



November 6, 2023

The Arlington County Board
Ellen M. Bozman Government Center
2100 Clarendon Blvd.
Arlington, VA 22201

Dear Chair Dorsey, Vice Chair Garvey, Mr. Karantonis, Mr. de Ferranti and Mrs. Talento:

As members of the Old Dominion Citizens Association (ODCA) executive committee, we submit the following comments on the Draft Langston Boulevard Area Plan since you intend to consider this proposal at your next board meeting. Two years ago, our association submitted the attached comments to the County in response to the initial plan and many of our points of concern about the plan remain. In addition, we have identified several opportunities for the County to make changes to the plan to benefit ODCA residents.

Plan Langston Boulevard proposes historic and dramatic changes to the corridor and ODCA sits in one of the areas (Area 3) where massive changes to the current zoning are proposed. Overall, we believe the County has not done enough to engage residents—particularly in the last year—on the impact of the significant development proposed in the plan and the repeated updates to the plan made just in the past few weeks. The timeline has afforded residents insufficient time to consider the impacts of these late changes. Specifically, over 1,300 changes were made in the draft of September 28, released just three weeks prior to the Board meeting that approved the Request to Advertise (RTA). Because of these changes, some in our neighborhood would like the County Board to delay consideration of the plan until next year to allow more time for public review. We also note our displeasure that Cherrydale and East Falls Church are no longer included in the plan, which negatively affects the Plan’s ability to comprehensively address the corridor.

We offer the below, specific opportunities for the County to adjust the plan to better serve the residents of our citizens association:

Building Heights

One of the areas we have heard the most concerns from residents involves building heights. ODCA, as we did in 2021, strongly opposes increased building heights of greater than four stories immediately adjacent to residential parcels along Langston Boulevard. The current plan would allow for building heights of 5 stories directly adjacent to current residential homes in portions of ODCA and our association remains opposed to that part of the Plan. We continue to believe that increased building height and new commercial/retail space should only be added on properties directly adjacent to Langston Boulevard and should not be expanded into residential neighborhood streets. We would also like the plan to more clearly state that the maximum heights in the ODCA area in the plan—7 stories—

will truly be the maximum heights within ODCA and taller heights will not be added during any site plan review processes.

Our association also opposes the proposed 10-story heights in other areas within Area 3, which are adjacent to our neighborhood.

Retail

We are supportive of the intersection of Langston and Glebe being designated as a "mixed-use hub." We note that on page 55 of the Draft Plan, a map indicates the location of Ground Floor Priority designations (Gold and Blue) in Area 3. We offer the following recommendations:

1. Expand the Gold area to replace the Blue area for the property on the northwest corner of the intersection of Langston and Old Dominion (current Truist site). The current Truist site faces tall building heights on the other side of Langston and is an appropriate location for the Gold designation. Consider replacing the Blue with Gold on the northeast corner of the intersection of Langston and Old Dominion (area of Weichert Realtors).
2. Reduce how far north on Glebe the Gold areas go. Right now the northernmost Gold areas on Glebe are immediately adjacent to residential properties.

Intersection of Old Dominion and Langston

We believe a study is absolutely warranted to determine how to improve the intersection of Old Dominion and Langston. In particular, we would welcome study of a design that slows the speed of vehicles transitioning from westbound Langston onto northbound Old Dominion. The transformation of that intersection into a "T" design could achieve that aim. However, we would like the study of such a design to include measures to mitigate the possibility that drivers would try to avoid the intersection by turning from westbound Langston onto northbound Wakefield. One option is to consider making Wakefield one-way (southbound only) where it intersects Langston.

Speeding on 23rd Street

We note that there is already a pattern of vehicles speeding on the section of 23rd street between Glebe and Old Dominion. Increased development in Area 3 will increase traffic on this street. We would request a commitment to study appropriate traffic calming features on this section of 23rd street.

Speeding on Old Dominion

We note the issue of speeding on Old Dominion, which in the last several years has led to accidents and damage to residents' property. We request a commitment to study potential traffic calming measures for the road.

Residential Permit Parking Zone

ODCA requests a commitment to study how land use changes along Langston could increase parking on ODCA's residential streets by non-ODCA residents. We would request this study include an evaluation of whether to establish a residential permit parking zone in ODCA.

