
New Directions

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Arlington New Directions Coalition
524 N. Jackson Street • Arlington • Virginia • 22201
703 • 243 • 5775

What Is Good Development for Arlington County?

By Charles Rinker

Arlington's central, inner-suburban location is very attractive to residential and commercial developers. What Arlington offers as a community — good schools, abundant public facilities, active civic life, livable neighborhoods, a vibrant economy and high-income customer base, to name just a few of our amenities — makes Arlington a good place to live and work, as well as an investor-popular environment. No wonder our county is under such intense pressure for development and redevelopment.

But what kind of development do WE — the residents and workers of Arlington County — want? And how do we go about getting it?

Communities across the country are asking these questions and making it clear that development must occur within the framework of a community vision and of a process for development project review that ensures the community's desired outcomes. In the process, lessons are being learned about what is "good" and what is "bad" development for the health of communities.

Development is seldom free of value judgments or neutral in its effects on a community and its neighborhoods. Experi-

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ANDC Public Forum on Development

Opening Remarks

By Jack Cornman

Arlington has faced and responded positively — some would even say with some degrees of enlightenment — to a series of critical moments since the 1940s. Then, the community came together in a successful effort to improve Arlington's public schools, an effort that evolved into a good government movement and became Arlingtonians for a Better County (ABC).

In the 1950s, Arlington stood fast against the massive resistance of the Commonwealth of Virginia to the U.S. Supreme Court's school desegregation decision, fighting successfully to keep open and eventually to integrate its schools.

In the late 1960s, Arlington welcomed newcomers from Korea and Cuba and launched some of the nation's first programs responding to the aging of the population.

In the 1970s, Arlington led the nation in the rapid decline of its school-age population, which generated changes in its schools and the character of its political discourse. Also, the Metro system began taking shape, increasing Arlington's attractiveness to developers and leading to adoption of a long-range community improvement program.

With the influx of Vietnamese families starting in the mid-1970s and of Hispanic and families from other cultures and countries through the 1990s, Arlington's population became more ethnically diverse, raising public policy issues for education, housing, services and jobs.

Today, we are challenged to ask ourselves if success - "success" in terms of becoming a hot market for high-priced residential and commercial redevelopment projects, of denser commercial neighborhoods, of rising real estate prices, and of dwindling residential options for moderate and lower income families - has spoiled Arlington. Have we, as a community, been true to the vision for Arlington adopted in 1986? That vision called for, "A diverse community of dynamic, secure residential and commercial neighborhoods; a caring, learning, participating community in which each person is important."

We are challenged to ask if and how we can be true to that vision in the future. And we are challenged to ask if that vision is sufficient to guide us for the next 20 years given the changes

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Twin Oaks — You Do The Math!

By Mary Rouleau

Last May, the County Board approved a Site Plan filed by the Donohoe Companies for Twin Oaks. Like many such decisions in the past, this plan will replace 55 affordably priced housing units (a combination of efficiencies, one bedrooms, and some two-bedrooms) with luxury priced housing units (and some affordable units). You are probably reading this article in September. So why recap these events now? Because, I think, it is a good example of both the “substantive” and “procedural” problems associated with the Site Plan approval process—especially where existing affordable housing is at issue.

The details are many, so excuse the shorthand. But I believe this is a fair summary of the most important issues.

The Donohoe Company sought to redevelop the Twin Oaks site, currently home to 55 affordable apartments (75 bedrooms, total) in Rosslyn. Donohoe proposed building to a density of 4.8 F.A.R., zoning the property at “high residential”, and creating a 26-story complex. The Rosslyn station area plan calls for a 3.24 F.A.R., with “high medium” residential zoning. In return for the “bonus density”, Donohoe proposed to supply some mix of “affordable” housing.

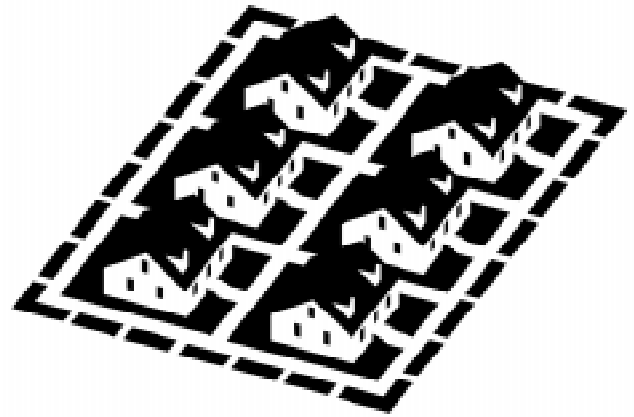
Donohoe presented eight such options — all resulting in 38 affordable units — to the Housing Commission. The Housing Commission voted unanimously to support Option #4, which would include setting aside 26 units for those at or below 45% of median income for a term of 30-years.

Because the Rosslyn community was objecting to the additional density and height, Donohoe then presented two options to the Planning Commission. Option A, the “high residential” zoning option with 38 affordable units, and Option B, a “high medium” density option with no affordable housing. The Planning Commission voted 4-3 to deny both options for reasons including adverse impacts to the immediate neighborhood and the County’s need to be more creative in its affordable housing solutions.

At the Planning Commission, residents of Twin Oaks and, with the exception of one speaker, the surrounding neighborhood (including the Atrium, Highgate, and Colonial Terrace) spoke against approving the project. Further, the Rosslyn Renaissance Board also declined to support either option and requested that the developer provide other options for consideration. The Rosslyn Renaissance Board urged the County to take a broader interpretation of the implementation of the Special Affordable Housing Preservation District (SAHPD), a tool designed to assist in the preservation of affordable housing.

