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# New Directions

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Arlington New Directions Coalition  
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## Region's Economic Health Affected by Housing Crisis

*Excerpts and paraphrases from a paper entitled "The Impact of the Housing Sector on the Washington Area's Economy" prepared for the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments by Professor Stephen S. Fuller, George Mason University*

Housing is a major variable in the regional economy of Washington, D.C. and critical to its long-term growth and vitality. This economic importance can be demonstrated in several distinct ways:

- Construction jobs
- Investment or cash value
- As a place for workers to live
- As an alternative source of consumer spending

Each of these dimensions can be viewed as generating value in the economy and contributing to its gross product (gross regional product=value of goods and services produced in the region).

However, each has a negative side, with housing—sometimes lack of it or the high price of it—potentially a constraint on a local economy's ability to achieve to its full growth potential. It also can represent a diversion of spending away from sectors of the economy having greater job and income effects.

Continued on page 10

### Contents

- 2.....Why Public Education Is a Good Investment
- 2.....Arlington's Public Policy Process Is Broken
- 3.....A Lesson in Supply and Demand
- 4.....County Board Agrees to Revenue-Sharing with Schools
- 5.....Tid Bits from the Smart Growth Web Site
- 6.....Housing Issues Motivate More than Half of Movers
- 7.....Columbia Pike Plan Delayed

## Development in Arlington: What Kind of County Are We Building?

*Report on ABC Development Forum Held Last March*

By Kit Johnston and Charlie Rinker

*This forum was valuable, but where will what was learned go from here? As you read the following, consider the need for the County Board to establish a way to engage all sectors of the Arlington community in a process purposely designed to help define the kind of development and redevelopment the community wants. Perhaps a good place to start would be the County's planned review of its sector plans, as well as its planning process along Columbia Pike. The involvement of all sectors of the Arlington community—and especially the lower-income and minority members most often affected by development and redevelopment—will be critical.*

Armed with facts from the 2000 Census, County Manager Ron Carlee opened the ABC Forum on Development at George Mason University's Arlington campus last March with such statistics as:

- On any given weekday, there are more workers in Arlington than residents; and
- More than 200,000 vehicles traverse our county daily.

Carlee noted that these facts are no accident but the inevitable result of the model of development Arlington began to use in about 1940. There was nothing particular systematic about it, and certainly very little attention was paid to whether whole commercial or residential areas would lose their sense of place. As a result, in part, today we have the Rosslyn-Ballston corridor, where the sense of "neighborhood" got lost.

By contrast, Carlee maintained, we could choose to look more carefully at another model of development, called "new urbanism," which operates from a set of principles (see the box on page 6 for an articulation of some of the principles). What made old urban neighborhoods work as neighborhoods (creating a sense of place) was that certain features were retained or created, such as town squares, pe-

Continued on page 8

## Why Public Education Is a Good Investment

By Libby Garvey, Chair, Arlington School Board, and Andi Cullins, Member, Arlington New Directions Coalition Board of Directors

Arlington Public Schools are currently supported by a revenue-sharing program that allocates 47.8 percent of locally generated tax revenues to the schools.\* Schools are the single largest part of our local budget. Historically, the voters in Arlington have overwhelmingly supported the schools with the funding necessary to make our county schools among the best in the nation. Why has the larger community, including a significant portion of the population that does not have school-aged children, continued to view our schools as an important and wise investment?

In Arlington, as elsewhere, public schools educate a very high percentage of young people in the community. These children represent our future and the future of our county. Now, as in the future, chances are quite good that your bank teller, your doctor, the mechanic who fixes your car or checks out your next flight, the agent who sells your house, and the firefighters and police officers who protect you and yours, will have been educated in public schools. In short, public schools supply employees for our local businesses and help determine our health, safety, and overall quality of life.

The quality of a community's public schools is a collective statement about a community's values and its belief in the future. Good schools are, justifiably, a source of community pride. Good public schools say to all that a community values education, values children and families, and understands the value of building for

Continued on page 10

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## Arlington's Public Policy Process

### Is Broken

By Jack Cornman

Arlington's public policy process is broken or, at least, it is in need of major repair. Too often, the process has devolved into County Board hearings on zoning adjustments or on the budget. Both venues are more concerned with implementing, not setting policies.

The problem with setting policy through zoning adjustments is that elected officials are reacting rather than leading. Indeed, one County Board Member reportedly expressed concern, voting recently against a high-rise, high-priced condo building in Rosslyn, that the Board was losing control of the process (of guiding redevelopment of the County's built environment—a process and policy issue with significant implications for the future of Arlington).

The problems with using the budget to set policy goals are: (1) many issues and options, particularly those not mentioned in the draft budget, never get on the agenda, and (2) setting the budget comes at the end of the policy process. The purpose of budget hearings and decisions is to allocate next year's funding among approved policy goals competing for limited financial resources, not to set ongoing policy goals.

