



AURORA HIGHLANDS CIVIC ASSOCIATION

November 13, 2025

Dear Chair Karantonis and Members of the Board,

The Aurora Highlands Civic Association reviewed the attached “ARLINGTON 2050: Guiding Our Path” Comments forwarded by the Lyon Park Civic Association below at its November 12, 2025 meeting and voted nearly unanimously in support. The dissent suggested support of an approach that allows for certain density increases only with a high level of consideration and engagement. Obtaining the reasonable approval from those potentially negatively impacted by the development would be an example of a high level of engagement. We also discussed the issue of increasing lot setbacks, and there was general agreement, that for this neighborhood, with its small lots, the existing setbacks work as is, though a vote was not taken on the matter.

AHCA expects the County Board will course-correct in regards to its 2025 approach to upzoning in Aurora Highlands, in particular, as a reminder, the Aurora Highlands Civic Association in its June 2024 meeting nearly unanimously approved support of the in-process Local Historic District for Nelly Custis School and voted nearly unanimously against the over-reach in upzoning on 23rd Street exemplified by the Melwood development. We were shocked in February at the approval of the out-of-scale Melwood upzoning with zero concessions as recommended in our SPRC comments. We request that the County Board approve the Local Historic District for Nelly Custis School as this has been a public asset for over 100 years and is the second oldest extant school in the county. Its scale and use are integral to the neighborhood.

After the assertion that the Comp Plan can be blatantly ignored by the County Board at its February 2025 meeting, we also want to know what assurances there are that any Comp Plan including the supporting documents in the GLUP will be followed in the future.

Response requested. Thank you,

Sincerely

Stacy Meyer

President-elect

Aurora Highlands Civic Association

Attachment A

“ARLINGTON 2050: Guiding Our Path” Comments:

New Comp Planning Needs New Ideas but not ‘Density Everywhere.’ With respect to “Arlington 2050: Guiding Our Path,” the County’s revision of our Comprehensive Plan, Lyon Park Citizens’ Association (LPCA) urges that you:

- provide us ASAP the current Comp Plan introduction that you are intending to replace (not currently available online);
- engage directly with LPCA as soon as possible and before any Board action on Phase One revision of the Comp Plan introduction;
- clarify how the possible adoption of six new precepts WOULD RESHAPE the existing Comprehensive Plan going forward to 2050 and beyond;



- Livable Built Environment
- Interwoven Equity
- Harmony with Nature
- Healthy and Safe Community
- Resilient Economy
- Responsible Regionalism

- assure residents Comp Plan changes will still limit high- and medium-density development to four designated transit corridors, with low-density (10 units per acre) remaining in all other locations, including those parts of Lyon Park-that are now zoned for Low-density development;
- bolster the award-winning Metrorail-based TOD model and explore realistic transit improvements along Columbia Pike and Langston Boulevard;
- pursue affordable housing options like preservation, conversions, direct subsidies, and state tax credits;
- move urgently on impervious surface and broader lot coverage fixes;

Background. In the 1980’s Arlington was lauded nationally for far-sighted investing for growth, mostly in Metrorail but also first-class schools and parks that attracted new businesses. Our Transit Oriented Development (TOD) that allowed high density along two Metrorail corridors worked well – and still offers plenty of opportunities (office to residential conversion policies as one recent example). Beginning with the 2005 Base Realignment and Closure and the national economic downturn in 2008, revenues dropped and the County shifted from “smart growth,” rail TOD to short-term fixes for tax revenue. It allowed

construction of very large homes – anathema to the environment and storm management. It adopted “form-based code” for the Columbia Pike corridor, but that lacked both Metrorail and new ways to replace affordable housing. That dynamic repeats along Langston Blvd. In 2023 the County passed Missing Middle (or Enhanced Housing Options), a “density-all-over” zoning that saw older affordable replaced with ones for \$1.8 million. A state court ruling that Arlington had violated state law with EHO is a sign we need to get back to good planning. Start with the Comp Plan.

Seeking Details Not Jargon

LPCA is seeing clear signs the county might densify along other, yet-undefined transit corridors; as per the slide below that has been part of staff previews for some time:



20 months of staff work has produced only slogans and “guiding precepts” from the American Planning Association. To what end? Comp Plan discussions and parallel work on the Master Transportation Plan are skirting hard truths that Metrorail ridership was down well BEFORE Covid, and that expanding to new, less-popular transit modes would be foolish. I urge you to remind staff that our most urgent priority is shoring up [Metrorail](#) and guarding against another ill-planned scheme to apply density inefficiently by applying it to additional areas.

Sincerely,

Natalie Roy
President, LPCA