

Clarendon Sector Plan Update

Community Comments & Staff Responses from December 14, 2020 Online Engagement

Note: The following table provides a summary of comments and preliminary staff responses to feedback that was received following the December 14, 2020 Online Engagement. The complete list of comments is provided on the [website](#) for reference. Both documents may continue to be updated over time.

#	Respondent Connection to Project	Comment/ Question	Staff Response
1	Transportation Commission member	This seems like a missed opportunity to update the Sector Plan street cross-sections to match the updated guidance in the MTP Bike Element (which envisions enhanced bike facilities on Wilson Blvd, Clarendon Blvd, 10th St, Highland St, & Washington Blvd all within the bounds of the sector plan.	The Master Transportation Plan (MTP) - Bike Element recommendation for Fairfax Drive (between Clarendon Circle and Kirkwood), the only location defined within the scope of this plan update, has been incorporated in this Clarendon Sector Plan Update. Within the defined study area for this project, Wilson Blvd, Clarendon Blvd, 10th St N, Highland St, and Washington Blvd are not a part of the Primary Bike Corridor, as defined in the MTP – Bike Element. However, there could be a reference to the MTP - Bike Element in this study update that addresses the entire Clarendon Sector Plan.
2	Park & Recreation Commission member	Concern over the permanent loss of a relatively large park open space that has been part of the county's official plan for almost 15 years. The most recent County policy on this area is stated in the PSMP. PSMP, page 149, identifies the 10th Street Park space as the very first one listed as an opportunity for land acquisition and park development. If it is to be lost, we should expect sufficiently large community benefits to be provided that would allow for open space elsewhere.	Acknowledged. Thank you. It is acknowledged that the PSMP is consistent with and reflects the open space recommendations contained in the sector plan. The PSMP highlights the Verizon site as a potential site for land acquisition as phase two of the 10th St. Park envisioned in the Sector Plan. Given the discussions on the County's 10th St. site and Fire Station 4, staff is evaluating the potential for a linear park space on Fairfax Drive. Open space will be discussed at upcoming LRPC meetings. Staff will continue to explore ways to achieve open space within the study area,

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			including how spaces are phased, designed and funded.
3	Park & Recreation Commission member	Why can't the revised sector plan require that the proposed projects provide other open space opportunities? In the least, new language should be added to the Sector Plan that calls for private sector funds through the site plan process to fund (completely) the Fairfax Drive open space improvements. Perhaps one alternative would be a contribution to county land/park acquisition funding.	The site plan applications and proposals provided to staff currently do not include any on-site open spaces. In the October engagement, staff identified the private sites as potential locations for at-grade public plazas or elevated, rooftop spaces. Staff is open to exploring this further with the applicants and LRPC. Staff will consider adding language to the Sector Plan to secure funding for open space implementation through private development.
4	Park & Recreation Commission member	On the configuration of the St. Charles building, the preference of the county has been to avoid "superblock" buildings and to encourage ease of pedestrian circulation in our expanding urban sectors. A split building configuration between Washington Blvd. and the new street plaza on Fairfax Drive is what was called for in the sector plan. A major theme and result from the Washington Blvd./Kirkwood Rd. Special GLUP project was the provision of pedestrian (and bicycle/vehicle) connectivity to break up that superblock. This superblock is a block away from that one.	Acknowledged. Thank you.
5	Park & Recreation Commission member	At the last meeting there were also statements made from the St. Charles applicant about the need for automobile access in the possible plaza area near the 10th St./Fairfax intersection. Such a layout would detract from the open space benefits of the plaza which is already going to be challenged by the location of the Metro line, double bicycle paths, vehicle access for the Wilson Blvd.-fronting businesses, and existing utilities.	Staff agrees that parking or drop-off for the church on County right-of-way is problematic and could create conflicts with pedestrians, cyclists and park users.
6	Park & Recreation Commission member	There are additional tertiary streets being proposed for the subject area. Can these be designed such as with shared use characteristics to provide public space benefits?	The proposed cross sections and dimensions of the new segments of 10th Rd. are consistent with the cross sections in the Sector Plan. The overall aesthetic could take on more of a shared street through creative paving design, plantings, etc. Staff will evaluate further in future engagements.
7	LRPC member	St. Charles Church's proposed development appears to create a canyon effect along Fairfax Drive. I don't have a problem with the proposed	Acknowledged. Thank you.

