



August 23, 2026

Mr. Mark Schwartz, Arlington County Manager  
Arlington's Transportation Future Project Team  
2100 Clarendon Boulevard  
Arlington, VA 22201

Dear Mr. Schwartz and Members of the Transportation Future Project Team:

The Arlington County Civic Federation appreciates the County's effort to replace the 2007 Master Transportation Plan with a single multimodal framework. We support the draft plan's emphasis on safety, accessibility, reliability, sustainability, transparency, and accountability. Our principal goal in these comments is to ensure the final MTP will translate those goals into concrete capital improvements and development practices.

These comments are grounded primarily in the Civic Federation's April 14, 2026 resolution, [\*A Safe, Equitable, and Accountable Transportation Plan in Arlington County\*](#). Rather than restating all of that resolution, we focus here on the changes that would most strengthen the final MTP: clear implementation responsibility, measurable outcomes, realistic development and parking assumptions, enforceable mitigation, effective intergovernmental coordination, and timely correction when policies do not perform as intended.

## **Executive Summary: Top Recommendations**

**1. Make implementation and accountability part of the plan itself.** Publish a two-year rolling implementation program for major MTP network and corridor improvements showing responsible County divisions and partner agencies, anticipated cost and funding sources, near-/mid-/long-term timing, project status, and measurable outcomes. Connect this program to the Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) and provide annual reporting.

**2. Treat land use and transportation operations as inseparable.** Modernize site-plan and development-review standards so new residential and mixed-use projects demonstrate how parking, pick-up/drop-off (PUDO), deliveries, loading, moving, sanitation, service vehicles, emergency access, and internal circulation will actually function. Predictable building-generated demand should be accommodated on site to the greatest extent feasible; public curb space should supplement, not substitute for, adequate site design. Long-standing safety improvements near site planned properties must have clear implementation and mitigation plans for transportation safety

folded into the 4.1 process so that CIP milestones and site plan construction milestones coincide with one another. Fold this guidance into the Arlington County Zoning Ordinance (ACZO).

**3. Create a real implementation framework with VDOT and other regional partners.**

Establish a formal Arlington-VDOT coordination framework, early VDOT involvement in relevant planning and site-plan processes, a single County point of contact for VDOT coordination, public milestones for corridor studies, and an escalation path to the County Board when County and state implementation positions materially diverge. Provide Langston Boulevard, Glebe Road, Washington Boulevard, and other state-maintained corridors defined pathways from planning to funding and construction. Status quo is unacceptable as a long-term solution. Resolving these disputes is an inherently governmental function and should not be delegated to a developer's transportation engineering or design consultants.

**4. Base parking and TDM decisions on observed conditions and enforceable commitments.**

Parking ratios should reflect observed vehicle ownership and parking demand, transit access, TDM performance, affordability, and surrounding curb conditions. Reduced ratios should be paired with enforceable TDM and parking monitoring, independent verification where appropriate, clear corrective actions, and a workable Residential Parking Program process when spillover occurs. Because reduced parking ratios are already not consistently working as intended in some recently approved developments, the County should not assume that further reductions are appropriate before realistic transportation alternatives exist and are demonstrated to work. Once a building is constructed, substantial additional structured parking may be prohibitively expensive or physically infeasible to add, leaving residents, surrounding neighborhoods, and the County to manage a structural deficiency after the fact. The MTP should direct a corresponding amendment to the ACZO's parking ratio tables so that observed-condition calibration is a binding requirement, not aspirational guidance.

**5. Pair modal priorities with transit capacity, safety, and operational readiness.** Advance measurable ART reliability/capacity improvements; address north-south and cross-County connectivity; and ensure streets and transportation facilities open with required signs, markings, curb controls, accessibility features, and other operational elements in place. Significant right-of-way changes should disclose tradeoffs and evaluate before-and-after conditions.