A properly working policy process goes through the following (admittedly overly simplified) steps:

- setting a vision of what the community seeks to be

or do;

- identifying and documenting issues that promote or hinder attaining the vision;
- developing goals to address the issues and options to attain the goals;
- selecting and funding the preferred option(s);
- implementing the selected option(s), and
- evaluating the outcomes and adjusting the implementation as necessary.

For example, the County might determine that for moral and economic reasons, County residents new to this country should become productive workers and participants in community affairs as soon as possible and that the inability to speak English is a major barrier to attaining that vision. The County would then collect data on the demand among working-age residents for English-as-a-second-language courses, set a goal for meeting that demand in a timely fashion, consider different ways for attaining the goal, and select and fund the program(s) best suited to meeting the goal. Finally, after a year or two, the County would evaluate the effectiveness and continued need for the program, making adjustments as needed.

Similarly, if the Arlington public process were in good order, the policy making process at the County Board level would be focused on trends that will determine what kind of community the County will become over the next 25 years. The following are just four such trends that Arlington's public policy process should address.

## A Lesson in Supply and Demand

A recent article in *The Washington Post* serves as a reminder to communities such as Arlington that they will be competing for teachers for the foreseeable future...and that a key element in this competition is housing availability.

The article noted that an estimated 3,000 new teachers were needed in Northern Virginia school districts this past fall. Arlington needed 300; Loudoun another 378; Prince William, 500 and Fairfax, 1,800. In addition, the supply is tight for some teachers, particularly for special education and higher level math and science.

So what did localities do about it? Arlington has begun to make some long-awaited, long-needed changes in its retirement benefits, yet, last year, had to put off some pay raise adjustments. These adjustments will be the subject of a new

Arlington Education Association campaign beginning this fall. The campaign will maintain that, not only are pay raises needed but higher quality recruitment and retention practices.

Interestingly, in Fairfax last year school officials introduced a “Smooth Transitions” program to provide one-year, no-interest loans in the amount of \$2,500 to first year teachers, who typically earn, in Fairfax, no more than \$38,000/yr., when the median income is well over \$80,000 and one-bedroom market rate rentals easily exceed \$1,000 a month.

In addition, Fairfax County officials are working with the business community to obtain discounts on housing for teachers.

\* *The New York Times* recently reported there were 0.57 children for each adult woman of childbearing age in Manhattan, and that there were only three communities in the country with a lower ratio. Arlington was one of the three. Granted a number of macro trends affect those figures, but even taking those trends into consideration, the figures still raise questions about Arlington’s approach to development, zoning, and affordable housing. Do we really want Arlington to be a little Manhattan, with fewer children, more high-priced housing, and more high-rise commercial buildings? If not, what can public policy do to help shape a different future?

\* The Page County (Virginia) Public Schools made a study of the true value of property for each student in the jurisdictions of Northern Virginia. The figure for Fairfax County was \$583,000. The figure for Arlington County was \$1.15 million, the highest in the region. Arlington’s figure is the result of its small children’s population, of commercial redevelopment, and of escalating property values. Other than to suggest that Arlington has the tax base to support high-quality schools and public services—and to help explain the County’s moderate real estate tax rate—the figure raises these kinds of questions for the future:

- For what purpose(s) does the County seek to increase its property tax base - to support schools, public services, public amenities, and/or to keep real estate tax rates low?
- Does the County have a goal in mind for its true

property value figure or is the sky the limit, regardless of how commercial growth may or may not affect other aspects of life in Arlington? Is the County’s approach “growth for growth’s sake”? If not, how does it define community development (which encompasses but is more than economic growth) and the part economic growth will play in attaining that vision?

\* Over the past 20 years, the number of jobs in Arlington has grown faster than the residential population. For 2000, the estimated figures were 189,000 residents, 201,000 jobs, and a day time population (residents who stay home plus workers in Arlington) of 278,000. In 2025, with no

Continued on page 9

*New Directions* is the newsletter of the Arlington New Directions Coalition (ANDC). ANDC reports on local news and presents formal ANDC positions. *New Directions* also publishes articles and opinion pieces consistent with ANDC’s mission and values concerning critical public issues in Arlington County.

Contact Charlie Rinker at (703) 243-5775 for more information about ANDC or Kit Johnston at to be placed on the mailing list. Donations help defray printing and mailing costs, \$10 per year is suggested.

### Editorial Board

Jack Cornman, Kit Johnston, Carlos Luna, Charlie Rinker, and Mary Rouleau.

