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**Long Range Planning Committee (LRPC) of the Planning Commission**  
**Meeting Summary**  
**February 28, 2024**  
**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)
- Daniel Weir (in-person)
- Eric Berkey (in-person)
- Jim Lantelme (in-person)
- Karen Guevara (in-person)
- Leo Sarli (in-person)
- Nia Bagley (in-person)
- Peter Robertson (Absent)
- Sara Steinberger (Absent)
- Tenley Peterson (Absent)
- Tony Striner (in-person)

**Staff in attendance (CPHD Planning):**

- Anthony Fusarelli Jr., Planning Director (in-person)
- Natasha Alfonso-Ahmed, LRPC Coordinator (in-person)
- Jennifer Smith, Comprehensive Planning Manager (virtual)
- Aaron Shriber, Current Planning Manager (virtual)
- Kellie Brown, Comprehensive Planning Section Supervisor (virtual)
- Matt Pfeiffer, Site Plan Review Section Supervisor (virtual)
- Kris Krider, Urban Design Supervisor (virtual)
- Rana Abu Ghazaleh, Principal Planner (virtual)

**Other:**

- Chris Slatt, Transportation Commission
- Robert Benson and David Howell, Forestry and Natural Resources Commission
- Jane Siegel
- Bill Richardson, Donaldson Run Civic Association
- Jean Henceroth, Leeway Overlee Civic Association

## **PRELIMINARY 2024-2025 PLANNING DIVISION WORK PROGRAM LRPC Meeting**

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

Commissioner Patel recognized members of several other Arlington County advisory boards and commissions and civic leaders in attendance, as well as staff members.

A staff presentation by Anthony Fusarelli Jr., Planning Director (CPHD – Planning), on the preliminary draft work program for 2024-2025 highlighted that, like the previous year, the work program materials will be presented and discussed during the Department of Community Planning, Housing and Development (CPHD) budget work session with the County Board and the presentation will be streamlined. The presentation was followed by discussion with the following questions and comments, which focused on:

- The proposed work program and organization of the Planning Division.
- Potential Staff Cuts - concerns about additional decrease in staff resources and demanding workload, year over year, and impact on timing for completing items on the work program, items that are not on the work program that “need” to be done and are being delayed, and community engagement. Concern about lack of staff resources to process special exception applications and provide specialized skills like 3D modeling and urban design work for Special GLUP Studies.
- Ongoing priorities, including procedural and regulatory updates, relating to:
  - RA District Study – support for study to address need for BZA variance for non-conforming townhouses and multi-plex properties conducting interior renovations. Mixed concerns with requirement for Use Permit/Site Plan approval for duplexes in townhouse zoning districts (R15-30T and R10-T). Statements indicating there are more incentives to build “McMansions” than to build new (or renovate existing) multi-plex units that provide additional housing units and so process should be streamlined.
  - Langston Boulevard GLUP/ZO amendments for constrained sites – concern work program is unclear about timeframe for completion of work and property owners are interested in moving forward. Staff clarified that larger sites and those envisioned for greater development levels have a path through the existing site plan approval processes to realize redevelopment, and, additionally, indicated the work on tools for smaller/constrained sites is targeted to be underway this year but more time is needed to determine timeline.
  - East Falls Church Area Plan update – concerns that it is not in the work program. As noted in the Langston Boulevard Area Plan, until discussions with VDOT and WMATA confirm there is interest from both parties in pursuing joint development at the EFC Metro site, the priority for reevaluating the Plan will not be elevated. Staff understands related discussions may begin this year.
- Lot Coverage Study – concerns that it is not in the work program as well as concern with the study being done without a comprehensive review of Expanded Housing Option provisions in the Zoning Ordinance and before the litigation is settled. Commissioners asked if there is an opportunity to integrate this analysis with other work already in the work program. Staff acknowledged the priority is to advance items that were in our long range planning work program last year, and that have not moved forward or been completed, before adding new work. Staff also stated lot coverage may be best analyzed as part of a low-residential

development study to address other related issues like building height, setbacks and density and after Arlington 2050 Visioning Initiative and Comprehensive Plan Update, Phase 1. These efforts can help shape the preferred vision of Arlington's future, and directly inform the approach to studying low residential development.

- Accessory Dwellings Review – concerns that it is not in the work program. Staff noted that the number of accessory dwelling units approved annually has increased since latest ACZO amendments in 2019, and does not consider this review a priority at this time.
- Affordable Housing Ordinance Review – concerns that it is not in the work program. Staff noted that any changes to our local affordable housing provisions within the Zoning Ordinance (ACZO) would also require legislative changes at the Commonwealth level, which would be challenging to pursue at this time. Commissioners suggested thinking about opportunities to hire a consultant to do some of the work (i.e., review on-site unit requirements and levels of contribution), given the staff constraints, so that if the upcoming State elections are more favorable to Arlington, this work can get started without delay.
- Development Applications Fee Analysis – support for right-sizing fees to improve cost recovery.
- Biophilic Cities Resolution - concern there is insufficient guidance on expectations for biophilic design when reviewing site plan applications. Staff noted that the reference guide to landscape standards was last updated in 2017 and while it needs to be updated, there is also an opportunity to reference best practices around biophilic elements such as nature walls versus green walls, etc.
- GLUP Studies – concern with time required to complete studies and that community members don't understand how the process works, which leads to frustration when community concerns are not addressed by the applicant. Concern that we are using GLUP Studies to address development pressures and make changes in areas with sector plans (that are decades old), and in edge areas with no sector plans, because we don't have the resources to update or create new sector plans, leading to "spot" development/planning. Staff noted that the update to the General Land Use Plan, which is part of the overall Comprehensive Plan Update, will speak to the County's vision and guidelines for future development in other areas and may negate or reduce the need for future GLUP studies.

### **Public Comment**

- Lot Coverage and Tree Canopy – representatives of the Forestry and Natural Resources Commission and Donaldson Run Civic Association strongly recommend including in the upcoming work program a study to reduce the allowable lot coverage of buildings and encourage more room for planting trees. Others prefer looking at lot coverage and impervious surfaces more comprehensively, not just in the context of a residential lot, as there are many corridors that need more greenery.
- Lee Center – Leeway Overlee Civic Association is requesting that the County consider saving and renovating the building.
- Comprehensive Plan Update – support effort and timing with the Arlington 2050 visioning exercise. There is an opportunity for the community to see how things fit together.
- Public Facilities Review Committee Principles of Civic Design – concern this document has not been updated and fails to mention anything about biophilia and equity.

- Potential Staff Cuts – concern that division is shrinking while the County is growing with growing needs. Need to advance studies from previous years like the Multifamily Reinvestment Study.

### **Next Steps**

The LRPC expressed appreciation to staff for their work and Mr. Fusarelli acknowledged that not all suggestions could be accommodated in the current year's work program, however, feedback would be considered.

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