**6. Make safety, accessibility, construction management, and public reporting time bound.**

Provide clear processes and public tracking for near-miss and hazard reports, crosswalk and beacon requests, quick-build safety measures, speed management, reporting of permanent ADA sidewalk obstructions, construction detour plans, bike-lane obstruction enforcement, and community transportation requests. There should be a system with more back and forth than the report-a-problem function for civic associations and other community organizations.

## **1. Implementation, Capital Programming, and Accountability**

The final MTP should be stronger as an implementation framework, not only a statement of long-term policy. The Civic Federation's resolution called for realistic capital planning, a two-year rolling implementation plan that should map proposed transportation improvements, cost estimates, responsible divisions, and timing that distinguishes near-term projects from improvements that may take decades. The final MTP should incorporate that discipline directly into its implementation chapter or companion program. An example of this is in the 2007 plan, there was a map of where bike lanes should be seen in the short, medium, and long term. Many of these plans remain unrealized because there was no realistic plan forward.

For each major network improvement, priority corridor, or policy requiring significant follow-through, the County should identify:

- the expected implementation horizon;
- the funding pathway;
- key milestones;
- performance measures;
- outside agencies whose approval or funding is required; and
- the process for correcting or revising an approach that is not working.

The MTP's five-year comprehensive review can remain useful for long-range policy evaluation, but it should be supplemented by annual public reporting on implementation, CIP status, safety measures, TDM/site-plan compliance, and major unresolved gaps.

The same accountability should apply to community requests. Civic associations and residents need an official pathway for requests that are more substantial than a routine service ticket but may not qualify for a full Neighborhood Complete Streets project. The process should identify review criteria, responsible staff, expected response times, written outcomes, and alternatives when a requested treatment is not advanced. A single public transportation information hub should consolidate project status, Vision Zero information, curbside pilots, MMTA/TDM compliance information, and proper staff contacts.

## **2. Land Development, PUDO, Deliveries, and Building Operations**

The MTP should make it explicit that transportation and land-use decisions cannot be separated. Development approvals establish operating conditions that can be extremely difficult to retrofit after a building is occupied. The Civic Federation's resolution therefore called for stronger Area Transportation Plan/MMTA analysis, designated delivery and rideshare areas, enforceable TDM commitments, parking and neighborhood-impact analysis, construction mobility requirements, and stronger commercial loading and delivery standards.

We recommend that the final MTP strengthen its land-development guidance with focused amendments to the ACZO, including the approach to pick-up/drop-off (PUDO), around a clear performance principle: new residential and mixed-use development should accommodate predictable PUDO, delivery, loading, service, moving, sanitation, and accessible passenger-loading demands on site to the greatest extent feasible, while maintaining safe and unobstructed emergency access.

Use of public curb space should supplement rather than substitute for adequate on-site facilities. For example, if a retail location has a restaurant, it should be required in their certificate of occupancy review to provide a plan for where all pickups and deliveries, ranging from mobility scooters to large vehicles, will be handled that is not in an active roadway and what the delivery hours and days are expected to be. This is particularly important in urban and near-urban locations where curb space is already heavily contested.

Development review should require realistic operational analysis, not merely diagrams that work on paper. Applicants should demonstrate anticipated vehicle dimensions and turning movements, delivery, and sanitation operations, PUDO demand, moving activity, emergency access, internal circulation, and peak-period conflicts with pedestrians, bicyclists, transit, and adjacent traffic. Where warranted, solutions may include internal loading/service areas, driveways, or turnaround space, designated PUDO areas, package-management facilities, and building operating plans. The County should verify that required transportation facilities and controls are complete and operational before occupancy whenever possible.

Curb management, technology, and enforcement remain important tools, but they should be the backstop—not a substitute for good site and building design. Where transportation and operational demands are predictable, they should be addressed during development review rather than becoming public-right-of-way problems after occupancy.