# County Board Agrees to Revenue-Sharing with Schools for FY2002 on Heels of State Budget Uncertainty

## *Additional Teacher Compensation Consideration Postponed*

By Marjorie McCreery

Early last spring, the School Board presented a budget for the Arlington Public Schools in FY2002 that reflected their Strategic Plan for the schools as well as local, state, and national requirements for public education to the County Board. The budget reflected mutual agreement by the County and School Boards to slow the growth of the APS operating budget. It also contained a request by APS' Superintendent to begin to increase teacher salaries, providing incentives for new teachers to come to Arlington and for current teachers to continue teaching in Arlington.

Much occurred after that, however. First, despite the then-acting County Manager's recommendation to increase the Real Property tax rate by 4 cents per \$100 assessed evaluation, without much public discussion, the County Board voted to advertise no increase to the Real Property tax rate. Then, the Virginia General Assembly failed to agree on a state budget, due to differences of opinion in the Assembly and between the Assembly and the Governor about implementation of the Governor's long-promised roll-back of the Personal Property tax. Subsequently, the Governor announced that he would begin instituting state budget cuts, in order to continue the spending plan adopted in the previous year. That old spending plan contained no cost-of-living adjustments for teachers and did not take school enrollment increases into account in state contributions to local public education.

The Arlington County Board then informed the School Board that the Superintendent's request for additional teacher compensation could not be considered. In addition, the County Board informed the School Board that they could not fund the previously agreed upon 8.8% increase in the County Transfer to schools.

The Superintendent went back to the drawing board, reducing the needed County Transfer to a total increase of 7.8% over the FY2001 budget. This action eliminated his proposed additional compensation for new and current teachers. In a move that acknowledged the continued uncertainty about the level of state funding for County programs and schools, the County Board also agreed—for this fiscal year—to a revenue-sharing plan, whereby the schools would receive 47.8% of the county operating budget. If additional funds became available the schools' appropriation

could increase. If funds were lost, the schools' appropriation could shrink.

Under the FY2002 Adopted County and School Board Budgets and the revenue-sharing agreement, school and county employees received a 3% cost-of-living adjustment. The school system will assume payment of an additional 1.5% of employees' Virginia Retirement System contributions in January 2002.

The objective of the Superintendent's teacher compensation initiative was to give Arlington a competitive advantage over surrounding jurisdictions. The postponed teacher salary plan would have provided an 8.8% across-the-board salary increase (including the cost-of-living adjustment and pay for an additional four days in the teacher work year). The beginning salary in Arlington Public Schools for teachers with master's degrees would have been \$40,000. (All Virginia teacher preparation programs require candidates to complete a bachelor's degree in the arts, sciences, or humanities and then complete a master's program in pedagogy and practice teaching.) Later in the plan, teachers, administrators, and citizens would have collaborated to develop a program of pay for performance to provide additional compensation for some teachers.

Without these improvements, neighboring jurisdictions offer higher pay at several steps of the scale. For example, teachers with Masters degrees earn higher salaries in Montgomery County, Maryland during their first seven years of teaching, than Arlington teachers do. Other school system salary scales exceed Arlington's at other steps. While current Arlington teacher salaries are not competitive, Arlington's cost-of-living is highest in the area, owing to our extremely high housing costs that make it very difficult for young teachers to live in the county.

The School Board informed the County Board that teacher compensation improvement would be their first priority in the FY2003 budget. A committee of citizens, teachers and administrators worked through the summer and early fall to perfect the plan that is now called the Teacher Excellence Initiative. A Blue Ribbon panel of citizens with expertise in employee compensation will review the recommendation and advise the Superintendent, before he completes his FY2003 budget proposal.

# Tid Bits from the Smart Growth Web Site

## ARIZONA

In the 50 years since its incorporation, Scottsdale has grown from a mile-square, 2,000-inhabitant “rustic hamlet” with “frontier personality” into a wealthy 185 square-mile, 220,000-resident city, determined to nurture the quaint character of its downtown, preserve fragile desert, and curb strip-mall-type development. In anniversary articles on Scottsdale’s transformation, *Arizona Republic* writers note that while some call Scottsdale “Snobsdale,” former state planning director Harry Higgins responds, “It’s high-end for everyone. Even the poor people are upscale” ....

[http://www.smartgrowth.org/information/news/news\\_trends06-01.html](http://www.smartgrowth.org/information/news/news_trends06-01.html)

As recommended by a committee of residents and developers, the Scottsdale City Council unanimously banned 75,000-or-more-square-foot “big box” stores on 134 square miles of environmentally sensitive land in the city’s north. This was sparked by residents’ fight against a Home Depot “megastore” proposed September 2000.

[http://www.smartgrowth.org/information/news/news\\_trends06-01.html](http://www.smartgrowth.org/information/news/news_trends06-01.html)

## CALIFORNIA

Fleshing out a national \$12 billion initiative to expand affordable housing, Fannie Mae and CitiMortgage of Oakland, a member of Citigroup, announced a partnership to provide \$2.1 billion over five years in low-interest mortgage loans to East Bay area low- and moderate-income, minority, and new immigrant families.