Notwithstanding the views of the Housing and Planning Commissions, the County staff favored the highest density option in its report of May 10th.

However, the staff recommended a deferral of any approval of the plan because Donohoe offered only a 30-year term of affordability instead of the 40 years staff recommended. Also, Donohoe was limiting its contribution to the Housing Reserve Fund (which is used for other affordable housing) to \$200,000, an amount staff thought inadequate given the magnitude of the



increased density.

That is where things stood leading up to the County Board evening meeting of May 23rd. All expected a deferral of the Twin Oaks project, including ANDC. ANDC sent a letter to the Board on May 21 requesting that a joint committee of the Planning, Housing, and Tenant/Landlord Commissions and civic associations meet with the developer to work out a more acceptable solution.

On the day of the County Board meeting, Donohoe agreed to the staff’s two conditions, and staff changed its recommendation to approval. I was literally at a Capitol Hill reception at 6 pm that evening when I received a call from ANDC President Charlie Rinker about the last-minute change. I then attended the meeting and spoke on behalf of ANDC for deferral. Residents of Twin Oaks, Atrium, Highgate, and Rosslyn Renaissance also spoke, in all but a few cases, against the project.

In my testimony, I made three major points:

1. ANDC in general supports the exchange of bonus density for affordable housing, but it has to be a good deal for the County.
2. The Board should defer the Twin Oaks decision because the affordability housing mix in the staff plan was different than that recommended by the Housing Commission (the staff plan included only 4 units for those at or below 45% of median, 8 units for those at/below 50%; and 26 at/below 60%) and because the Planning Commission had voted to reject that plan.
3. Donohoe had low-balled the County through the negotiation process, and this last-minute tactic made it difficult for citizens to participate.

Despite this history, the Board voted 3-2 (Ferguson and Zimmerman dissenting) to approve the staff recommendation. On what is a positive note in my opinion, several members of the Board chastised the developer’s tactics, noting that Donohoe wasn’t alone in its behavior and indicating that such behavior would have consequences in the future.

I think this case raises important substantive and procedural issues that have arisen in other affordable housing cases:

1. Is proper deference being given to the recommendations of the Housing and Planning Commissions in such cases by both the staff and Board?

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Office of Latino Affairs Needed in Arlington

By Willians Silva,
Gates of Arlington Tenants Association

First, this story helps to illustrate my point: My friend, Juan, was driving home late one night from his job as a cook at a restaurant on Wilson Boulevard. He noticed an Arlington police car following him. He watched as a young white woman made an illegal U turn in the middle of the street, yet the police officer did nothing. Why did the officer continue to follow him instead of stopping her? Juan could find only one explanation: he is a young Latino. Like many others, Juan also has witnessed Arlington police taking photographs of his neighbors as they stood talking or waiting on the corners of parking lots in his community, Buckingham. Nobody had committed a crime.

So what is going on? Are Arlington Latinos being treated more severely by the police and others than are whites?

Latinos now make up 13.5% of Arlington's population. Most work hard in restaurants, construction, day care, and health care. They have strong family values and often work two jobs to meet monthly expenses. Many have lived in Arlington for more than 15 years, and their children are Arlington natives who attend the public schools. The vast majority of Latinos rent their apartments but are facing steep annual rent increases as well as displacement because of demolition or major renovation. Over the past five years, Latinos have been displaced from Buckingham, Barcroft, Arna Valley, and, now, the Patrick Henry Apartments. The new owners at Patrick Henry are making all the vested tenants, a majority of whom are Latino, pass criminal background checks as one of the criteria for qualifying for the renovated units that are being subsidized by Arlington taxpayer dollars.

As Arlington residents, Latinos are concerned about basic issues: a high-quality education for their children, improved affordable housing, racial profiling, access to health care and to county services, such as recreation, small business assistance, and job training. The message from the Latino community is that they are an integral part of Arlington's diverse population. As the fastest-growing ethnic group in Arlington, Latinos want the county's attention because they are often overlooked as equal partners and citizens in Arlington's mainly white and black community. Recently, the Human Rights Commission held a forum for the Hispanic community to come forward and describe incidents where they have been discriminated against. That was one step. But will there be any follow-up?

At the forum the commission was reminded that many Latinos live in run-down apartments where they face discrimination by managers and are refused timely maintenance of their apartments. Latino children suffer health problems because of persistent mold and rat infestation. When Latino children have prob-

lems in school, it seems that it is often because teachers have low expectations and treat them like criminals. Everybody recognizes that kids need role models, but Arlington has very few Latino teachers. To solve this problem, the school system recently announced that it had recruited five teachers from Spain. But Arlington's Latino community comes primarily from Central and South America. With its deep roots in Bolivia, El Salvador, and other Latin American countries, the Latino community believes that Arlington should have established links with countries south of the border and not in Europe. Our cultures and language are very different from Spain.

For the County to provide services to the Latino community, the County should establish an Office of Latino Affairs. This could help make up for the fact that, at present, very few County employees are bi-lingual and bi-cultural. The new Office could provide much-needed translation services and also advocate for the Hispanic community. An Office of Latino Affairs would help lessen the fear of being a stranger in a strange land. Other small cities and some very prosperous counties around the country have developed excellent models of how to integrate Latinos into their community. Arlington can do the same. If the County is serious about wanting its new residents to remain and continue to contribute to the county, it also could establish a citizenship program to help educate and process residents who are applying for U.S. citizenship.

Arlington should not be a place where people seem more accustomed to saying *buenos dias* during a Mexican vacation than to neighbors in their own community.

New Directions is the newsletter of the Arlington New Directions Coalition. We will be reporting on local news and presenting formal positions taken by the coalition. We will also publish articles and opinion pieces consistent with our mission and values concerning critical public issues in Arlington County.