Where implementation of these standards requires changes to the Zoning Ordinance, MMTA guidance, standard site-plan conditions, SPRC checklists, or other development-review procedures, the MTP should identify those follow-on actions. The plan should also require adopted area plans to include credible transportation implementation and funding pathways at the time land-use changes are approved, rather than assuming that necessary improvements will materialize later through uncertain grants. Because land use and transportation operations cannot be treated separately, the MTP should fold this guidance directly into the ACZO, including a requirement that long-standing safety improvements near site-planned properties carry clear implementation and mitigation plans through the 4.1 process, so that CIP milestones and site-plan construction milestones coincide with one another. The ACZO and all relevant area plans should likewise be amended to affirmatively require on-site PUDO, delivery, and loading facilities as a condition of approval, not merely as guidance for site-plan review.

The MTP should distinguish between designing new development correctly and correcting operational problems at existing buildings. Existing buildings may require after-the-fact curb management, signage, loading zones, wayfinding, operating agreements, or enhanced enforcement where structural changes are no longer feasible. Those corrective tools can provide useful relief, but they should not become the planning model for new development or substitute for adequate on-site facilities when those facilities can reasonably be provided.

### **3. VDOT, Priority Corridors, and Transit Implementation**

Arlington cannot implement a countywide transportation plan in isolation from VDOT, WMATA, and other regional partners. The Civic Federation's resolution called for an Arlington-VDOT coordination MOU or equivalent framework addressing design and safety expectations, Vision Zero treatments, ADA compliance, maintenance responsibilities, resurfacing/restoration standards, and a regular communication cadence. It also called for early VDOT participation in long term planning and SPRC processes affecting state roads, a single County point of contact, transparent corridor studies, and evaluation of the feasibility of Arlington assuming responsibility for appropriate non-interstate state routes.

Two VDOT roads deserve particular attention:

- 1) Langston Boulevard is a corridor that has a concrete County planning area. The entirety of that plan relies on public right of way improvements. There is much uncertainty about how to actually see these recommended changes from SPRC to larger scale recommended changes. The County should identify a funding mechanism, whether general obligation bonds, accelerated grant applications, or authorizing design contractors to begin grant applications immediately, so that funded construction does not lag the adopted plan by a decade or more.
- 2) Glebe Road serves as Arlington's primary north-south roadway connector. The VDOT Glebe STARS study provided lackluster recommendations that are not sufficient for the changes needed.

For both roadways it is recommended to work with VDOT on short, medium, and long-term safety improvement opportunities. Additionally, Arlington should study the costs associated with the county assuming ownership of the remaining non-interstate VDOT roadways.

Transit commitments also need measurable implementation. The resolution specifically called for Columbia Pike Premium Transit Network improvements, better stops and real-time information, transit-signal priority, faster boarding and fare collection, larger buses where needed, improved lighting, ART capacity and reliability reporting, and a near-term implementation schedule. The final MTP should incorporate corridor-level transit performance and implementation milestones. Consistent with the committee's draft review, the County should

also evaluate north-south and cross-County transit gaps where current service does not offer a practical alternative for many trips.

#### **4. Parking, TDM, Residential Spillover, and Enforcement**

The MTP should distinguish between reducing vehicle trips and eliminating the need for vehicle access. A household may walk, bike, use transit, carpool, or telework for many trips while still needing a vehicle for employment, caregiving, medical appointments, shopping, or regional travel. Parking ratios should therefore be calibrated to observed vehicle ownership and parking utilization, while also considering transit access, TDM strength, affordability, and curb demand. Affordability should not be treated as a proxy for absence of vehicle need. In fact, the Council of Governments recently observed in their [State of the Commute](#) that people with lower income rely more heavily on cars for employment than higher income earners. The MTP should direct a corresponding amendment to the ACZO's parking ratio tables so that observed-condition calibration is a binding requirement, not aspirational guidance.

Parking adequacy is particularly important because a structural parking deficiency may be extraordinarily difficult to correct after construction. Once a building is complete, adding substantial structured parking is usually prohibitively expensive and may be physically infeasible. If the approved ratio proves too low, residents may be left without adequate parking, surrounding neighborhoods may experience long-term spillover, and the County may have to devote continuing staff time and public resources to operational measures that cannot fully correct the original design deficiency.