[http://www.smartgrowth.org/information/news/news\\_trends06-01.html](http://www.smartgrowth.org/information/news/news_trends06-01.html)

In an effort to revitalize Fillmore, Ventura County’s historically rural and now poorest city, officials worked out a 20-year plan to expand its area from 1,748 to 3,238 acres, increase its population from 14,000 to 20,000, and build about 1,200 homes, including many in an “executive style” attractive to upscale professionals.

[http://www.smartgrowth.org/information/news/news\\_trends06-01.html](http://www.smartgrowth.org/information/news/news_trends06-01.html)

## GEORGIA

Preparing to launch a tough review process for big projects in metro Atlanta later this summer, the Georgia Regional Transportation Authority released an early draft of the Development of Regional Impact (DRI) plan that would

make developers submit analyses of area air quality and traffic consequences with their permit and zoning applications.

[http://www.smartgrowth.org/information/news/news\\_trends06-01.html](http://www.smartgrowth.org/information/news/news_trends06-01.html)

## NEW JERSEY

The nonprofit New Newark Foundation, created three years ago to redevelop an eight-block segment of the city’s core, announced a \$180-million, mixed-use project, which will transform two long-vacant buildings from the National Register of Historic Places and two big parking lots into a 24-hour neighborhood, with about 550 loft apartments, upscale stores, restaurants and night clubs, courtyards and underground garages, all near public transit and a future rail to Newark International Airport.

[http://www.smartgrowth.org/information/news/news\\_trends06-01.html](http://www.smartgrowth.org/information/news/news_trends06-01.html)

Morris County Republicans won their freeholder majority in 1973 and strengthened it with a popular open-space property tax initiative in 1993, but now Democratic candidates want “to steal the GOP’s thunder” by proposing a much more aggressive land preservation approach.

[http://www.smartgrowth.org/information/news/news\\_trends06-01.html](http://www.smartgrowth.org/information/news/news_trends06-01.html)

Encouraged by growing support for land preservation across the state and in their two Passaic County towns, Pompton Lakes and Wanaque officials are planning November referenda on one-cent property tax increases, which would cost owners of the average \$130,000 homes about \$13 a year, raise \$40,000 a year in each town, and make the towns eligible for state Green Acres 50-percent matching grants and low-interest loans.

[http://www.smartgrowth.org/information/news/news\\_trends06-01.html](http://www.smartgrowth.org/information/news/news_trends06-01.html)

A decade-long transformation of the landscape in some Bergen County suburbs by “big money” has reached the town of Closter, where developers have razed about 70 of its modest homes since last year to build McMansions and where a petition drive to curb the trend prompted the Borough Council to start considering a zoning ordinance that would limit new home sizes.

[http://www.smartgrowth.org/information/news/news\\_trends06-01.html](http://www.smartgrowth.org/information/news/news_trends06-01.html)

## Housing Issues Motivate More than Half of Movers, According to the U.S. Census Bureau

According to two non-Census 2000 reports released by the U.S. Census Bureau, more than half (52 percent) of all of the people who moved when the U.S. economic engine was roaring hot in 1999 (between March 1999 and March 2000) did so for housing-related reasons.

More renters (33%) than homeowners (9%) moved, and more low-income households moved\* (21%) than upper-income households\*\* (12%).

“The desire to live in a new or better house or apartment was the most common reason cited for a short-distance move—one in which the mover remained in the same county,” said Jason Schachter, author of both reports, “Geographical Mobility: March 1999 to March 2000” and “Why People Move: Exploring the March 2000 Current Population Survey.”

A new job or a job transfer was the most common reason cited for a long-distance move—where the mover moved from one county to another.

Fifty-six percent of all moves made between 1999 and 2000 were within the same county, compared with 64 percent from 1997 to 1998. Nineteen percent of all moves made between 1999 and 2000 were from one state to another, up from 15 percent of those made between 1997 and 1998. An additional 20 percent who moved during the recent one-year period moved between counties in the same state, unchanged from the earlier period.

The reports also found that

- Overall, 43 million U.S. residents, or 16 percent of the population, moved to a new residence during the one-year period.
- Moving rates decline with age, at least until very advanced ages—about one-third of people in their 20s moved, while only four percent aged 65 to 84 did so.
- The South was the only region with a significant population increase as a result of internal migration between 1999 and 2000, showing a net gain of 227,000 people.
- Among people living in households with incomes under \$10,000, 33 percent moved for family-related reasons (such as marriage) and 11 percent for work-related reasons.
- For those living in households with incomes of more than \$75,000, 23 percent moved for family-related reasons and 20 percent for work-related reasons.
- The percentage of people who moved for work-related reasons increased in tandem with their educational level, from 14 percent for high school graduates to 28 percent for those with a master’s degree higher.

