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**Long Range Planning Committee (LRPC) of the Planning Commission**  
**Meeting Summary**  
**Tuesday, July 25, 2023**  
**7:00 p.m.**

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*This meeting was a hybrid virtual/in-person public meeting held through electronic communication means.*

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**Planning Commissioners in attendance:**

Devanshi Patel (LRPC Chair) (in-person)  
James Lantelme (in-person)  
Nia Bagley (in-person)  
Erik Berkey (in-person)  
Karen Guevara (in-person)  
Elizabeth Gearin (virtual)  
Tenley Peterson (virtual)  
Peter Robertson (in-person)

**Staff in attendance:**

Natasha Alfonso-Ahmed (CPHD – Planning) (in-person) - presenter  
Kellie Brown (CPHD – Planning) (in-person)  
Ryan Delaney (DPR – Park Development) (in-person)  
Richard Dooley (DES – Environmental Management) (virtual)  
Emily Garrett (CPHD – Planning) (in-person)  
Walter Gonzalez (DPR) (virtual)  
Rachel LaPiana (CPHD – Communications) (virtual)  
Jennifer Smith (CPHD – Planning) (in-person)  
Richard Tucker (CPHD – Housing) (virtual)

**LRPC members and others in attendance:**

Caroline Haynes, Forestry and Natural Resources Commission (virtual)  
David Howell, Park and Recreation Commission (virtual)  
Alice Hogan (virtual)  
A. Kaye (virtual)  
Jeffrey Williams (virtual)  
Tom Wolfe ((virtual)  
Michele Horwitz Cornwell (virtual)  
Sara Mariska (virtual)  
Ralf Voellmer (virtual)  
Robert Vaughan (virtual)  
Ben Keeney (virtual)  
Cynthia Hilton (virtual)  
Michael Zacharia (virtual)  
Jacqueline Snelling (virtual)  
Dick (virtual)  
Michelle Winters (virtual)  
Jason Harrier (virtual)  
Chris Jones (virtual)

Jon Obenberger (virtual)  
Eric M (virtual)  
Tom Kornis (virtual)  
Joan McIntyre (in-person)  
Tim Hansen (in-person)  
Ginger Brown (in-person)  
Ashley Smith (in-person)  
Aaron Roberts (in-person)  
Robert Pillsbury (in-person)  
Julie Pillsbury (in-person)  
Paul Holland (in-person)

### **Plan Langston Boulevard Update LRPC Meeting**

Commissioner Patel opened the meeting at 7:00 p.m.

Commissioner Patel recognized members of the several other Arlington County boards, commissions and civic leaders in attendance, as well as County staff. A staff and consultant presentation by Natasha Alfonso Ahmed (CPHD – Comprehensive Planning) and Ryan Bouma (AECOM) on the Draft Langston Boulevard Area Plan (includes updated maps, policies and implementation recommendations, and design principles and guidelines) was followed by discussion that addressed the following key issues:

#### **Economic Vitality**

- Consideration of flexibility with ground floor retail areas given the changing reality of retail.
- Emphasis on the currently healthy 0% vacancy rate along the corridor and concerns about disrupting that with potentially higher lease rates. Noted that change will happen over time and existing spaces will not go away all at once.
- Noted that the plan is a guide with policies, not regulatory, and encourages ground floor priority areas so that we end up with mixed-use, but it is not required.
- Consideration of parking availability and its effects on business success. Noted that changes to parking will be an evolution and the plan encourages shared spaces and access.
- Consideration of how involved the government should get, and whether there is a zoning mechanism to consider, in incentivizing small, local, racially diverse, and/or legacy businesses to stay. Noted that there is some turnover of legacy businesses regardless of redevelopment as people retire.

#### **Housing**

- Emphasis on the importance of racial equity, especially considering the option to make a cash contribution rather than create on- or off-site affordable units. Noted that we cannot guarantee affordable sites will be on Langston Boulevard.
- Noted the process made by staff to reach the affordable housing numbers presented in the Draft Plan.

- Consideration of how to achieve more affordable housing, including increased building heights and additional 100% CAF properties along the corridor. Noted existence of affordable condos and MARKs currently along corridor.
- Noted that there are sites along Langston Boulevard owned by the County that could contribute to affordable and/or senior housing.
- Consideration of general opportunity, not just for Langston Boulevard, to be more innovative in guiding how developers provide affordable housing in Arlington.
- Consideration of adaptive reuse of existing buildings, including preserving what we already have and making renovations for energy efficiency. Noted that infill development on parking lots could complement this.
- Noted that Cherrydale and East Falls Church are not included in Draft Plan and future study of these areas could help achieve the Affordable Housing Master Plan goal for CAFs.

### **Public Facilities and Schools**

- Consideration of consolidation and colocation of facilities and activities.
- Noted community desire for public green space.

### **Historic and Cultural Resources**

- Recognized significance of balancing County goals with preservation recommendations.
- Noted that the corridor would benefit from more public art.
- Consideration of general opportunity, not just on Langston Boulevard, to better understand recommendations in the Historic and Cultural Resources Plan.

### **Building Height and Form**

- Noted that building height maps have evolved throughout the planning process.
- Noted that there are design guidelines in the Draft Plan for the built environment.
- Noted the need for clarifications on setback and stepback recommendations in Draft Plan.
- Consideration of construction materials needed at different building heights.
- Consideration of building efficiency and green building standards, including building footprints, sustainable design, creating space for pervious surface including open space, green roofs, and trees, and mitigating heat island effects.

### **Implementation**

- Consideration of GLUP amendments, MTP amendments, and zoning amendments.

### **Public Comment**

- A participant voiced excitement about the Plan's potential to energize opportunities in the diverse neighborhood of Area 5, acknowledged concerns about adding density, with varying degrees of support from individuals and inquired about the duration of the study (25 or 50 years) and the meaning of the TDR process.
- Common consensus on prioritizing pedestrian, bicycle and traffic safety, given the presence of a high-speed trail.

- A participant expressed criticism of the “green main street” concept, highlighting that the corridor serves as a major truck route and adverse effects on traffic from lane removal, with concerns about congestion not mentioned in draft report.
- Issues with analysis and assumptions made, questioning the 50 percent transit use figure
- Suggestions on maximum building heights, including five stories on the north side and three or four stories on the south side of Langston Boulevard.
- A participant commented on retail plan, proposing against excessive retail along the corridor due to rapidly changing retail trends and the decline of small businesses.
- Advocacy for selective retail planning to ensure vibrant retail survival and mention of the expense of building mixed-use properties and the need for flexibility given the uncertain future.
- Emphasis on the viability of retail and the need to consider various factors, including parking and financial sustainability when raising building heights.
- A participant stated that flexibility in plan is important and acknowledges of the uniqueness of the site along the corridor.
- A participant calls for attention to safety, livability and context-sensitive building design and identified Langston Boulevard/Oak Street as a dangerous intersection in the County, according to Vision Zero, citing three members of community have been severely injured.
- Reflection on the long-term nature of the plan and the need to envision future transportation changes.
- Encouragement to think about the future rather than sticking to low-density solutions.
- A participant expressed challenge to the concept of a “green main street,” suggesting that the AFA site may not fit that vision.
- Proposal for adaptive reuse of the site and concerns about potential future threats to the community’s green spaces.

**Next Steps**

The LPRC expressed their appreciation to staff for their work and participants were encouraged to reach out to staff with any additional follow-up questions. A continuation of this discussion item is tentatively scheduled for the September 5, 2023 LRPC meeting.

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Chair Patel adjourned the meeting at approximately 9:28 p.m.