Contact Charlie Rinker at (703) 243-5775 for more information about the Coalition and/or Kit Johnston at kitkat5@erols.com to be placed on the mailing list. A \$10 donation would help defray printing and mailing costs.

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Arlington County Improves Retirement Benefits

By Marjorie McCreery

With adoption of the Fiscal Year 2001 budget, the County Board provided resources to enhance the retirement system for future county and school employees and those hired since 1981. This decision followed focused and energetic action by several employee groups. The County Board anticipates that these improvements will make its compensation package more competitive with surrounding jurisdictions and help retain experienced employees.

The Board provided a lump sum for the School Board to design its own system for school employees. While some aspects are still under development, the plan announced to employees has the following components.

Beginning in January 2001:

Post-'81 employees will receive a lump sum, based on length of service, as a start-up amount for retirement savings accounts. The maximum amount will be \$6,000 (\$100/year for the most recent ten years' service and \$500/year for the remaining years).

The School Board will match up to \$15/pay period of employees' retirement savings. With 26 pay periods each year, the employer contribution will be \$390/year.

School Board employees not presently covered by the Virginia Retirement System (VRS) (custodians and maintenance, transportation, and food service employees) may be transferred from the county retirement plan into VRS. The School Board will seek to remove its own and employees' contribution to the retirement trust fund to purchase prior service in VRS for these employees. When vested in VRS, these employees will be eligible for a monthly retirement benefit that is 13% larger than the County plan would have provided. This action doubles employees' life insurance and improves their disability coverage, as well.

Beginning July 2000:

The School Board will provide VRS benefits for employees who work half time or more. These employees have been denied any retirement benefit except Social Security. They were the only County or School Board employee group so disadvantaged.

In another move that will not improve retirement benefits but will enhance disposable income, the School Board will begin to pay 2.5% of the employee's VRS 5% contribution to the state. Once this payment begins, the School Board must assume the total 5% contribution within three years. Fairfax County is now the only school division in the Commonwealth that does not pick up this employee contribution.

Once the School Board has assumed the full 5% contribution, employees may be required to save at least .8% of salary in retirement accounts to assure that their retirement benefit at the end of a 30-year career will equal at least 55% of final salary. These contributions will reach the target for newly hired employees in 2000, but employees who are more senior will proba-

bly not have enough time for these investments to meet the target.

The County Manager recommended two different retirement enhancements for county employees. The monthly defined benefit program for uniformed employees was improved, and a defined contribution program was established for all other County employee groups.

The police, fire fighters, and the Sheriff's department will have a tiered benefit of 1.5% per year of service for the first 10 years, 1.7% for the next 10 years, and 2% per year for the remaining years of service. Employees who serve full careers and retire after age 50 will receive a benefit of 2% per year of service until they are eligible for Social Security. Then, their benefit will be recalculated on the tiered system. For these enhanced benefits, uniformed employees will increase their contribution rate from 5% of salary to 6% each year. The incentive for employees to contribute to retirement savings accounts will increase from \$10/pay period to \$15/pay period. In addition, the County will provide 1% of pay each year to the retirement savings accounts.

The employees in all other county departments will remain on the current defined benefit program (1.5% of salary for each year of service, capped at 30 years for a maximum 45% benefit). In addition, they will receive 2% of pay to invest in retirement accounts. The incentive to save will be increased from \$10/pay period to \$15/pay period. These employees will receive start-up accounts equaling \$600/year for the most recent five years of service; \$1000/year for years six through twelve; and \$1200/year for remaining years of service back to 1981. The most senior employees would be eligible for \$19,000 in start-up accounts.

The start-up accounts for County general employees and school employees come from a \$15 million distribution from surplus funds in the retirement trust fund rather than the Operating Budget.

Employees welcome these improvements. They congratulate the County Board and School Board for tackling a complicated and expensive issue. They are aware, however, that their colleagues hired before 1981 continue to enjoy a retirement plan that replaces 70% of income, before Social Security. Even with these improvements, many teachers in our region have better retirement benefits. Employees hope the Boards will revisit the issue regularly to ensure that we do not slip farther behind.



Columbia Pike Planning Process: Our Goal Should Be Development without Displacement

By Todd Endo

Arlington County initiated a limited planning process for Columbia Pike at the end of April with a series of three meetings at three different locations along Columbia Pike. The current process emerged from a recommendation of the Columbia Pike Initiative Working Group, which was appointed by the County Board in January 1998 and made its report to the County Board in March 1999. The County Board hired three planners to lead the process, headed by Doug Woods. In addition, the County appropriated a considerable fund for consultant studies for economic development and transportation and \$30,000 for CPRO to conduct outreach for the process. A report to the County Board with recommendations is expected by the end of the year.

In the first series of four meetings in April and May, Doug Woods solicited ideas from individuals and groups, both orally at meetings and in writing. He compiled these ideas into a comprehensive 31 page “transcript” and distributed them to the community. In the second series of meetings in June and July, Doug Woods presented six density options used by the county at a work session over a year ago and sketches of possibilities of development along the Pike. The sketches featured four centers of development at Walter Reed Drive, Glebe Road, George Mason Drive, and Four Mile Run. About 300 people attended one or more of the first series of meetings, and about half that number attended one or more of the second series of meetings.

Now that we are about half way through the planning process, the outline of the process is clear and the picture is spotty at best. The current plan responds to many of the ideas as stated by the community members—e.g. better parking, more pedestrian friendly walkways, better streetscaping, more attractive frontage on Columbia Pike, and general neighborhood beautification. However, we have a number of fundamental concerns about the process that relate to 1) a lack of attention to people and the effects of physical changes on the people and the neighborhoods; 2) a failure to include important priorities expressed by a large number of community members’ suggestions—for example, housing and public facilities and services.