\*incomes of \$25,000 or less

\*\*incomes of \$100,000 or more

### What Is New Urbanism?

According to an article in the Dec. 8, 1995 *Wall Street Journal*, a group of “New Urbanist” architects and planners developed a set of community-design guidelines in 1991, a sampling of which follows:

- Communities should be planned to integrate housing, shops, offices, schools, parks, and civic facilities.
- Housing, jobs, and daily needs should be within walking distance of each other and transit.
- Housing should be available for citizens of diverse ages and economic backgrounds.
- Ample open space-squares, greens, and parks should be placed so as to encourage use.
- A well-defined edge of agricultural greenbelts or wildlife corridors should be protected from development.
- Pedestrian and bike paths should connect to all destinations and be protected.

# Columbia Pike Plan Delayed: Still Time for Your Ideas

By Todd Endo

The current draft plan for Columbia Pike is an improvement over previous plans. It includes the Arlington Mill Community Center for the first time and discusses housing. However, it still doesn't say much about specific plans to retain affordable housing in a booming housing market and says too little about transportation, the positive international diversity assets as a focal point for development, and the impact of transportation options. It is still much too "bricks and mortar" oriented, and far too little people and community oriented.

The completion of the Columbia Pike plan has been delayed until at least December and probably into 2002. The lead planner, Doug Woods, resigned and his duties have been assigned to Bob Rulli and Claude Williamson. They are still taking comments on the last draft. Call Bob Rulli at 228-3789 or email him at [rrulli@co.arlington.va.us](mailto:rrulli@co.arlington.va.us)

Arlington County planning staff presented its latest draft of a redevelopment plan for Columbia Pike to the County Board at a work session on April 24. The 23-page narrative, computer-generated drawings of potential new development, and maps culminate the early phases of the planning process.

The current draft provides detail within the general framework sketched out earlier in the planning process. Major development is envisioned for the "town center" that ripples out from the bull's eye at the intersection of Columbia Pike and Walter Reed Drive. A primary focus is to attract high tech businesses and organizations that could take advantage of the major ATT technology hub located in an ATT facility near that intersection. Mixed-use development, including office, residential, and ground floor retail in buildings that are depicted as 7-10 stories high, is envisioned for the area from Wayne Street on the east to Highland Street on the west.

Another node of development is a "village center" at the intersection of Columbia Pike and George Mason Drive. This would be smaller in scale than the "town center." Even smaller in scale would be a "neighborhood center" at the intersection of Columbia Pike and Four Mile Run. This center would focus on a new and enlarged Arlington Mill Community Center and an interpretive park along Four Mile Run.

## *New Aspects of the Draft*

The current draft indicates that the County and the

school system envision an enlarged (possibly by three or four times) Arlington Mill Community Center at its current site. Earlier plans did not acknowledge that the capacity and services of current public facilities, such as the Arlington Mill Community Center, need to be taken into account in plans for and projections of redevelopment.

At present, it seems possible that the alternative high school at the Mill could be permanently sited there, with expanded facilities to accommodate current overflow and even additional programs, such as Headstart, daycare, and employment assistance. There have also been discussions of linking Arlington Mill plans with plans for an indoor-outdoor amphitheater/concert hall that would extend eastward from the site toward Four Mile Run.

The County Board has initiated a planning process for a new, enlarged Arlington Mill Community Center through board resolution in August. In November, planning will begin in earnest with the community and the county and schools expect to have a bond issue in front of the voters next November.

Unlike previous drafts, the current draft also acknowledges the importance of affordable housing and the danger of drastic reduction in affordable housing units along and near the Pike as a result of redevelopment. In envisioning "a physical redevelopment plan" for Columbia Heights West and then other neighborhoods along Columbia Pike, the draft acknowledges that future steps in the process will need to take into consideration effects on and linkages to tenants and home owners. It recognizes that if apartment units are thoroughly renovated, the costs of such will tend to drive rents up \$250-400 per month and thus out of the affordability to many current residents. However, it doesn't provide new ideas for closing the "rent gap" for tenants as it did earlier in the draft in closing the "profit gap" for commercial investors. Instead it proposed a housing study beginning in Columbia Heights West and progressing to Fillmore Gardens, Foxcroft Terrace, and Barcroft.

## *Market-Driven Changes Already Occurring*

Changes in housing along the Pike are already underway, however. For example, the for-profit, Silverwood and Associates, has purchased the Quebec Apartments (172 units) and has negotiated a deal with the county for funding to renovate the property and to use federal Section 8 and County Housing Grants rental assistance to keep units affordable. ANDC and several affordable housing advocates were instrumental in getting an improved and more tenant-friendly redevelopment package. But delays by the devel-

**Continued on page 8**

Continued from page 7

oper and the County in getting rental assistance information out to the resident households has resulted in at least a quarter of the tenants having already moved from the site (some without their relocation assistance payments). Farther west on the Pike, Dittmar is substantially renovating its high-rise Wildwood Apartments and raising the rents considerably out of any definition of affordability. In its renovated building, rents for one-bedroom apartments rose from \$895-965 per month to \$1065-1140 per month and rents for two-bedroom apartments rose from \$1105-1250 per month to \$1415-1490 per month.

