

Areas 1 and 5 Community Meeting

(5/27/21, 7 PM – 9:30 PM)

Area 5 West Community discussion comments by topic:

Land Use

John C. – President of Lyon Village CA, which is predominantly single-family constantly under pressure for development from all sides. Lyon Village was under the impression that only the Lee Highway frontage was being analyzed and were surprised to see that the single family homes up to 18th street are now being considered. There are many nice and recently renovated/new single family homes being impacted with nice green space and plenty of trees. None are interested in redevelopment/increasing density. LV has been designated as a historic community. We recommend stopping at edge of RA8-18 and not R-6 parcels. Please focus on shallow properties on Lee Highway and don't include single-family neighborhoods.

County Response: Staff will consider.

Antoinette Q. – President of N. Highlands CA. would like to echo sensitivity to s.f. neighborhoods. I feel that single family along Vance and Wayne Street (near Mom's Organic Market) have not been respected and considered as significant communities. There is a sharp disconnect between what is planned and what is on the ground. Seeing big buildings on top of strips of single family homes. Focus should not be where established single family home communities are and instead it should be where density is and infill makes sense. Strong value in N Highlands of the mix and housing (duplexes and apartment buildings) we have here. Homogenous density is not a benefit to the neighborhood. Our little neighborhoods are also under pressure for redevelopment. Not broken so don't fix it. If this is put into plans, single family homeowners will have little say and sway compared to developers who can point to the plans.

County Response: Staff will consider. County is thinking about 2050, transit orientation and the vision in the GLUP today, which already looks to achieve a higher intensity in that area. Diversity of housing types is due to underlying zoning. County is not trying to will it to change, only providing ideas for consistency with the GLUP. In that particular area, we are showing low height to respect the residential edges and to encourage it to stay. For it to change, a developer would have to buy out the homes and rezone them. All the neighbors would have to

decide to make a change, for it to change at all. County will not require it to change.

Transportation and Connectivity

John C– We are concerned with narrowing Lee Highway. When Lee Highway backs up traffic comes through Lyon Village. This a transit rich community. Many people walk thru LV from the north to get to metro and are excited to see that. We want to keep buses moving as much as traffic on Lee Hwy. particularly during rush hour.

County Response: Staff will consider.

Eric J. - Caution decreasing number of lanes in this area is bad, if doubling or tripling population. If you look at I-66 and Lee Hwy. near Italian Store, there is a nice flow. In East Falls Church traffic backs up near cube smart because there are less lanes.

County Response: Next step in process is to figure out density implications, which will be tested through the transportation models. Sections shown are not necessarily for the entire corridor, we understand that intersections near I-66 will be unique and that will be analyzed in the next step.

Martha – It sounds like they want to tear our house down and replace it. Is VDOT on board with this? Lee Highway is a way to get out in case of emergency. We taxpayers have paid to redo Lee Highway in the 70s and seems like a waste of money to redo it again.

County Response: VDOT is a partner in the process and we are working together with them. They have not endorsed the plan yet. We have heard that people want to make crossing Lee Hwy. easier and they want to move along Lee Hwy. better with multiple modes, not just in cars. We also know traffic volumes have gone down on Lee Hwy., like they have in other parts of the County. The vision for Lee Hwy. is not to keep it as a highway but more of a main street and diversifying different types of transportation. Lee Hwy. is not going to function as an evacuation route the way people thought when it was planned, because Lee Hwy. doesn't go anywhere that I-66 doesn't. It takes you to the highway that everyone else is already on.

Public Space and Stormwater

John C. - Happy with stormwater proposals at Lee Hwy. and Spout Run. Flooding is a significant problem there. The development at Kirkwood by Washington Blvd. will be generating more water down the hill.

Building Heights

Jane G. – I am pro height. How does proposed building height compare to what is there currently?