The framework is not about people; it’s about things

In a draft “Urban Design Redevelopment Guidelines” the county makes the claim that “the Columbia Pike Corridor’s physical setting and the relationships between elements of the built environment establish the area’s sense of place. Streets, sidewalks, buildings, and open spaces are the primary components that shape the area’s urban character.” We claim, on the contrary, that **it’s the people, the social setting, and the relationships among people that establish a sense of community and place.** The fundamental questions for planning are who will live in the desired community, who will work in it, who will shop in it, and what kind of interaction do we want among

them? The important, but next level questions relate to what height the buildings should be, what density should be encouraged, what transportation changes should be made. These are important issues, but they relate to strategies to achieve the fundamental ends, which relate to people and their relationships. While it’s easier to focus on a visual representation, the process should always ask how the plan relates to people and the desired community social relationships. The Columbia Pike planning process is not making this link explicit and doesn’t explore the assumptions or consequences of its visual plan for the people who live in the community.

As a result, the process is skewed toward economic and physical redevelopment and away from community development. Our goal should be “Development without Displacement.” This will balance physical and economic redevelopment with the desire to maintain an international population diverse by ethnicity, language, and income. While we cannot ensure the realization of our ideal development and the ideal of no displacement, we can ensure that development ideas for physical changes are connected with ideas about people, relationships, and community. In the discussion of any idea, we need to ask who will benefit from the idea, who will be harmed by it, and what effect will the idea have on the community and its people.

The county has narrowed and limited the coverage of the planning process — where is housing?

From the beginning, the County Board has sought to reduce the scope of the planning process from the recommendation of the staff and citizens’ working group. In its charge to the planning office, the County Board eliminated from the scope, “housing and the influence of housing patterns, education of residents of all ages, employment of area residents, and long-range planning for public facilities, such as schools, libraries, senior centers and community centers.” Even though all agree that these issues are integral to any comprehensive plan and are among the most important needs expressed by community residents (more on this later), the County Board has formally limited the planning process.

When asked about housing at the June 29 meeting at Arlington Mill, Doug Woods said that that issue is a county-wide issue and should be taken up in other forums, such as the consideration of the report of the Affordable Housing Task Force and the Housing Commission. It is true that housing is a county-wide issue, but it is also an important element of the Columbia Pike community and directly influences the question of who lives in the community. Therefore, it is equally a vital issue for Columbia Pike planning. If housing is a county-wide issue that should be addressed county-wide and excluded from the Columbia Pike process, how about environment, parks, transportation, pollution, and safety? All of these are county-wide issues as well as local issues, and should be addressed vigorously in both venues.

Without attention to housing and other important local issues, we cannot really have a comprehensive plan for the community. It will be an economic development plan that ignores and often works against the interests of large segments of the

that have occurred in Arlington since 1986, continuing pressures for still more change, and the still unfinished task of eliminating discriminatory practices.

Consider these figures that are taken from various County documents:

In 1980, Arlington had a residential population of **153,000** and an employment population of **156,000**. **Today**, Arlington has a residential population of **192,000** and an employment population of **201,000**. **In 2025**, Arlington is projected to have a residential population of **214,000** and an employment population of **295,000**.

The average size household has dropped from 2.12 persons in 1990 to an estimated 2.09 persons in 2000. More than 70 percent of Arlington residences are one or two person households.

Since 1980, the amount of commercial space in Arlington has doubled to 40 million square feet.—more commercial space than Baltimore (24 million sq. ft.) or Seattle (28 million sq. ft.). There are more jobs per square foot in the Ballston-Rosslyn corridor than in downtown Miami or San Diego.

The County's population is more diverse. Persons of Hispanic origin now make up more than 15 percent of the population. The school population is 49 percent Caucasian American, 35 percent Hispanic American, 11 percent African American, and 5 percent Asian American. The County has a higher percentage of students eligible for school lunches than the average for the region.

Seven percent of Arlington residents have incomes at or below the poverty line of \$16,000 a year. Many more families have incomes below 125 percent and 150 percent of the poverty line.

In 1999, the real property tax base was evenly divided between commercial and residential. In 1986, the property tax rate was 94 cents per \$100 of assessed valuation. In 2000, the rate is \$1.02.

In summary, for many reasons, including location, location, location, Arlington will continue to be a hot residential and commercial redevelopment market. The impacts of market place forces and other changes in Arlington raise the following kinds of questions about the County's future.

What kind of community will Arlington become if its future is entirely shaped by market forces? Is there a difference between economic growth and economic development? Which approach has Arlington been taking? What approach should it take in the future?

Is there a desired ratio between residential and employment populations? Is there a point at which a community becomes more defined by the number of persons working in it than by the character of its residential neighborhoods, schools, and public services? Should we care what defines Arlington?

Is it a concern that more than 70 percent of our residences are one or two person households? Is that fact the result of

macro demographic trends or does it also reflect, at least in part, local zoning ordinances and policies? Should Arlington seek to encourage construction and/or renovation of more units suitable for families?

Can Arlington through various policies help shape the make-up of its residential population? If so, should it seek to do so? What kind of mix is desired? What kinds of policies and programs should be considered?

Is affordable housing important to the community? If so, why? Can and should Arlington set a goal for the number of affordable housing units? How can it achieve that goal?

How much does the entire County population value good schools? How do residents with no children in schools — the large majority of Arlington households — become engaged with and supportive of good schools? Should the larger community invest in continuing education and/or increased pre-school education? What does it mean now and is the future to be a "learning community?"

What does it mean to be a "caring community?"