***The Transportation Hitch***

At the April work session, Board Chair Jay Fisette noted the lack of transportation plans for the Pike. At present, there are only options to be studied — from enhanced bus routes to Metro or light rail. He asked whether development plans could go forward without a decision on transportation. There is increasing concern that the planning for transportation is not keeping up with other aspects of the plan. Both Fisette and Board member Chris Zimmerman indicated that the plan will need to integrate transportation and affordable housing before it is submitted for Board approval later this year.

Continued from page 1

pedestrian friendly streets that invite browsing and meandering, close-by retail outlets and other facilities supplying food, clothing, and entertainment, schools within walking distance, an interesting and safe interlacing of streets and public spaces, and so on.

Invited guest Peter Katz, an urban planner and nationally known author on “new urbanism”, then described what he meant by the term. Healthy urban or urban village-like neighborhoods —

- have a center and an edge that create community identity and focus;
- are compact (about 1/4 mile or a 5-minute walk from center to edge);
- have mixed housing in terms of incomes and types;
- have mixed property uses with stores, houses/apartments, offices, and public buildings;
- are pedestrian-friendly with respect to sidewalks

- and innovative mass transit, such as light rail;
- have connected streets and hidden parking; and
- have workplace proximity.

According to Katz, communities need to have “appropriate backdrops for the public realm.” We need civic interaction, pedestrian comfort and safety, independence of movement for seniors and kids, market appeal and differentiation, lower infrastructure costs, and retained assets. The tools that communities have to use for “encouraging” these kinds of neighborhoods are codes and zoning. But Katz thinks that zoning is “too crude” — i.e., not precise enough to get communities where they want to be with respect to redevelopment in the direction of “new urbanism” principles. For Katz, zoning does not create smart growth; it creates large-scale single uses.

Arlington’s Director of Economic Development, Adam Wasserman, said his goal is the creation of value that will attract business to Arlington. He believes that new investment in Arlington is a good thing that produces higher tax revenue and thus better services. He believes that his role is “product development,” and the marketing of Arlington. He noted about one-third of Arlington’s residents are not a part of our economy, and that he wanted all citizens to share in our wealth.

**In a late-morning Q and A, one participant asked Katz whether Arlington wasn’t becoming too dense to be livable. Katz responded that density need not always translate into high-rises.** “The D.C. area has fallen in love with townhouses and high rises, but these tend to be over-used here,” he said. “We need to use density more creatively.” It would be better to have Parisian type densities, but with tiers, so that you can get “great streetscapes.”

Another questioner asked who was responsible for planning in Arlington: Developers? The Economic Development staff? Katz responded that all of us are responsible. “A plan can come from anywhere. It doesn’t have to come from government or developers. The best plans come from the people. Use incentives; use community-sensitive consultants. Land use is only a small part of planning!” **Carlee added that “we have to have a shared vision. Our General Land Use Plan was that at one time. Now we need to assess whether it is giving us what we want.”**

Following lunch, Bob Brosnan, Arlington’s planning director, described “the rules of the road in Arlington development.” The state of Virginia has allowed localities to establish general land use plans (GLUPs) and zoning. GLUP and zoning decisions must be consistent and not arbitrary. There are three types of zoning controls — by-right (which

are uses and development standards specifically authorized by a zoning ordinance or category that allows little or no discretion in its administration), site plan (which are forms of special exception that allow more flexibility in development, use, and density than permitted by-right, but which require County Board approval and allow the Board to assign conditions deemed appropriate to the site), and use permits (which are forms of special exception that allow uses in certain districts, but may need special conditions and safeguards in order to protect the community from undesirable impacts).

Brosnan said only 5% of Arlington's land — in the two Metro corridors — is zoned for high density; and that's where we try to concentrate increased density. He added that the County strives to keep a 50-50 breakdown between residential and commercial tax revenues.

Katz then spoke of "coding" as a better way to get the kind of planning and place identification that residents want. Whereas zoning defines blocks only in terms of density, use, floor-area-ratio, setbacks, parking requirements, and maximum building heights, coding—in addition—specifies frequency of openings, surface articulation, landscaping, street and building types, build-to-lines, floor-to-floor heights, and percentage of site frontage. Use becomes a subset of building types, allowing buildings to be used for different things over time. Houses occupy small lots clustered around attractive public places, and garages retreat to alleys and to the rear of the lots. Street grids replace isolated cul-de-sacs and the larger roads that connect them. Shopping takes place on Main Street with stores lining the sidewalks and parking in the rear.

