



Arlington County Civic Federation

Arlington's Comprehensive Plan and General Land Use Plan Background

November 12, 2024

Comprehensive Plan Purpose

“The purpose of the Comprehensive Plan is to guide the coordinated and harmonious development of the County through the provision of high standards of public services and facilities.”

Comprehensive Plan Vision



- ***Arlington County Vision Guides Our Comprehensive Plan with 12 Sub-Elements***

“Arlington will be a diverse and inclusive world-class urban community with secure, attractive residential and commercial neighborhoods where people unite to form a caring, learning, participating, sustainable community in which each person is important.”

Comprehensive Plan - Principles



Comprehensive Plan – Guiding Principles

1st plan dates from August 1960. General principles:

1. Retain **predominantly residential character** with more intense development in limited and defined areas;
2. Promote **sound business, commercial and light industrial activities** in designated areas appropriately related to residential neighborhoods;
3. **Develop government facilities** . . . , including those for health, welfare, culture and recreation;
4. Provide **adequate water supply** that is effectively distributed;
5. Maintain **acceptable sewage disposal** standards for the county and regional neighbors, that abates Potomac River pollution;
6. **Provide adequate storm water drainage** system; and
7. Provide **adequate traffic system** that is integral to county/ regional highway and transportation networks with safe, convenient traffic flow

Comp Plan - What Does it Do and How Does It Work?



WHAT: “A community-based vision helped Arlington protect low-density residential neighborhood areas, while planning for the expansion of Metro. . . . This was pivotal . . . in forming the compact, urban environment we know today.” p.1 [of Essential Guide to Comprehensive Plan](#)

HOW: Per Virginia code, Arlington must adopt a Comp Plan that must be reviewed by our planning commission “at least once every five years.” p. 3 [of Essential Guide to Comprehensive Plan](#)

How is Comp Plan Amended?

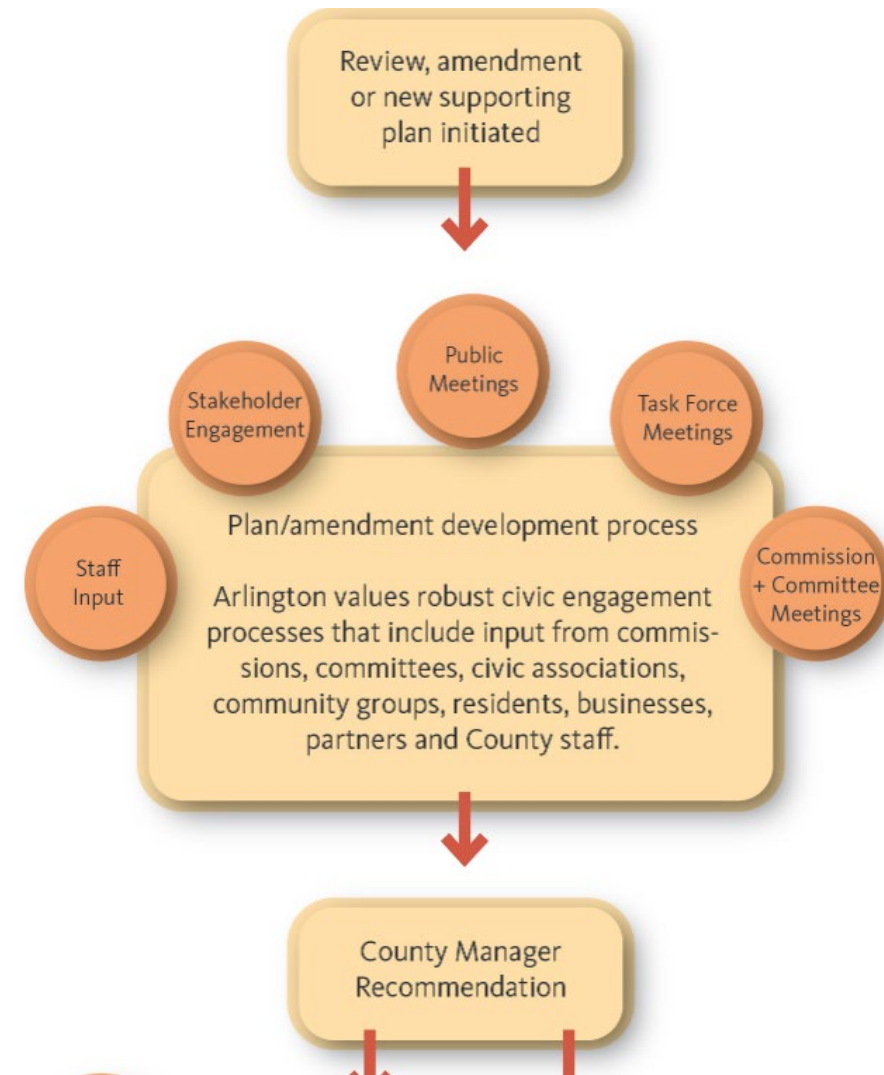
Elements [of the Comp Plan] are . . . developed and amended through a community-based process that includes the evaluation of existing policies, the development of alternatives, and consideration of recommendations. p. 3 [of Essential Guide to Comprehensive Plan](#). Chart at right shows process that concludes with a County Board vote.

Area Plans (e.g., Langston Blvd), Sector Plans (Clarendon), site plans (Amazon HQ2), and major rezonings (Columbia Pike form-based code, Enhanced Housing Options) must be consistent with the Comp Plan, balancing competing goals

Comprehensive Plan Consistency

How do land use policies that support increased housing options and supply comport with other Comprehensive Plan elements?

Elements	Selected Goals or Policies
Affordable Housing Master Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Adequate supply of housing to meet community needs Explore flexibility in housing types and residential uses in single-family neighborhoods Enable Arlington residents to age in the community
Master Transportation Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implement land-use policies that result in better access and use of the transportation system Parking and Curb Space Management Element: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure that minimum parking needs are met and excessive parking is not built Promote on-street parking in residential neighborhoods



The General Land Use Plan (GLUP) – Key Comp Plan Element



Comprehensive Plan

The (GLUP) was adopted Feb 2020 and is the **primary policy guide for future development in the County.** As required by Virginia Code 15.2-2223, the GLUP is adopted by the County Board and serves as a guide in its decisions on growth. It establishes the overall character, extent and location of various land uses.

It balances residential, shopping, office and mixed-use development, focuses development around Metro Station Areas and encourages construction of a variety of housing types.

GLUP Goals Focus on Residential/Retail Goals and Distinguish between High and Low Density Areas



1. **Concentrate high-density residential, commercial and office development within designated Metro Station Areas** in the Rosslyn-Ballston and Richmond Metrorail Transit Corridors.
2. **Promote mixed-use development in Metro Station Areas** to provide a balance of residential, shopping and employment opportunities.
3. **Increase the supply of housing by encouraging construction of a variety of housing types and prices at a range of heights and densities in and near Metro Station Areas.** [This] allows a significant number of townhouses, mid-rise and high-rise dwelling units within designated Metro Station Areas.
4. **Preserve and enhance existing single-family and apartment neighborhoods.** Within Metro Station Areas, land use densities are concentrated near the Metro Station, tapering down to surrounding residential areas. . . . Throughout the County, the Arlington Neighborhoods Program and other . . . programs help preserve and enhance older residential areas and help provide housing at a range of price levels and densities.
5. **Preserve and enhance neighborhood retail areas.** The County encourages the preservation and revitalization of neighborhood retail areas that serve everyday shopping and service needs and are consistent with adopted County plans.