



July 22, 2025

Members Site Plan Review Committee
Arlington County Planning Commission
2100 Clarendon Boulevard
Arlington, VA 22201

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Dear Members of the SPRC,

Creating a high-level vision for Langston Boulevard through the adoption of the Langston Boulevard Area Plan (LBAP) took many years. We are excited to finally reach the first Langston Boulevard Site Plan Review Committee meeting, that of 3130 Langston Blvd. (former Walgreen's site). The Langston Boulevard Alliance (LBA) offers these observations as to this proposed project's compliance with the LBAP and two suggested changes.

For more than a year, the applicant has been engaging with the LBA and with the communities surrounding the project. The applicant has made significant changes, such as setting the building back to add a greenway that better addresses stormwater concerns and improves the pedestrian experience. They also have improved the retail space and the facade of the garage. LBA supports and applauds these changes, which are all consistent with the LBAP. We are grateful to be working with a landowner who is trying hard to meet the goals of the plan—such as tree canopy and significant amounts of onsite affordable housing—and to incorporate feedback from the community.

However, this project abuts one of the most problematic and accident-prone intersections along Langston Blvd. While the applicant is willing to consider needed changes to transportation issues, they are handicapped by delayed corridor studies and VDOT approvals. Even after a decade spent planning Langston Boulevard, transportation studies for this dangerous intersection are years away and the outcome is uncertain.

Additionally, LBAP is a high-level plan. While there was extensive community input overall, it was not possible for every property to receive detailed analysis nor benefit from evaluation of different scenarios. Despite the applicant's strenuous and repeated efforts, the site could not be consolidated. Given the timing of the county transportation studies and the uncertainty of VDOT approvals, as well as the lack of site consolidation, we believe some commonsense adjustments should be made and extra consideration be given to pedestrian safety right now.

First, the off ramp from I-66 and its operation as a right-on-red slip lane poses a significant danger to pedestrians. To deal with this, the proposed



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secondary lobby on Langston Blvd. should either be moved further east from the off ramp, or the entrance should be changed to a private entrance for residents. No package deliveries or ride-share drop-offs should occur at this location. If possible, the building address should be changed with USPS to a Kirkwood address and the primary lobby on Kirkwood should be highlighted through clear signage, changes to Google mapping, ride-share sites, etc. The county was quite helpful with address changes for the renaming of Langston Blvd. several years ago, so perhaps the County could also help with this safety issue, given that actual safety and transportation improvements seem to be years away.

Second, LBA has heard concerns from the community about the lack of a true drop-off area for this building's 300-400 new residents. The landowner did add layby spaces near the Kirkwood lobby, however, LBA would like consideration given to a more pedestrian-friendly option. There are different viewpoints in the community about the value of the small parklet next to the primary lobby on Kirkwood. Some believe the parklet would provide respite for pedestrians walking from the Metro corridor and that it also provides a setback from houses on the nearby hill. Others in the community think the parklet is so small (~5,000 sq. feet) and poorly located (in LBAP) so that it offers little real benefit. The space is not large enough for community activities or placemaking opportunities that one might expect in a public space in a primary commercial node.

LBA believes the parklet should be considered for a different hardscape treatment that could improve safety. A parklet that includes a shared-space, cobblestoned area with abundant landscaping and benches would continue to serve as a respite for pedestrians and a setback to houses on the hill, but it could also improve the traffic flow by providing a roundabout for pickups and dropoffs from a 300+ unit building. Think of how the Wharf in D.C. or the lovely residential towers in Woodley Park, D.C. have incorporated such elements to benefit pedestrian and resident safety. While LBAP seeks to minimize curb cuts, we believe leaving a Kirkwood Road curb cut would be safer for both cyclists and pedestrians than the proposed layby. The project would still have fewer curb cuts than exist now.

We look forward to continuing to work with the applicant, community and nearby neighbors, county staff and commission members as this significant project is refined and moves forward.

Sincerely,

James T. Lantelme, President
LBA