Reduced parking ratios are not consistently working as intended in all locations. The MTP references mobility hubs that may combine transit, bikeshare, micromobility, PUDO, and similar services. If shared parking facilities, parking hubs, or other off-site capacity are expected to support lower on-site ratios in the future, that capacity should exist, be accessible, and be shown to work before additional parking reductions are approved.

If the County studies additional reductions in parking requirements, the assumptions supporting them should be measurable and monitored with corrective actions available if unrealized. Required parking studies, travel surveys, TDM commitments, transit benefits, carshare, unbundled parking, and related mitigation should be treated as enforceable compliance requirements, not simply reporting exercises. The County should define who verifies compliance, when monitoring occurs, what constitutes a material deviation, and what corrective actions are available. The site-plan process should evaluate neighborhood spillover in advance, and the County should maintain a practical Residential Parking Program review process when significant impacts emerge. Consistent with committee discussion, the County should publish a clear web-based process and integrate parking-spillover/RPP considerations directly into the SPRC checklist and broader development review where unusually low parking ratios are

proposed. Reduced parking should follow, not precede, the arrival of safe and reliable alternatives; residents should not be asked to absorb years of shortfall while those alternatives are built out.

Parking and curb rules also depend on effective enforcement. Metering, loading restrictions, PUDO zones, fire lanes, residential restrictions, and protections against stopping in bicycle facilities work only when they are clear, signed, marked, and reasonably enforced. As parking permits or enforcement become more digital or automated, the County should incorporate data minimization, secure storage, appropriate access controls, and public input on privacy protections.

RPP should not become the County's after-the-fact substitute for adequate parking in new development. Program reviews should focus on whether established RPP areas are effectively addressing the documented conditions that led to their creation and should not continually erode existing protections. Where post-occupancy spillover nevertheless occurs, affected communities should have a prompt and workable process for review, enforcement, and corrective action.

## **5. Safety, Accessibility, Construction, and State of Good Repair**

The Civic Federation strongly supports Vision Zero and asked that the MTP pair long-range safety policy with practical, time-bound tools. The final plan should preserve clear public processes for near-miss and hazard reporting, marked crosswalk and RRFB/PHB requests, quick-build safety measures, speed management, automated enforcement where legally authorized, and transparent before-and-after reporting. Safety should be balanced across pedestrians, bicyclists and micromobility users, transit riders, motorists, and interactions among modes.

Safety implementation should also specifically address park and trail crossings of high-speed arterials, including consideration of pedestrian hybrid beacons or signals, speed management, warning treatments, and refuge islands where appropriate.

The final MTP should also preserve the Civic Federation's request that Arlington determine what authority it has, or would need from the Commonwealth, to address excessive exhaust and engine noise that creates safety and quality-of-life impacts.

Accessibility likewise requires a program for correcting existing conditions, not only standards for new construction. The resolution called for a five-year ADA-first sidewalk remediation program focused especially on utility-pole obstructions, minimum clear widths, annual progress mapping, and stronger rules against unnecessary sidewalk obstructions. The final MTP should establish how such deficiencies are inventoried, prioritized, funded, and corrected, including when repaving, utility work, redevelopment, or other capital activity creates an opportunity to make an upgrade.

Construction is another recurring operational gap. Maintenance of Traffic (MOT) plans should preserve continuous ADA-accessible pedestrian routes, practical bicycle and micromobility detours, bus-stop continuity or well-managed temporary relocations, and school and emergency access. The MTP should identify a clear complaint and escalation process and meaningful consequences for repeated failure to follow approved MOT plans. Where development or major transportation projects affect school routes, APS coordination should be documented.

