act request for the information⁶⁸⁴. One resident wrote that “This revamp of the county website has been akin to the burning down of a library with half of the books still inside,” she wrote. “In this case, the ‘books’ still exist — the community simply has no access to them.”⁶⁸⁵



There has been a significant reduction in broken links to the site. It is unclear if that is due to correctly the problem or simply creating an error page.^{686, 687, 688, 689, 690, 691, 692, 693} The error/redirect page only disguises underlying problems that prevent the public from finding information.

⁶⁸⁰ <https://www.arlnow.com/2021/11/16/broken-links-on-countys-new-website-still-frustrating-some-residents/>
⁶⁸¹ <https://www.arlnow.com/2021/11/17/county-manager-apologizes-for-thousands-of-broken-links-on-new-website/>
⁶⁸² <http://www.arlingtonconnection.com/news/2021/nov/10/letter-website-broken-arlington/>
⁶⁸³ <https://www.arlingtonva.us/Government/Topics/Policy>
⁶⁸⁴ <http://www.arlingtonconnection.com/news/2021/nov/10/letter-website-broken-arlington/>
⁶⁸⁵ <https://www.arlnow.com/2021/11/16/broken-links-on-countys-new-website-still-frustrating-some-residents/>
⁶⁸⁶ https://www.arlingtonva.us/Government/Programs/Recycling/wp-content/uploads/sites/8/2021/07/HowToCompost_sp.pdf
⁶⁸⁷ <https://www.arlingtonva.us/Government/Programs/Recycling/locations/trades-recycling-drop-center/>
⁶⁸⁸ <https://www.arlingtonva.us/Transportation/parking/parking-day/>
⁶⁸⁹ <https://www.arlingtonva.us/County-Board/open-door-mondays/>
⁶⁹⁰ <http://news.arlingtonva.us/releases/arlington-county-to-regulate-pub-crawls-through-special-events-policy>
⁶⁹¹ <https://newsroom.arlingtonva.us/wp-content/uploads/sites/35/2017/11/Proposed-Signage-Flagpole-Entrance.pdf>
⁶⁹² https://www.arlingtonva.us/Government/Departments//wp-content/uploads/sites/6/2021/02/ArlingtonPolicePracticeGroup.Subcommittee.Report..FINAL_.2.15.21.pdf
⁶⁹³ <https://www.arlingtonva.us/Projects/rppreview/>

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13.3. Public-facing County systems are released with significant errors appear to cause impediments for resident participation.

13.3.1. Summer camp registration and residential parking systems appeared to have system and process errors as well as a lack of historic data required for transactions.

The summer camp registration systems are often released without adequate testing and/or correction of errors. Additionally, the new residential parking system was built and released in a manner that did not adequately import prior RPP records and permit information.

- Summer Camp registration⁶⁹⁴
- Residential Parking Program⁶⁹⁵

The community was unable to register and/or use the systems as needed to conduct County transactions. The result is that the community wasted significant time and effort unsuccessfully trying to conduct basic county/community business. The County lost revenue due to the payment timeframe and inability to enforce parking due to County delays.

13.4. County policies are not easily accessible or viewable to the public.

The County has not published all County policies, made them accessible or made them easy for the community to understand.

Those policies that are published are not easily searchable. Policies often conflict. The public is held to providing input on policies. The Board creates policies,⁶⁹⁶ Staff implements policies, and the Board is tasked with monitoring the implementation of policies. However, it is not easy for the community to find policies, which are often buried in a lot of miscellaneous documents,

⁶⁹⁴ <https://www.arlnow.com/2022/02/23/new-arlingtons-summer-camp-registration-system-melts-down-again-despite-changes/>

⁶⁹⁵ <https://content.govdelivery.com/accounts/VAARLINGTON/bulletins/3258914>

⁶⁹⁶ <https://www.arlingtonva.us/Government/County-Board/About-the-County-Board>

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mostly without indication of County Board approval required per Board Member Responsibilities.^{697, 698, 699, 700, 701, 702, 703, 704, 705, 706, 707}

It is difficult for the community to locate and understand County policies, which is required in order to provide issue input and feedback to the County. It is difficult for the Board and Staff to know and understand policies in place and/or missing. It is difficult for Staff to implement policies when they do not have a definitive source of all policies. It is hard for the Board to monitor the implementation of policies when policies are not understood.⁷⁰⁸

13.5. County appears to delay or not fully utilize technology resources to provide greater transparency.

The County has limited resources for livestreaming and YouTube, which appears to limit transparency and accessibility.