Is the physical and mental health status of the resident and employee populations a local concern? If so, how can the County measure that status? What kinds of programs might be effective to help improve that status?

What impacts will continued development have on the County's physical infrastructure and environment? What costs and regulations should be borne by the private and the public sectors to deal with these issues?

What are the impacts on families and children forced to move because of redevelopment? What are the responsibilities of the County and of developers to assist these families, if any?

How important are independent small businesses to the quality of community life? Should the County take steps to help preserve opportunities for independent small businesses?

And finally, there are questions of "community." What does "community" mean today and in the future? Is Arlington County a community or is it a collection of neighborhoods that come together occasionally, or both? Can Arlington County be a community? If so, in what sense and how defined? Should community building be a County goal?

Are there shared values that cross cultures and neighborhoods and can help build a "County community?" If so, what are those values? Are there values that divide groups and neighborhoods into separate communities? If so, how can the differences be overcome?

Arlington New Directions Coalition believes it is time to for a community-wide discussion of such questions. The task is not to curse or praise the past or the present but to think boldly about the future. The challenge is to ask and determine what kind of community Arlington ought to be.

ANDC Public Forum on Development — Highlights

Mary Rouleau, ANDC Secretary, opened the forum held May 6 in the National Rural Electric Cooperative Building, by describing the evolution of ANDC, explaining how the group grew out of the Arna Valley redevelopment debate but is not a single issue organization. She explained that ANDC plans to have forums in the future on other important issues affecting Arlington's future. She also noted that today's forum was designed to address the wide variety of issues related to development in Arlington.

Responding to the opening remarks by Jack Cornman (see page #1) were the following panelists: Dick Herbst, president of the Arlington Ridge Civic Association; Voncille Hines, president of the Arlington Branch of the NAACP and chair of the Multi-Cultural Citizens Advisory Commission; Claudia Soares, president of the Arlington Hispanic Parents Association; Greg Cahill, owner of Whitlow's Restaurant on Wilson Blvd.; Bob Olson, member of the Arlington Community Sustainability Roundtable steering committee; Walter Webdale, president of AHC, Inc. (formerly Arlington Housing Corporation); and Cecilia Cassidy, executive director of Rosslyn Renaissance. The panelists made the following remarks:

- Arlington is on the cusp of tilting too much toward commercial development.
- The issue of diversity (ethnic and income levels) is prominent. Redevelopment in Arlington has had a devastating impact on the poor and disadvantaged and, ultimately, the wider community. If affordable housing is not available, Arlington will lose the diversity that it cherishes and will become more homogeneous.
- Hispanic children constitute a large and growing proportion of the County's school population. Economic development has changed the physical characteristics of the County; minority achievement is still an important concern. Lower expectations for minority students are a reality, and negative expectations have become a reality. High expectations are essential.
- Small business is an important component of the community, and the County needs to have staff whose job is to look out for the small business perspective.
- The problems of "success" are not just an issue in Arlington. Development should be evaluated against a set of indices that emphasize values — that make things work for the long run. Being so close to D.C., we have the potential to be a national model.
- There is real price associated with success. The important thing is for Arlington's real sense of community to be preserved. Affordable housing is quickly disappearing. If nothing is done, we will lose our affordable housing stock. We should use the funds generated by the success to fund affordable housing; and we should choose developers that contribute to the community and to affordable housing.
- People have to sit across the table before the development comes to final plan. It is important to intercede early in the planning process and it is important to become part of the process. Activists need to know the County's sector plans for various areas and what they do and don't account for.

DISCUSSION FROM THE FLOOR

Following the panelists' discussion, there was a rich and lively discussion among the forum attendees, panelists, and Cornman. The comments listed below highlight some of the

points made:

- There is a need for a county-wide task force on "residential policy." We need to think about 10-20 years from now or the developers will tell us what our policies will be.
- Arlingtonians are tired of development bulldozing diverse middle class South Arlington and in-fill development in North Arlington. They are tired of the County Board deferring to developers. They want a wide range of affordable housing, especially single-family homes.
- Success has made Arlington very arrogant. A Democratic Board made the Arna Valley decision. If there's going to be any change, it will have to be accomplished at the political level.
- How could the County have saved Arna Valley? It would have required earlier intervention — sector plan, etc. This forum and the Sustainability Roundtable are important ways to raise up concerns and educate.
- We need to hire school bus drivers from far outside the County. We may have to bring them in from as far away as West Virginia because people working as bus drivers cannot afford to live in our community. Teachers are better paid now, but 60% of teachers don't live in Arlington, many because they cannot afford to.
- Development tends to be unfriendly to residents and small businesses. How do we become more proactive?
- Successful communities have a vision that looks beyond short term goals. If you have a good framework, then you can allow it to work on a project-by-project basis. If the vision is not there, then project-by-project decision-making does not work.
- Is hiring a problem for service businesses, especially given the lack of affordable housing?
- Yes, hiring is a problem but mainly due to the economic boom. Employees have to move because of housing renovation, but they want to stay in the area for mass transit. Metro has been a particular help for employees, more than for bringing in customers.
- Transportation is a mounting problem. Is there a maximum capacity of vehicles we can absorb in Arlington?
- A lot of us don't believe we have an adequate vision now, but rezoning/downzoning are difficult and subject to legal challenges. We need to figure out a way to engage REITS (real estate investment trusts) and community joint-ventures.
- The high density on the Metro Corridor seems to result in the loss of affordable housing. Pollard Gardens is an example of how the current policy did not work; the affordable units will become unaffordable in 7 years.
- We should focus on what we can do. Also, we need to recognize that people become discouraged about their interaction with the existing processes. Staff relationships with citizens should also be considered — is this working? Some staff do not treat citizens well and it appears that the Board works for the staff and not vice versa. The Board needs to be truly engaged in the visioning process.
- When we look at the County land use plan with its additional density, many people will not be happy with the plan. A tremendous amount of additional commercial space is already on the books, which will bring even greater imbalance to the future mix of residential and commercial. The vision in place is not adequate for the future. We need to revisit it.

ence shows that “good” development is inclusive, sustainable, and economically beneficial to those affected by it. And, conversely, “bad” development extracts wealth from the community, wastes human and environmental resources, disadvantages current residents and workers, widens the gap between rich and poor, and often subjects residents and small businesses to absentee owners who care little about the community.

