

09.05.2023

LRPC Hybrid Meeting

Draft Langston Boulevard Area Plan

Updated Public Comments Received Prior to Meeting (09.05.2023)

1. **Comment #1** - Leeway Overlee Civic Association requests Arlington conduct a public evaluation to assess the future of the former Lee Community Center & its Park, to begin no later than early 2024. We request Arlington maintain ownership & stewardship of this property & retain it 100% dedicated to community space. It's a community epicenter, vital public gathering place, has been used for 100 years for children's recreation, today has playground equipment, softball diamond, basketball court & open green space.
2. **Comment #2** - We are writing with comments and concerns regarding the draft Langston Boulevard Area Plan on behalf of Rivendell School, a small private school which has operated in Arlington since 1989, serving about 150 K-8 students, many of whom are Arlington residents.

Our greatest concern is that the Lee Center site, which is across N. Kentucky Street from our school, will be redeveloped in a way which temporarily or permanently reduces the open space available for our students to play. Under a 2014 agreement with Arlington County, Rivendell students walk across N. Kentucky Street every school day to use the sports fields and playground at the Lee Center for recess, in exchange for Rivendell hosting Arlington County youth basketball teams in our gym. Rivendell's own property does not have sufficient outdoor space for our students, and there is no nearby alternative to the Lee Center fields.

We believe that, if it is necessary to tear down the Lee Center, the Draft Plan should also include an option for the whole property to be turned into a public open space that includes a park and outdoor playing fields. The neighborhood, and the County as a whole, need more parks and youth sports fields. We strongly believe that neighborhood groups, as well as at least one County Board member, would be inclined to support the incorporation of this option. It is highly preferable to avoid presuming that the Lee Center will unquestionably be replaced by a brand new structure.

In addition, we would like to highlight that the draft Area 2 Concept Plan contains a preliminary design proposal for a large U-shaped building on the Lee Center site, accompanied by a significant reduction in the available public open space. We firmly believe that the plan should refrain from suggesting specific building outlines for the site, and should not propose a decrease in the public open space. Our stance is that the site must be preserved as public space, without any partial conversion to private use through a partnership or otherwise. Furthermore, we are concerned about the potential negative consequences of redevelopment at the Lee Center, particularly in terms of pedestrian safety, traffic congestion, and parking availability in our neighborhood.

We have one final concern regarding the Lee Center site—the possible construction of an underground stormwater detention facility. This would block access to the playing fields for an extended period of time, likely years. Unfortunately, there are no nearby alternative fields for our students to use during this period. While we may not be experts in stormwater management, we do question the logic behind planning for stormwater detention at the top of a hill.

Regarding transportation: while Rivendell does not have any current plans for further development on its property, we remain concerned about the possibility that Rivendell could be forced to grant an easement for bicycle lanes as a condition for a use permit in the future.

Such an easement would deprive our school of one of the alternative green spaces we could use if we lost access to the Lee Center park and fields. Therefore, we request that easements for transportation improvements only be required for redevelopments subject to site plan approval, not use permit situations.

Finally, we noted that a parcel of land owned by Rivendell, RPC 10-002-010, is currently not planned to be included within the mixed-use district boundary. This parcel, which contains a small outdoor play area for our youngest students, is contiguous with the main parcel where our school building stands, but is sandwiched on two sides by single-family homes (RPC 10-002-006 and RPC 10-002-008). As a result, the two parts of our property would be subject to different rules in a future redevelopment scenario. We request that all three parcels be included in the mixed-use district, but it is our understanding from County staff that the owners of RPC 10-002-006 and RPC 10-002-008 would have to request inclusion in the mixed-use district in order for our parcel to be included. In the event that our neighbors do not timely request inclusion, we hope that the final plan will at least include a note that the unusual situation of these three parcels may require further study, to encourage County staff in future decades to give appropriate consideration to future plans for our site.

3. **Comment #3** - We strongly support that the Plan should include language explaining the need for housing units at 30% AMI and add the need for a range of AMI's that are UP TO 60% AMI (and not just "at" 60% AMI). In addition, the Plan must find a way to achieve the 2,500 CAFs promised in the AHMP.

4. **Comment #4** - RECOMMEND PLB INCLUDES:
 1. URGENCY OF REMEDIATING CLIMATE CHANGE - PUBLIC INVESTMENT IN STORMWATER MANAGEMENT/TRANSIT; PRIVATE INVESTMENT IN BUILDING ENERGY CONSERVATION, CAFS 10%
 2. AFFORDABLE HOUSING - 2500 UNITS = CAFS PLUS CONSERVATION OF MARKS,
 3. OPEN SPACE - PUBLIC INVESTMENT NOT ONLY PRIVATE/PUBLICLY ACCESSIBLE SPACE
 4. COMMUNITY FAC. - 9000+ NEW RES. NEED THREE COMMUNITY CENTERS, GREY HOUSE

BLACK HERITAGE, LIBRARY, ARTS

5. BUILDING HEIGHT-AREAS 2&3, LEX TO WOODSTOCK UP TO 7 ST

5. **Comment #5** - I urge your support for the Plan Langston Blvd to address the goal of the Affordable Housing Master Plan to add 2,500 units of committed affordable housing for households earning an expanded range of incomes from 30% AMI up to and including 60% AMI. This means greater flexibility with lot size, co-location with public buildings, and bonus density and height. Also critical is reviewing/ updating the East Falls Church and Cherrydale Plans for their inclusion in PLB.