County Response: Variety of heights exist that are mixed together. There are 1 story buildings adjacent to 4 and 8 story buildings. There are buildings up to 13 stories, depending on where you measure from. Generally proposing increase by a few stories to incentivize redevelopment in a more coherent way. Farther north there are some buildings that are currently 6-7 stories that are proposed to go up to 10 stories. Don't imagine that every building in the purple colored area will be 10 stories and are trying to illustrate where those steps happen in the general band on the map. 15 stories is a new height precedent for this area and proposed location is the least impactful to single family neighborhoods and help make the public realm network possible.

Steven F. - Longtime resident. Area near Koons is a high point, which is good for watching fireworks – a tradition for residents in that area. Will that line of sight be preserved if there are 15 story buildings in the LV shopping area?

County Response: Yes, that view would remain.

Community Improvements and Benefits

Ben A. - Liaison from Housing Commission. We should be sensitive to people who don't have the means to live in Arlington. They are forced to live further out because it's less expensive and are required to commute to jobs in DC and Arlington. A single family plot of land could be shared with more people, which would make their lives much better. These are people who are living on minimum wage and working 3 separate jobs and not allowing the single family areas to change is selfish.

Rose L. – I live in East Falls Church, but also impacted by what happens here, and want to second Antoinette's comments. Young families like mine chose to live in a neighborhood like this because of its beauty and the facilities that are available. I don't think it's selfish to want to preserve the beauty of Arlington. Caution with making changes for benefits we don't need or could trigger other issues. Developers in my area are being creative and are quickly picking up single family homes to build multi family. We are seeing adverse impacts to schools, parks and traffic, which will take away from beauty and cause people to leave.

Antoinette Q. – Caution about making sweeping generalizations about neighborhoods. Increasing density does not necessarily equate to more affordability, need to understand who lives here. Single family homes here are on small lots and many are old bungalows

with families that have been here a long time. There are a number of elderly who cannot afford to leave. If their property is redeveloped, they would be one of those families that would have to move far out of the area, out of the walk zone. Need to be respectful of the people who are living here and understand their circumstances before making decisions of what is best for them and making statements like that.

Jane G. – This is a 30 year vision and not just about what people who live there now want. It's about what people who could live here want and allow them to live here in the future, in a vibrant place which would support multiple generations. This would not force anyone out. They would have to make the choice to sell and redevelop and take their giant windfall and go live in just about any other place.

Area 5 East community discussion comments by topic:

Land Use

Michelle W. – North of Lee Hwy. there are already areas that we would consider missing middle housing. The single family homes that are north of LH are in a GLUP district that is not meant for single family homes and it has been like that since the 60s right? The GLUP designation does not necessarily drive a change, if the owners don't want to change, right?

County Response: There are a number of different zoning districts under two general land use categories in the GLUP, which are low-medium and medium density residential. The zoning is what dictates what gets built.

Transportation and Connectivity

No comments or discussion on topic in this area.

Public Space and Stormwater

No comments or discussion on topic in this area.

Building Heights

Michelle W. - In both areas there are quite a few MARKs and Committed Affordable units that are within the County's Housing Conservation Districts. Can you expand on preservation of affordability or redevelopment w/additional affordability and if additional height will be available if development is committed affordable?

County Response: County is not precluding any options. One idea is to preserve MARKS. Those are difficult to maintain. Would like to add flexibility for those property owners to allow redevelopment on a portion of the property which could help maintain some of the market rate affordable units on another portion of their property. Another idea is to provide height incentives for those sites to redevelop and provide an even greater number of affordable units. The height incentive would require affordability. Still too early to know if that is a tool that will be used but are thinking about it. Still coordinating with the MRS study.

Jerry A. - Do proposed heights include builder incentives or are the incentives on top of the maximum heights that are shown in the plan?

County Response: The proposed maximum heights include the incentives. There would be no additional incentive to get more height than what is proposed on the maps.