Communities across America are finding ways to distinguish good development from bad? Figure 1 below provides some key initial questions that the community and its elected officials can ask to establish community criteria against which a proposed development or redevelopment can be weighed and judged. If development is people-oriented and directed toward enhancing the community and improving the lives of its residents, local small business owners, and workers, it is “good” development. If Arlington’s current neighborhoods and workplaces are the real beneficiaries of development and are treated justly in the development process and in the outcomes, it is “good” development. “Good” development enhances the County’s environmental quality. “Good” development takes responsibility for the legitimate needs and desires of the community and is accountable to community interests. “Good” development enhances the quality of life and living standards of the County’s current residents and workers.

County Board and Staff Responsibility

In Arlington, we have traditional channels, such as civic associations and citizen advisory commissions, as well as direct testimony, to provide community input into decisions before the County government. At times of intense development activity, such as our own, citizens must not only be vigilant in monitor-

ing development proposals brought before County Staff and County Board members, but they also have the right to expect the staff and board members to exercise their responsibility to protect the community. Simply put, it is the responsibility of the County Government to use all of its powers and tools to encourage and promote good development and to discourage and fight bad development.

Each time a development project is proposed, it is the duty of local elected officials and County staff as well as citizen advisory commissions and civic associations to ensure that the project is viewed in the context of neighborhood and community needs and is integrated into the larger existing and living organism that we call “the Arlington community.” The role of the local government is to regulate the excesses that private profit-making property owners and developers propose and to develop a product that truly benefits the residents and workers of the community and of the neighborhoods affected.

When engaged in project review, there are three key questions that need to be asked and answered in determining whether a project is “good” or “bad”? 1) What will be produced/developed? 2) How will it be produced/developed? and 3) Who will “own” and benefit from what is produced/developed?

What Will Be Produced/Developed?

What will be produced/developed should be considered in the context of the needs of the community. Regarding residential development, County statistics show that we need more housing units that serve households who earn 60% and below of the area median income. Arlington needs larger housing units — family-sized rental and owner-occupied. In addition, housing

Figure 1

Value	"Good Development"	"Bad Development"
Who benefits?	Residents, workers, neighborhoods and entire community	Profit-driven investors, developers and wealth extractors
What factors are primary in guiding decisions?	Quality of life of present residents and businesses	Profit maximization
What is the relationship to the natural and social environment?	Protects and enhances both the natural and social environment	Does what is easiest and cheapest to increase the developers bottom line, and shifts the natural and social cleanup costs to the public
Does the developer get involved with addressing community concerns?	Gets involved and works with community to address its real concerns and needs	Addresses only what is necessary to get their project approved and shifts responsibility to the public sector
Who owns the final product?	Encourages local ownership which links concern, responsibility and accountability to the community	Absentee ownership which delinks concern, responsibility and accountability to the community
To whom is the developer accountable?	Is accountable to the residents and workers in the development area and to the entire community	Is accountable primarily to its investors and stockholders for maximizing profits

is needed for single residents earning less than 30% of area median income. Residential development projects that come up for review should be measured against these community needs.

When it comes to commercial development, Arlington has been well served in the past by responsible businesses that provide products and services needed by Arlington residents and workers and that invest in the community and its human capital and potential. An important factor in the high quality of Arlington life is the convenience with which we can do business everyday with reliable, locally based firms with a long history of Arlington community involvement. Therefore, when a commercial development project comes up for review, we need to ask, will that project serve and strengthen or displace and weaken existing and desirable local businesses? Developers should work with the community to create mixed-use sites, enhance small business prospects, and grow local businesses that are not export-driven in terms of their product and services.

In addition, when commercial development or redevelopment is proposed, the community should ask: Are the businesses that are likely to locate in that development selling safe and beneficial products and services, providing secure jobs at a living wage, providing safe and participatory workplace environments, and covering their own costs — including environmental and social — rather than leaving those costs to be paid for by Arlington taxpayers?

How Will It Be Produced/Developed?

This question primarily revolves around environmental, labor, and externalized cost impacts of a given development project.

1. Environmental: Is the proposed project environmentally friendly in both the short-term and the long-term? Are existing site materials to be reused or recycled, and are other recycled and energy-saving products to be used in the construction? Will site-specific environmental benefits and characteristics be kept or destroyed, enhanced or diminished? Are energy-conservation (or green building components) being planned for the development?

2. Labor: Will the employees of the developer, construction contractor, other service-providers and the prospective users of the developed space be treated fairly, paid a living wage, provided with health benefits, and have a mechanism for input into improving working conditions? Are profit-sharing or employee-ownership plans available?

3. Externalized Costs: What are the financial, social and other costs to the community of the proposed development project? Which costs will be paid by the development itself, and which costs are left to the community? Is the community being asked for public subsidies and tax breaks, and, if so, what products or services will the community receive in return? Will the benefits to be received by the community be equal to or greater than the benefits given by the community? What are the guarantees that long-term benefits promised would actually be provided?

We need to consider a number of factors that we have not in the past because many recent development outcomes have not been friendly and beneficial to the residents, workers, and neighborhoods of the County. In order to get good development, we must think in this broader context and ask these more focused questions.