Proposed Bike Lanes on Glebe

ODCA notes the inclusion of bike lanes on portions of Glebe north of Langston. ODCA would oppose the construction of bike lanes if it required removing any of the trees and bushes on the east side of Glebe in front of the Birches townhome community.

Pedestrian crossings on Glebe and Langston

We request additional safe crossing across Glebe. We note that along Glebe there is no crosswalk in the 0.4 miles between the intersection of Glebe/Langston and Glebe/26th street.

Public Parks

We note the lack of additional publicly owned park space in the plan. ODCA flags that a portion of the "salt dome site" at Old Dominion and 26th street would be an ideal location for a new park to serve the Langston corridor. ODCA is the only Arlington County Civic Association without a park, yet it will absorb significant density with Plan Langston. As part of the 2016 decision on Fire House No. 8, the County committed to creating a County owned park to address the existing density within ODCA. The County has failed to act on that park for over eight years and we expect the County take meaningful action to demonstrate it will keep its word. We would like the Plan to commit to a park on at least a portion of the "salt dome site".

Public Accessible Space on N. Albermarle St.

We welcome the inclusion of a proposed publicly accessible green space (min. 10,000 square feet) on the location of the existing dead end section of N. Albermarle St.

Ownership of Langston

ODCA supports future efforts by the County to assume ownership of Langston from VDOT.

Capital Investment

ODCA notes that the County in recent decades has severely underinvested in the communities along Langston because it was not a "planned corridor." With passage of Plan Langston, we would request an equitable distribution of CIP funds to the Langston corridor.

Bus Service

We note that other parts of Arlington County's government are proposing changes to bus service in the corridor inconsistent with the Plan's goals. For example, the Arlington Transit Strategic Plan's proposed redesign of ART service would eliminate ART Route 72, which runs on Glebe Rd and connects the Langston Blvd corridor to the Ballston Metro Station. The proposed replacement route would not provide the same connectivity between the Langston Blvd corridor and Ballston Metro. We would like the Plan to commit to keeping this important north-south bus route.

Pedestrian Safety for Children

We would like pedestrian safety, particularly for children walking and biking to school, to be prioritized. We would like the County to aggressively work to improve pedestrian safety not just on parcels being redeveloped but throughout the Planning Area. We note that per the CPHD Population and Demographic Estimate, there are 364 children aged 5 to 17 in ODCA. There are no schools within ODCA, so any children walking or biking to school must travel about a mile or more to reach Discovery Elementary, Williamsburg Middle School, or Yorktown High School. This often requires children to cross major streets, such as Glebe Road and Old Dominion Drive. We would like to ensure that the County prioritizes implementation of Transportation and Connectivity Goal 7 (TC.7), which calls for redevelopment to employ a Complete Streets approach to support the County's Vision Zero goals. We would like redoubled efforts on Implementation Matrix Item No. 45, which calls for transportation studies where appropriate that focus on how to achieve Vision Zero goals. We would also like the County to coordinate with ACPS to ensure that future development improves, and does not hinder, the ability of children to safely walk and bike to school.

Thank you for your consideration of our view.

Sincerely,

Mike Iger, President of ODCA

Richard Lolich, Vice President of ODCA

Eric Malpeli, Director of Communications of ODCA



Old Dominion Citizens Association

July 2, 2021

Community Planning, Housing and Development Staff
Attn: Natasha Alfonso-Ahmed & Leon Vignes
2100 Clarendon Blvd., Suite 700
Arlington, VA 22201

Re: Old Dominion Citizens Association Comments on PLH Land Use Scenarios Analysis

Dear Natasha and Leon:

The Old Dominion Citizens Association (ODCA) submits the following comments and concerns on the Plan Lee Highway (PLH) Land Use Scenarios Analysis (LUSA) for Area 3, which includes the ODCA community. Please note that these comments and concerns were recently articulated at an ODCA-wide meeting held on June 24, 2021.

ODCA Comments

While ODCA believes that it is important to have a community-based plan for future Lee Highway development vs. the current random status quo that has characterized recent development along the Lee Highway corridor, our community and neighbors have expressed significant concerns with the land scenarios that have been proposed, their variance from community consensus inputs, and the process by which they have been rolled out.