Community Improvements and Benefits

Rachel W. – Issues that are important around the redevelopment of Lee Highway are affordable housing, missing middle housing and preserving tree canopy. What are the incentives for developers or single family homeowners to sell their property to bring more missing middle and affordable housing? Love the idea of having tree lined medians and trees along the sidewalks on Lee highway and other streets. What is the plan for maintaining existing/old tree canopy and planting new trees as single family homes are redeveloped?

County Response: Core areas have a much lower tree canopy than the County average and there is a lot that can be done with just greening the public rights-of-way. New development would be required to add trees on their sites which would significantly improve the corridor. Good point about what happens when you incrementally change single family neighborhoods to two-family, or similar, and the impact on trees. One of the reasons for thinking about missing middle types, on the single family edges, is because of what is already happening on the single family lots with the McMansions. The structures are already getting larger and we are losing the trees and only getting one family in return, not two.

We are thinking of providing owners the choice to build a duplex and renting or selling half of it and living on the other half. The incentive for homeowners to build a missing middle type, or an accessory dwelling, is rent they could earn. For developers, the incentive is height and/or density increase that allows for additional revenue that could be generated to help pay for amenities that people are requesting or subsidize the affordability further.

Area 1 Community Discussion comments by topic:

Land Use

Sandy – Is anybody paying attention to this? The last thing that got built around EFC Metro was an enclave of 5 McMansions, which are across from the station on Sycamore. How does that fit into the EFC plan, which has been in place since 2011? Who built those? Was hoping for apartments, townhouses or condos for essential workers right across the street from metro.

County Response: That site is not within the Neighborhood Center District, which is the area that is part of the East Falls Church plan. That site has not been envisioned for anymore density or height, than what was recently built there. It's a good point, there certainly are opportunities for more density immediately around the station itself.

Alice H. – Live within walking distance of metro stop. Was part of working group for EFC Plan and was disappointed in the low heights that were included in final plan. Need more development around metro to maximize benefits (housing, small businesses). Understand EFC is unique in that it is in a residential area, however, it is a wasted opportunity right now. Metro stations were envisioned to have more density within ¼ and ½ mile of the stations. It's been 10 years and maybe people can see better now where Arlington is going and how to better utilize these centers. Maybe missing middle study can look at the edges of the EFC Plan to accommodate more than one household per lot. More density would bring more opportunity for equity and diversity in this metro area. During the pandemic, metro identified a list of stations that would be either temporarily or permanently closed and EFC was on the list. If site doesn't have usage, they will close it. We need to find out from WMATA if that is part of the issue and, if it is, we need to look more seriously at development immediately around there to increase the usage.

John W. - Echo Sandy's comment about enclave of McMansions. 15 years ago there was a strong political resistance against changing single family areas - the Eisenburg rule, which said neighbors couldn't get together to sell their lots. There was a lot of resistance

to the types of changes PLH is talking about. At least we are making progress and talking about it now. The mixed use development on Westmoreland Street was envisioned in 1984, but it didn't happen until 2004. It happened because there was a change in generation. Businesses changed hands from father to children and children then retired. Park and ride lot has 400 spaces. WMATA did a survey years ago, when the EFC taskforce was formed, which showed that 85% of cars came from more than 15 miles away. At that time, thinking was that area didn't serve TOD and there was no desire to get people off the highway and into mass transit. There was no reluctance either to cut down the number of parking spaces. Don't know what their thinking is on that today. Need to keep in mind who is parking there, where they are coming from and what their alternatives would be.

Michelle W. – Echo disappointment that the existing EFC plan is what we are basing recommendations on. Surprised to see nothing proposed between Lexington and EFC, not even area close to EFC. Would like to know why. Would like to see at least 4 story multifamily (shown in yellow in scenarios) development near the metro.

County Response: The planning study is focused on the core areas, which are mostly commercial and multi family properties, as well as, the residential edges abutting the commercial and multi family lots. The properties between Lexington and EFC are single family and, therefore, were not included in the core study area. It was anticipated in the beginning that the bulk of the change was going to happen in the core or residential edges.