Who Will Own and Benefit from What Is Produced/Developed?

Development project review by County Government must be sensitive to ownership patterns created or sustained by the development activities. Good development discourages absentee ownership and encourages a broadening of ownership among local people. Property rights lose their moral legitimacy when they are used to exclude others from meeting their basic needs. Local ownership and benefits-sharing strengthen accountability to the community and create more human-scale organization, while absentee ownership weakens accountability to the community because distance dulls sensitivities and blunts responsibility. Absentee ownership is extractive, taking resources away from the community, while local ownership and benefits-sharing increase community sustainability and local self-reliance.

The powers of County Government (land-use, zoning, fiscal and tax) must give considerable weight to who owns and who benefits from a given development. The chief beneficiaries must be the people who live in the County (both owners and renters, and all incomes and cultures) and the local people who own and operate small businesses in the County. Anything less is an abdication of responsibility by County Government.

In short, we need to change the way Arlington development projects are reviewed and approved. We need to consider a number of factors that we have not considered in the past, because many recent development outcomes have not been friendly and beneficial to the residents, workers and neighborhoods of the County. In order to get good development, we must think in this broader context and ask these more focused questions. If we as a community do not work for good development, our future will be burdened by bad development; and Arlington will not be the inclusive, diverse, just and people-friendly place which we have the opportunity to be.

Next Steps

There are at least two things that we can do to help us get more “good” development outcomes:

1) Through real and structured input from all economic levels, cultures, genders, ages and household sizes in the County, we can develop a filter or screen of evaluation questions that each development project must answer before it moves forward through the development review process of the County. The developer would be asked to prepare a “development impact statement” that answers these questions as a part of its de-

velopment project submission. By doing this statement, the developer will quickly learn what is important in a development project in Arlington and will have an opportunity, therefore, to begin to address these aspects of their development project from the initial planning stages. Through such evaluation questions and developer answers, the community will have a far better way to judge specific development projects. County government will have a set of principles or standards to go by. Community dependency on County staff interpretation of vague County Board goals and desires will be eliminated.

2) We should create a community development corporation (CDC) run by a widely-representative and democratically-selected board of Arlington residents and workers (from a variety of income levels, cultures, genders, ages and household sizes), independent of County government, to be proactive in attracting and generating good development projects. The CDC could be owned by Arlingtonians and could generate a modest return on a defined limited investment. The CDC could partner with private developers or bring development projects forward on its own; and it would be responsible for putting the financing together for its projects. The projects initiated under this mechanism would need to do their own development impact statements and answer the same questions as other development projects are asked to answer. The CDC could initiate development projects beneficial to Arlington and its various neighborhoods that might not otherwise be considered, as well as get some community needs met that might otherwise go unmet.

ANDC invites you, the reader, to nominate development projects in Arlington County - past or present - that you think have been "good" or "bad". Just write a couple of paragraphs that describe the project (its location, its product and its characteristics); and another paragraph about why you think it is/was a "good" or "bad" development project. Send your paragraphs to ANDC, c/o Charles Rinker, 524 North Jackson Street, Arlington, VA 22201.

2. Is the County actively pursuing creative solutions for affordable housing, such as that recommended by the Rosslyn Renaissance, where it makes sense?
3. Is the County really targeting affordable housing units to those truly in need through the proper mix of median income percentages — even if it means greater contributions from the County or developer?
4. What is the "negotiation" process over affordable housing contribution and other "community benefits" really about? What kind of contributions do developers think they are expected to make when they first think about a project?
5. How can the Site Approval process be open to public participation when staff and the Board allow developers to engage in last-minute changes without any consequences?

In our May 21st letter to the Board, ANDC stated:

"We think the Twin Oaks development decision [which, at that point, had yet to be made], coming in the wake of the Affordable Housing Task Force [AHTF] recommendations, as well as considerable input from various community groups over the past year, gives the Board a unique opportunity to explore new avenues, assert itself on behalf of low- and middle-income resident households, and send new signals to developers. We cannot express strongly enough how important it is for the Board to give clear direction to the County staff about the use of bonus density and other incentives. **We need to begin an era in Arlington where developers understand long before they contract to buy a property, let alone submit their first draft of a proposal, that they are expected to make a meaningful contribution to affordable housing — even if that means a less extravagant site design and/or lower property price.**"

It is time for that era to begin.

Join our ANDC committees!

We are in the process of transforming ANDC into more of a committee-driven organization. The following committees have been formed. We hope you'll join us. Please contact the conveners as listed or indicate your interest and return this form to:

**ANDC Committees
524 N. Jackson St.
Arlington, VA 22201**

- ___ 1. **Affordable Housing** - Charlie Rinker, 703-524-0995 cwrinker@juno.com
Will monitor implementation of the Affordable Housing Task Force Report, participate in targeted Site Plan decisions, explore a public education campaign about affordable housing, etc.
- ___ 2. **Economic Development** - Mary Rouleau, 703-527-1063 marycarl@gateway.net
Will monitor activities of Economic Development Commission, Potomac Yard land use, etc.
- ___ 3. **Arlington Futures** - Lora Rinker, 703-524-0995, lar18@juno.com
Will monitor and participate in Arlington Futures Task Force process.
- ___ 4. **Living Wages** - Dave Knudsen, 703-533-2157, canute@worldnet.att.net
Will research wage levels paid to County employees, work with other groups to educate public about wage levels and cost-of-living issues.
- ___ 5. **ANDC Newsletter** - Kit Johnston, 703-276-7748, kitkat5@erols.com
Will produce at least two issues each year.