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		heights, but the lack of pedestrian or bike access through the property, coupled with stepback changes undercuts any streetscape life.	
8	Resident- Ashton Heights	The Clarendon Sector Plan was built based on a multi-month community process that included all constituencies in Arlington County, including three representatives from Ashton Heights.	Staff has laid out a public engagement process for this effort that is being informed by community engagement through the Planning Commission's Long Range Planning Committee (LRPC), which is augmented with participation from other commissions and neighboring civic associations that can be found here . Each of the surrounding civic associations are represented.
9	Resident- Ashton Heights	The proposed changes are not consistent with the goals of the community-wide Clarendon Sector Plan working group and what they set out to achieve for the area. The Clarendon Sector Plan working group tried to carefully weigh the inevitable re-development of the area with the desire to create a vital, activated, accessible urban village. The proposed changes create an urban canyon, not an urban village, which is exactly what the Sector Plan was designed to avoid.	The study will not revisit the sector plan's vision statement, overarching goals, or framework elements, which lay a foundation for achieving a long range vision for Clarendon. Rather, the study will consider whether the plan's specific recommendations for individual sites should be refined in a manner that is consistent with the broader goals and policies, and could offer an alternative, but comparable solution.
10	Resident- Ashton Heights	The increases in height and density are particularly egregious. In the area bordering 10 th Street, the proposal is to increase the lowest heights from 55' to 85' and the highest heights from 110' to 128'. Remember, these heights don't include air conditioning rooms on the top floors or amenities like resident recreation areas, so the actual heights are even higher.	The proposed building heights will be discussed by the LRPC in upcoming meetings.
11	Resident- Ashton Heights	Step-backs and Set-backs (this is what reduces the impact of very large buildings, so that you don't feel like you are in a gray, unlit canyon) are greatly reduced/eliminated, contributing to an urban canyon not urban village. These important building design factors are really only decorative at this point and will not achieve the function that was intended.	Step-backs can be modified by the County Board through the special exception site plan review process. The intent of maintaining a pedestrian scale and sculpting buildings to create visual interest, maintain light and air will be a key part of both the LRPC and SPRC review of individual sites.
12	Resident- Ashton Heights	The proposal eliminates a vital pedestrian, residential and commercial link that ties the area together and creates a vital sense of place. The proposal	The mid-block streets are intended to provide locations for access and service activities and

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		<p>is to move a new 10th Road North closer to Washington Blvd. Why is this a problem? Because it eliminates the original purpose of the road – to be a vital pedestrian link between Wilson Blvd (and a new triangle public space there!) and N Hudson Street, connecting a new triangle public space on Wilson, the new development buildings and major park proposed at the Verizon site. The roadway as proposed is an after-thought – really more like an alleyway. "</p>	<p>avoid those from occurring on main street frontages, and to provide additional circulation through larger blocks. Shifting the alignment of 10th Road North farther north may still accomplish these goals. The proposed location could also provide a strong visual connection to the West End Plaza and potential Fairfax Drive linear park. Further discussion about how these objectives could be achieved while providing safe circulation will be discussed further by both the LRPC and SPRC, and will offer an opportunity to assess how the road placement impacts other urban design objectives.</p>
13	Resident- Ashton Heights	<p>I oppose granting additional height and density exceptions in building height along 10th Street and along the other streets involved in this development plan. I oppose granting smaller set-backs and smaller sidewalk widths. During this time of the COVID-19 pandemic I have spent a lot of time walking because that's about all that is possible to do. Current sidewalk standards in many places are too narrow for two adults to walk comfortably together. We should be seeking walkable sidewalks above all else.</p>	<p>Acknowledged. Thank you. Building heights and step-backs will be discussed in upcoming LRPC meetings.</p>
14	Resident- Ashton Heights	<p>Is there any consideration of how blocks on the south side of 10th street can be developed in coordination with the blocks north of 10th street in the study area? I thought that during the Sector Plan update, we had discussed potential arrangements for shared parking and/or transfer of height/density. This seemed important given the narrowness of the lots on the South side of 10th</p>	<p>The Sector Plan would allow residential, commercial, hotel or mixed-use buildings along the south edge of 10th St. N. at a maximum height of 55-feet. Parking would be discussed in the site plan review process for any future buildings. Note: The south edge of 10th St. N. is outside of the study area for this update process.</p>
15	Resident- Ashton Heights	<p>I think that a hotel in Clarendon is a good thing and that location proposed is a good location for one. Given the prominent location and high visibility of that location I think particular scrutiny of the quality of architecture, materials and design is warranted. I say this not because I think a committee can do a better job than a good designer but because so many</p>	<p>Acknowledged. Thank you.</p>