It is not part of the scope to study EFC and Cherrydale in more detail, or in the same way as the other areas, because there is already an adopted plan for those. It is also not in the scope to revisit the existing plans. We will, however, include recommendations in the Lee Highway plan for things that should be revisited as part of a separate process in the future. As we said, WMATA will be conducting a feasibility analysis of the site. The Lee Hwy. study will likely be completed before that, which means this study won't be able to address that area comprehensively without seeing how that analysis unfolds. The County is not ignoring comments and understand you want to see more changes done in this area. This is new feedback and we will take that into consideration as we prepare the recommendations for things that need to be revisited in the EFC Plan. We want to make sure there is sufficient community engagement for that process.

Transportation and Connectivity

Bill W. – I think I heard we are expecting 70,000 more people in Arlington by 2050. Is that true? There will be an increase in traffic with Amazon, etc. of people commuting to Arlington from other cities. Concern over decrease in lanes on Lee Highway and

Washington Blvd. Where will people park on 22nd and 26th street if you take the parking away to put in bike lanes?

County Response: That is correct, parking would need to change. There is approximately 30' from curb to curb, which is not sufficient to accommodate bike lanes and parking, on both sides, and travel lanes in two directions. One option is to have a bike lane on one side and parking on the other. This would leave a relatively narrow space for cars to pass each other, but maybe that is ok. The Master Transportation Plan has identified these as potential bike routes and we will continue to work through this with DES.

If you make it easy for people to drive to Arlington, they will, but if you don't they will figure out other ways to get there or will chose to live in Arlington rather than other areas outside. The idea of building capacity within Arlington, so people that work in National Landing can live in Arlington, a few stops away (or a bike ride away), is good, especially in EFC. They could bike along the Custis Trail or 4MR. We don't want to plan Lee Highway for people who are commuting to Arlington. There is much more Lee Highway can do for the communities along it, than to encourage long distance commuting.

Jerry A. - Washington Blvd. near Sycamore in EFC is a high traffic zone, high volume, jammed with cars in the morning and evenings. This is a reason for limiting development near metro. Bus priority lanes in this area are not sensible because ridership is low here. It increases as you go east to Rosslyn. Why would people want to get on a bus at EFC on Lee Hwy. to get to Rosslyn when they can get on the metro? 22nd street was narrowed a few years ago from 36 to 30 feet, which would have been wide enough for bike lanes before. Very frustrating. 2011 plan had many problems. They showed a big building along I-66 with a plaza on Washington that would not have much sun. Plan for keeping bus loop there makes more sense.

County Response: Can understand that having a metro station (especially a station that many people drive to for park-n-ride), next to a highway interchange has led to that problem. We expect that people living on the station would choose to move there because they won't have to drive during peak times, which means it wouldn't necessarily be adding more traffic. We want to have bus priority during peak times, so buses would be much more frequent and would be the mode of choice, which would increase usage of the buses and decrease traffic. Bus demand is growing at this station and it's certainly growing in the City of East Falls Church. We anticipate that it will grow along Lee Highway by 2050.

Public Space and Stormwater

No comments or discussion on topic in this area.

Building Heights

Franz G. - Struck with abiding feeling that we're fighting against height. There were two sides on the task force, but there was never a vote on height. We never saw a trade off on what heights could bring in the way of amenities. Washington Blvd. is on a major hill. The previous study depicted this site as if it were flat. This study does not represent the topographical condition and the impact the height differential could have on organizing the masses and building heights. What may be 9 stories on top of the hill is like 13 stories where the bus loop is. Hope this study recognizes that there is a frail consensus about building height. Please thoroughly explore increase in building height that could attract the kind of activities and amenities that we desperately need and would like in EFC.

Community Improvements and Benefits

No comments or discussion on topic in this area.