## **6. Modal Priority Networks, Street Typology, Curb Management, and Tradeoffs**

We support an integrated multimodal framework and recognize the need to prioritize limited right-of-way. The Modal Priority Networks, Street Typology, and Curb Lane Hierarchy can be useful decision tools if they remain operationally grounded, transparent about tradeoffs, and connected to implementation. Modal priority should guide investment without eliminating analysis of effects on other users, adjacent neighborhoods, emergency response, freight and deliveries, transit reliability, accessibility, and intersection operations.

Micromobility should be treated as an operating system that requires active management. The MTP should retain practical tools such as designated corrals, geofenced parking or slow zones where appropriate, operator accountability, safety education, and measures to reduce sidewalk and curb obstructions, particularly where they affect pedestrians, transit users, and people with disabilities.

Transportation and modal priorities should also be implemented in coordination with other adopted Comprehensive Plan goals, including tree canopy, environmental objectives, public-space needs, and neighborhood character. When major goals conflict, the County should identify and explain the tradeoffs.

Before significant roadway or curb reallocations are implemented, the County should disclose expected tradeoffs and define how it will measure results. Scenario assumptions about future mode shifts can be valuable for testing policy choices, but they should not substitute for observed conditions and realistic forecasts when the County makes irreversible development, parking, or capacity decisions. Where adverse effects emerge, the County should have a defined process for corrective action.

The final MTP should also explain how existing streets that do not meet new Street Typology expectations will be treated. New standards should not operate primarily as requirements triggered by redevelopment while known deficiencies persist indefinitely. The County should identify how existing gaps will be inventoried and prioritized, what projects or events trigger upgrades, and how constrained rights-of-way will be handled transparently when full standards cannot be achieved.

Finally, transportation facilities should be operationally complete when they open. Required signs, pavement and curb markings, regulatory controls, fire-lane identification, accessibility elements, and other features should be installed and verified so the public can understand and safely use the facility from the outset. The same practical principle applies to the Curb Lane Hierarchy: curb management can allocate scarce public space, but it cannot create physical capacity. Predictable private development demands should not be shifted permanently to the public right-of-way when they can reasonably be addressed through site design. Missing or unclear operational controls can also allow improper or unintended patterns of use to become established, making those behaviors significantly harder to correct after users have become accustomed to them.

## **Community Engagement and the Phase 4 Record**

The MTP itself calls for balanced, objective engagement that includes constraints, tradeoffs, maintenance needs, and relevant data. The Phase 4 questionnaire asks about overall impressions, policies, Modal Priority Networks, Street Typology, and the Curb Lane Hierarchy, but it does not directly ask the community to evaluate several consequential subjects contained in the plan, including parking policy and possible elimination of parking minimums, adequacy of parking ratios, TDM and site-plan enforcement, neighborhood spillover, land-development guidance, operational readiness, VDOT coordination, implementation schedules, CIP linkage, scenario assumptions, or accountability when mitigation fails.

Comments on these subjects should be treated as part of the substantive Phase 4 record regardless of whether the questionnaire specifically solicits them. The final engagement summary should identify significant comments received on these issues and explain how they were considered in the final MTP.

It does not go unnoticed that the feedback on this important project is due in late August, when it is reasonable to expect that people will be on vacation (including the boards, commissions, civic organizations, and County staff). The County Board and many commissions do not even meet in August. Detailed documents like this take a lot of time to review and require careful community consultation and input. For the future we would recommend that comment periods on important engagements like this remain open until September. Closing comments in the dog days of August may limit the community input that is so vital to the success of this long-term plan.

## **Conclusion**

The Civic Federation supports the goal of a safe, equitable, accessible, reliable, sustainable, and accountable transportation system. The final MTP will be substantially stronger if it pairs that vision with clear implementation responsibilities, realistic assumptions, enforceable development and TDM requirements, transparent intergovernmental coordination, measurable safety and accessibility programs, and timely corrective action. We respectfully ask the County to

incorporate these recommendations before adoption and to provide a public response describing how these significant issues were addressed in the final plan.

Sincerely,

*NJ Giacobbe, Jr.*

Nicholas J. Giacobbe, Jr.  
President

cc:

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