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		hotels are built these days with the shoddiest of banal architecture – probably due to the economics of hotels.	
16	Resident- Ashton Heights	We must ensure that ALL ground floor frontages in this area (except on service alleys) include many, regularly spaced entrances and permeability to create a more interesting and safe street for pedestrians. Note these do not have to be retail but could also include residential individual entrances and service commercial business.	Acknowledged. Thank you. The LRPC and SPRC will refer to the Sector Plan Urban Design Guidelines when evaluating designs for ground floor frontages.
17	Resident- Ashton Heights	The proposed changes ignore a crucial element of the Sector Plan – a new park on the Verizon site. How will that vision be achieved, in the context of the proposed changes?	Acknowledged. Thank you. Staff provided a brief update in February of the County’s 10 th St. site, including Fire Station 4 and potential loss of the 10 th St. park as envisioned in the Sector Plan. Staff understands the importance of open space within the study area and is evaluating options for a linear park space on Fairfax Drive serving as an extension of the West End Plaza. Further analysis and concepts were provided in February and will be discussed in upcoming LRPC meetings.
18	Resident- Ashton Heights	<p>We are very concerned about:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • significantly reduced step backs on the Joyce Motors site facing 10th Street, • the elimination of step backs on the west side of North Irving Street, north of 10th Street, and • the elimination of step backs on the Irving Street side of the Silver Diner site, creating together a two block-long, nearly-solid facade from 10th Street to Washington Boulevard, and • the building on the Silver Diner site without the original step backs being next to an equally high building without step backs on the Wells Fargo site <p>These changes will reduce light and visual interest and turn Irving Street north of 10th Street into a canyon-like, dark street, especially if it sets a precedent for future development of the Verizon site.</p>	Acknowledged. Thank you. Step-backs for all of the sites will be discussed in upcoming LRPC meetings.

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19	Resident- Ashton Heights	I would also have liked to have seen the plans show planned bike lanes and taxi/uber stations to have some sense of how overall traffic might be impacted. And further clarity on parking might be useful.	Proposed bike lanes, curbside pick-up/drop-off zones and parking will be reviewed in the SPRC process for each site within the study area. Staff will refer to the Master Transportation Plan's Bicycle Element and the Sector Plan during evaluation of any proposals.
20	Resident- Ashton Heights	We do not need any more tall buildings in our neighborhoods for additional housing and commercial areas along this corridor. We need more small boutique businesses, green spaces and more expanses of open sky for a host of environmental, social and economic reasons. Along with many of my neighbors and other home owners in Ashton Heights, I do not want neighborhoods along the R-B corridor to resemble the commercial or urban highrise housing centers of Rosslyn, Ballston, Crystal City, Pentagon City, Bethesda, Chevy Chase or other similar areas that are void of character, natural light, sky and green spaces. Ballston has rapidly become an uninviting grid of cold dark wind tunnels lined with chain restaurants and stores. Individuals and businesses who seek this type of environment can find it elsewhere.	Acknowledged. Thank you. The blocks within the study area have long been planned for medium density mixed use redevelopment as articulated in the 1084, 1990, and 2006 Clarendon Sector Plans.
21	Emergency Preparedness Advisory Committee (EPAC)	<p>As you consider updates to the Sector Plan, we respectfully request that you consider the following EPAC priorities:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Future expansion requirements of a growing County- The Orange Line Corridor has expanded beyond what was anticipated in the 2006 Clarendon Sector Plan Update. With limited land in the area, the County should plan for long-term emergency needs and expansion options such as additional fire station bays and/or land for Police and Fire/EMS support beyond current requirements. 2. Basic Life Support Ambulance (BLS)- The bars and restaurants in Clarendon require Basic Life Support (BLS) services, personnel (fire fighter/fire volunteer) and equipment. Currently the calls are serviced with Advanced Life Support (ALS) equipment and paramedics, reducing availability for medical emergencies in the community. The County should 	Acknowledged. Thank you. Staff will consider the EPAC identified priorities during our evaluation of any future upgrades. We look forward to your continued participation in the Sector Plan update process.

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		<p>ensure that Station design permits housing of a BLS unit and ability to accommodate housing for a crew of at least two (2) individuals for BLS call volume on weekend and holidays as well as special/surge events. Use of Certified EMT Fire Department personnel and volunteers</p> <p>would free the Advanced Life Support (ALS) Ambulance and Paramedics to handle services requiring advanced equipment and training.</p> <p>3. Primary/secondary Emergency Command Center (ECC)- The construction of a new station facility could incorporate a primary/secondary ECC to replace/backup the ECC at Courthouse. This is consistent with County plans to decentralization current Courthouse area functions. The ECC could be incorporated into Fire Department office space within the Station.</p> <p>4. Fire Department Rescue Training Space- The existing Clarendon Fire Department space provides space for fire and rescue training and exercises. The space could be relocated within North Arlington. However, it is beneficial to locate the area near the Rescue equipment and personnel.</p>	