Katz further noted how coding can encourage pedestrian versus automobile traffic by the building of sidewalks, narrow roads, and front porches, and the location of commercial and recreational facilities. Public transportation can be enabled by clustering neighborhoods, shops, and offices near bus, trolley, or light rail lines. Housing can be purposely varied in size and price to encourage income and age diversity.

In the afternoon Q and A, attending County Board member Chris Zimmerman stated that we as a County allow developers to drive the development process. Another panelist said that a community must become "developer ready" through community pre-planning and preparing to measure a developer's plans against what it wants. At one point, someone observed that people like mixed-use communities and that such communities are successful over time (i.e., "perform") because they are interesting and fun to be a part of.

**Continued from page 5**

## **OHIO**

With the rate of land loss in northwest Ohio four times faster than its population growth, Toledo's best chance to remain a strong "core city" lies in multi-jurisdictional planning cooperation and battling sprawl regionally, said a national land-use expert, Minnesota Democratic state senator Myron Orfield, in a presentation sponsored by the Common Ground Coalition at the Toledo Lucas County Public Library.

[http://www.smartgrowth.org/information/news/news\\_trends06-01.html](http://www.smartgrowth.org/information/news/news_trends06-01.html)

Visit the Smart Growth Network news area (<http://www.smartgrowth.org/information/news/news.html>) and archives (<http://www.smartgrowth.org/database/index.html>) for over 1,000 news items on smart growth!

The Smart Growth Network Website, <http://www.smartgrowth.org>, is a subset of <http://www.sustainable.org>, developed and maintained by, the Sustainable Communities Network (SCN).

**Continued from page 3**

changes in zoning, those figures (according to County projections) could be 218,000 residents, 295,000 jobs, and a 378,000-day-time population. Are those desirable goals? Should the County seek to increase or slow the rate of job growth? If so, with what goal(s) and for what purposes? What would be the impacts on the over all quality of life in Arlington if the County were home to twice as many jobs as residents?

\* The Task Force on Arlington's Future: A Vision for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century was told by a knowledgeable health official that Arlington County provides less medical care for poor people than many other communities. Is this correct? If so, how would that fact square with the vision of Arlington as a "caring community"? (1986 Commission on Arlington's Future) Shouldn't the County Board want to find out if the statement is true?

If Arlington is to regain control of economic growth, if Arlington is to actively shape its future rather than to react to what is brought to its table, it first will have to fix its public policy process.

Continued from page 2

the years to come. **Sound, healthy schools form the backbone of a strong community in many important ways—**

***Community Involvement:***

A strong community is a place where people decide to stay and commit themselves to keeping their community a good place to live. Good schools encourage families to stay and become involved and rooted in their community. Arlington Public Schools provide a unique array of opportunities for interested individuals to become involved in schools on a variety of levels. Volunteers are involved in classrooms, tutoring, and mentoring; participate in policy making issues through citizen advisory committees; and help out on single-event basis that aligns with their individual interests or skills, such as career days and workshops. Recently, more local businesses have been involved in our public schools through corporate-sponsored programs and school partnerships. These programs strengthen the link between schools and the larger community.

***Real Estate Values:***

Ask any real estate agent what most prospective buyers most urgently ask when considering a move into a new community. The overwhelming answer is, “What is the quality of the public schools?” Strong schools generally equate to high property values and good re-sale prospects. This view is not limited to families with young children. Businesses also find it attractive to locate in areas with strong educational systems. Their considerations include where employees want to live and raise families and where they will be able to find a reliable pool of well-educated, well-trained potential employees.

***Community Resources:***

Good school facilities provide many public amenities, especially here in Arlington. For example, Arlington Public Schools provide adult education, playing fields and green spaces, meeting rooms, concert halls and theaters, swimming pools, tracks, community centers, county-wide recreation gyms and indoor basketball courts, and tennis courts. Arlington’s public schools provide a wide array of programs and services for the entire community, from preschoolers to senior citizens.

***A Good Future for the Community:***

Strong communities perpetuate themselves by de-

veloping good citizens and good employees. It takes good schools to do this. Well-schooled young adults make good employees for businesses. They make good citizens who understand issues and, because their community cares about them, they learn to care about the community and understand the need to be involved in its future.

Over 2,000 years ago, the philosopher Plato said that the first concern of government is education. Some things do not change. Now, as then, the quality of our future depends on how well we educate the next generation. Today’s students are tomorrow’s mechanics, nurses, doctors, and business and political leaders. The nation’s future (and our own old age) will be bright, or grim, depending on how well we educate our young people.