Staff and others use unofficial resources because the County has extremely limited streaming licenses. According to one source, the County is only able to live stream one event or meeting at a time. Furthermore, recorded videos sometimes have delays of multiple months prior to being posted for the public. Rather than using the Arlington County Official YouTube Account⁷⁰⁹, unofficial County and Staff accounts are being used for official business, for example: YouTube account: kurtlarrick1 (Assistant Director of the Dept of Human Services)⁷¹⁰
YouTube account: ArlingtonCoVA^{711, 712, 713, 714}

⁶⁹⁷ <https://www.arlingtonva.us/Government/County-Board/About-the-County-Board>

⁶⁹⁸ <https://arlingtonva.s3.amazonaws.com/wp-content/uploads/sites/31/2017/03/Overall-plan-updated-February-25-2017.pdf>

⁶⁹⁹ <https://www.arlingtonva.us/About-Arlington/News/Articles/2020/Arlington-Updates-Green-Building-Incentive-Policy>

⁷⁰⁰ <https://www.arlingtonva.us/Government/Topics/Cable-Television-Policy-Administration>

⁷⁰¹ <https://www.arlingtonva.us/Government/Departments/Fire/Fire-Prevention-Office>

⁷⁰² <https://www.arlingtonva.us/Government/Departments/Parks-Recreation/About/Inclement-Weather/Inclement-Weather-Policy>

⁷⁰³ <https://www.arlingtonva.us/Government/Programs/Housing/Tenant-Assistance-Fund-TAF-Policy>

⁷⁰⁴ <https://www.arlingtonva.us/files/sharedassets/public/Building/Documents/Administrative-Regulation-4.1.pdf>

⁷⁰⁵ <https://www.arlingtonva.us/About-Arlington/News/Articles/2018/County-Board-Adopts-Four-Mile-Run-Valley-Policy-Framework>

⁷⁰⁶ <https://www.arlingtonva.us/Government/Departments/County-Board/Strengthening-Legitimacy-with-our-Community-with-a-new-Trust-Policy>

⁷⁰⁷ <https://www.arlingtonva.us/Government/Departments/CMO/Privacy-Policy/Managing-Privacy>

⁷⁰⁸ <https://www.arlnow.com/2021/12/15/peters-take-arlington-county-a-nine-year-perspective-on-the-future/>

⁷⁰⁹ https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCa4MVjN_2slqIn_Lu3rSHBA

⁷¹⁰ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=N8TTpOPmf54>

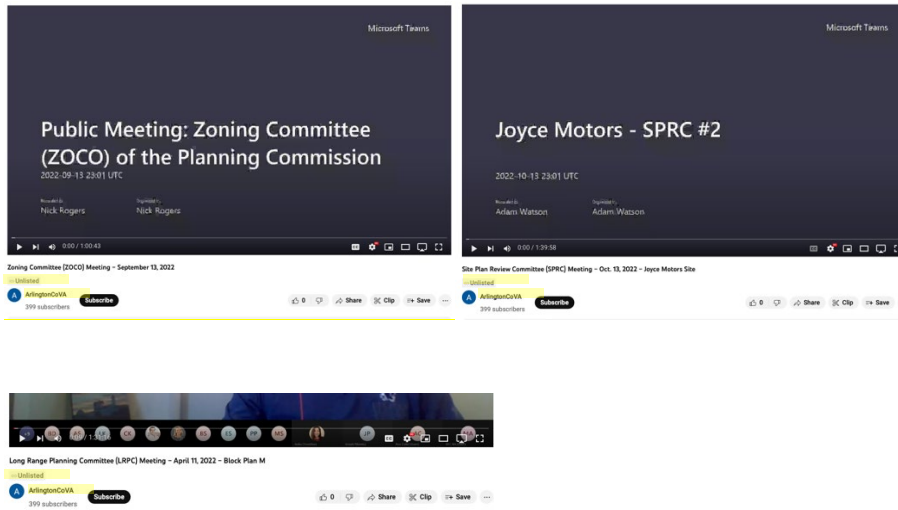
⁷¹¹ <https://www.youtube.com/user/ArlingtonCoVA>

⁷¹² <https://youtu.be/GtmSZxpPwoo?t=2430>

⁷¹³ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HJLZJ5vf7GQ>

⁷¹⁴ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=o5y2HONFIXA>

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This results in lack of transparency, accountability, sunshine and timely notification of County meeting proceedings. It is difficult for County and community resources to find all of the relevant meeting material when it is not kept in an official location and easily searchable (public) rather than unlisted. It is difficult for the County to comply with FOIA requests for this information when it is dispersed. While Staff may have the best intention by recording and posting the meetings with personal resources, the County should post the content centrally.