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current residents of Columbia Pike — renters and the poor. It will be development and displacement of large segments of the current poorer residents and business establishments.

The county has narrowed the focus to Columbia Pike — where are the neighborhoods?

At the June 29 meeting at Arlington Mill, the County planner was asked how the density plans and the sketches of redevelopment possibilities for Columbia Pike would affect the adjoining neighborhoods. The planner's responses were, in effect, "I haven't thought about that" and "I don't know." While it is unreasonable to expect a detailed analysis of such impacts at this time, it is reasonable to think about the relationships while sketching a possibility. It is reasonable to encourage a discussion of the interrelationship of ideas and the consequences of taking an action on the larger sense of what a good community is. The apparent disconnect may illustrate the previously stated disconnect between a focus on things and a focus on people. The disconnect may also illustrate what one County staff person said is the County Board charge to focus only on Columbia Pike and one block on either side of it in the planning. Either way, if left unchallenged, the process becomes narrow and skewed.

We should ask for a community impact study for any specific plan recommendation, similar to environmental impact studies.

The County ignores or diverts many of the suggestions from the community — Is the basic planning framework already set regardless of what anybody says?

We have discussed the deflection of the housing issue already. It was the second most mentioned suggestion made at the initial meeting of the west end Columbia Pike community on April 29, as captured by the transcript issued by the County. The most frequently mentioned suggestions related to increased programs (e.g. computers, ESL, adult education, early childhood programs) and the need for additional space to house these enlarged programs.

When asked how the sketches addressed the suggestions made at the initial meetings, the planner said that they were based on them. Yet, there is nothing about housing west of Four Mile Run in the sketches. The only mention of the Arlington Mill Community Center or any public space for increased programs is a sketch that replaces the existing building with a square denoting a new building in the front parking lot. When asked how the sketch addressed the more than two dozen individual suggestions for an enlarged building, the planner stated that such suggestions awaited the County's revised siting process and a needs assessment. As a result, the area west of Four Mile Run to the Fairfax County line is largely blank in the sketches except for some improvements directly on Columbia Pike.

Yes, the needs of the Arlington Mill Community Center could be addressed in the County's yet to be determined revised siting process. But, it also is a vital issue now in the west end neighborhoods along Columbia Pike and should be addressed in the Columbia Pike planning process. Yes, a more comprehensive

needs assessment is desirable. But, where is the needs assessment for the sketched mixed-use redevelopment of a portion of the Barcroft Apartments? Or the proposed building heights at different corners along the Pike? Or the environmentally related uses of space adjacent to Four Mile Run? Or parking in the back rather than in the front? Or the redevelopment of the Career Center site? These are all ideas that have emerged, and they could very well be good ones. Presenting options is a good way to encourage discussion. The six density options are examples of this. Not presenting options because the issue could be covered in another venue or because the needs assessment has not been done are strategies to avoid discussion, not encourage it.

When such avoidance occurs in the face of multiple suggestions that the issues are important to at least a major segment of the community, one begins to wonder whether the direction is already set. Remember that "public facilities" were eliminated from the charge to the planners. Are they planning to keep us from considering community centers, libraries, police stations, fire stations, human services area offices, or schools in this planning process? **On the other hand, why not consider public facilities and services as the core of the neighborhood center at Four Mile Run Drive and Columbia Pike?**

Conclusion

The County Board should assign housing, public facilities, education, and employment as equal planning priorities with transportation, economic development, and other important issues. It should also place consideration of people at the core of the planning process and talk about material changes in light of a discussion of who we want to live in the community, who we want to work in the community, and who we want to shop and visit the community. The County Board and all residents of Arlington should adopt as its vision of Columbia Pike, **Development without Displacement.**

We encourage all individuals and organizations to urge the County Board and the County planners to take these actions. Call County Board members, write them letters, meet with them, speak at County Board meetings. Do the same with the County planners. Plan with your organizational colleagues and members to take action to make the planning process for Columbia Pike serve all of its population.



Arlington New Directions Coalition
524 N. Jackson Street
Arlington, Virginia 22201

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Mark your calendars now:

ANDC is sponsoring a community discussion with Michael Shuman

On Monday, October 30, at 7:00 PM in the Arlington Central Public Library Auditorium, (1015 North Quincy Street). Mr. Shuman is the author of *Going Local: Creating Self-Reliant Communities in a Global Age* and director of the **Institute for Economic Empowerment and Entrepreneurship**, Village Foundation, Alexandria. Mr. Shuman will focus on what Arlington can do to achieve more community-friendly development.

Key Public and ANDC Meetings

I would like to be on a ___ phone or ___ e-mail list for key public and ANDC meetings. Send info to marycarl@gateway.net; leave a message at 703-527-1063 or return the enclosed form.

Make a Donation

ANDC is not a membership organization. We are a nonprofit with 501c3 status, so donations to ANDC are tax deductible. We rely on individual and institutional donations to help with the expense of our newsletter (circulation 2,000+) and events. Your help would be appreciated!! Please mail donations to:

ANDC
c/o Mary Rackmales - ANDC Treasurer, 874 N. Jacksonville, Arlington, VA 22205.

Your Ideas

The primary purpose of ANDC is to present information to Arlingtonians on public policy issues. Currently, our two primary "delivery" systems for information are the ANDC newsletter, *New Directions*, and forums like "Has Success Spoiled Arlington?". Send us your ideas for:

- Topics for future forums:
- Topics for newsletter articles/series:

Please keep me on the newsletter mailing list:

Name _____
Address _____
City _____ State _____ Zip _____
Phone _____

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• ***Send the form to:*** •
• Mary Rouleau •
• ANDC Secretary •
• 811 N. Daniel Street •
• Arlington, VA 22201 •
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