With respect to the process, until the ODCA meeting held last week, few if any of our neighbors were aware of the proposed land use scenarios for Area 3. Given the significant scale of changes being proposed the County has an obligation to do a much better job making residents aware of the proposals, reasons for deviation from previous community consensus, and giving them sufficient time to comment. That just did not happen here. As a result, there is now a significant amount of concern and misinformation about what Plan Lee Highway is even about. There needs to be significantly more outreach to our community throughout the rest of this process. This cannot be understated. ODCA residents are directly and deeply impacted by this proposal and our concerns must be listened to and addressed.

In addition, the County's Plan Lee Highway website is not at all clear about what future opportunities there will be for additional comments on the plan and much of what has been communicated verbally in presentations, such as when concerns about schools and traffic will be considered and the commitment not to use eminent domain, do not appear in the presentations

that were delivered to communities. The website needs to be updated so that the process and opportunities for comment are embedded on the home page itself without needing to piece it together by looking through the website links. It should also include easy to understand FAQs about what PLH is and is not.

As it stands, PLH LUSA for Area 3 requires significant modification for our association to be comfortable with the plan.

ODCA Concerns

The proposed PLH LUSA contains several elements which the ODCA community does not and cannot support. They are listed below:

- Increased building heights of greater than four stories immediately adjacent to residential parcels along Lee Highway is not supported by ODCA.
- Increased building height and new commercial/retail space should only be added on properties directly adjacent to Lee Highway/Old Dominion and should not be expanded into residential neighborhood streets
- The addition of commercial/retail space and increased building heights over existing single-family homes along and adjacent to Columbus St., on 22nd ST N between Old Dominion and Wakefield, 23rd ST N between Columbus and Glebe, are complete non-starters within the community.
- We are concerned that the plan will lead to additional cars cutting through our neighborhood and specifically oppose adding a new street connecting N. Culpeper Street and N. Columbus.
- There is very little new green space or parks being proposed within the ODCA boundaries; the county has promised our neighborhood a community park for years and we expect the county to keep that commitment. We also recommend that the green space proposed Albermarle St between the Metro 29 Diner and the ABC store be removed to allow that entire parcel to be contiguous, but that a larger park be added at the rear of the parcel as a buffer and for community use.
- The apparent lack of a plan to address increased parking and traffic problems and the impact on Arlington Public Schools under the scenarios envisioned by the plan is a glaring omission. The ODCA community has repeatedly raised these and other concerns to Arlington County and the PLH staff, the proposed plan clearly indicates that our voices have been ignored.
- The commitment not to use eminent domain to achieve the proposed elements of any plan must be strengthened through a county board resolution. Given that the scenarios released by the county propose new building overlaid on top of people's homes, residents are understandably concerned about the risk of eminent domain. Verbal commitments are not enough.

Additional Comments

In addition to the comments above, we hope you will consider the below elements in future scenarios:

- Potential re-routing of Old Dominion Drive where it intersects Lee Highway. This will improve safety at that intersection and provide more green space in the ODCA section of the corridor. However, we are concerned that the proposed T intersection could lead to additional cut-through traffic in our neighborhood through Wakefield St and request mitigation measures to reduce this risk.
- Major building heights around the intersection of Glebe Road and Lee Highway. This intersection at the heart of ODCA currently contains a critical mass of retail and residential space for the neighborhood and the emphasis on greater height is a potentially good use of this area.
- The incorporation of multi-family dwellings along the edges of Lee Highway. This makes sense provided it does not infringe on the already existing single-family homes that back up to Lee Highway.
- The inclusion of moderate to major height development along Lee Highway/Old Dominion east of Lorcom Lane/Woodstock St.

In closing, we would like to thank you and the staff for the opportunity to voice our concerns on the PLH LUSA and hope that our comments and concerns will be seriously considered as the plan is further developed. Please let us know if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

Mike Iger
President
Old Dominion Citizens Association

Richard Lolich
Vice President
Old Dominion Citizens Association

Barney Maloney
Treasurer
Old Dominion Citizens Association

Jacki Wilson
NCAC Representative
Old Dominion Citizens Association