For information about adult education, using school facilities, volunteering in our schools, or joining one of the schools citizen advisory committees, call Linda Erdos at 703-228-6002. Visit the schools Web site at: [www.arlington.k12.va.us](http://www.arlington.k12.va.us).

**\*See also Marjorie McCreery’s story on the school budget, pg. 4.**

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Continued from page 1

In short, before getting into specifics, let me note that last year, in the metropolitan area, we needed 70,000 new housing units to accommodate all the new jobs our economy generated. Put another way, we filled only 20% of our housing need. This pressure is causing the price of housing to go up, and as the price of housing goes up, traffic congestion also goes up. Traffic is really a housing problem. We are seeing a threat to the continued vitality of the region’s economy.

In early March, the Council of Governments had a housing conference. We noted that in the 1970s, we were much more aware than we are now of deteriorating housing and insufficient housing. Today, discussions tend to center on fiscal impact as opposed to seeing housing as something necessary for the quality of life.

***Housing Is a Source of Direct Jobs in Our Local Economy***

The personal earnings of and other income flows from the jobs held by local construction workers totaled \$8.6 billion in 2000 or 3.67% of the area’s gross regional product

(GRP). Residential construction edged out commercial as the source of these jobs (55%). The average annual earnings of a construction worker in the area was \$38,640, one of the highest local incomes available to workers who do not have an advanced academic education.

### ***What Is the Investment Value of Local Housing Stock?***

Homeownership is a national goal, and over time, the home becomes the largest single asset of most American families. Most local governments depend on housing stock as their largest single source of tax revenue (not including Arlington, where the residential/commercial tax revenue break down is more like 50-50).

In 2000, there were an estimated 1,078,000 housing units in the region (owner occupied or rental) with an estimated average mean per unit value of \$185,568. Much of this housing stock is old, by some standards. Older housing incorporates degrees of unconventional obsolescence that, if rebuilt to today's standards, would be corrected with a commensurate increase in cost and quality. The presence of this older, less expensive housing, whether rental or ownership, constitutes the primary source of units priced at levels that households with below-average incomes can afford and, thus, provides an alternative to overpayment for housing services.

Later we will see some of the regional economic problems that can be caused by overpayment for housing services.

### ***Housing as a Source of Economic Growth***

The region's housing units define the region's households. These households generate personal earnings and account for a substantial portion of the spending associated with the consumption of goods and services produced by the regional economy. Our metropolitan area had an estimated 1.834 million households in 2000 with an average (mean) household income of \$102,800, and these households generated \$188.5 billion of the Washington area's \$233.2 billion GRP.

If one calculates the economic value associated with the growth of housing in one year as a percentage of the growth in the economy for that same year, what do you find? For the year 2000, new households caused the GRP to grow at 4.82% instead of 3.5% in the absence of these new

households.

Clearly, it can be argued that for each additional new household in the area, the GRP will expand, and for every household unable to find housing, the economy loses, and substantially. The opportunity cost of a tight and overpriced housing market can be measured as jobs not filled and income and output not generated for each year that these conditions persist with these costs accumulating over time.

New households may choose to locate outside the region and commute into the region, but that adds to transportation demand, highway congestion, and consumer spending lost to the region as consumers tend to spend near their place of residence, not their place of work.

### ***Economic Impact of Overpaying for Housing***

Housing affordability has always been an issue in the Washington region's housing market. Affordability becomes a problem when housing prices exceed an acceptable percentage of a household's disposable income. When confronted with high housing prices relative to household income, households determined to live in the area have two options: pay a disproportionately large amount of their income to secure housing or pay less and secure lower quality or less adequate housing.

The number of area households overpaying for housing (i.e., paying in excess of 30% of household income) in 1998 was 37.5% of all rental households and 21.1% for all owner households. The total value of this overpayment was \$1.96 billion in 1998 dollars (slightly over \$2 billion in 2000 dollars). And this overpayment is reducing the effected households' spending for retails and other local purchases of goods and services. If it had been spent in the retail trade sector, it would have supported creation of 56,8000 new jobs.

### ***Housing Discussion Focus Should Change***

Knowing the magnitude of the economic costs of not having a sufficient housing supply should change the focus of the region's housing discussion. It should be realized that the greater the diversion of consumer income to housing and away from retail and other consumer goods, the greater the magnitude of unrealized local economic activity. If we don't do something about this, new jobs won't come here, the economy will slow, and our ability to do anything about our slowed economy will be undermined, eroding our tax base.

**Arlington New Directions Coalition**  
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*ANDC joins with individuals and organizations across the nation and around the world in expressing our deepest sympathies for the victims of the September 11 attacks and for the families and friends of those victims. Yet, even as we grieve and struggle to make sense of a world changed for the worse, we pause to pay tribute to Arlington County's fire and police departments, emergency response teams, school personnel, and volunteers for the leadership, courage, and service under stress they exhibited in responding to the attack on the Pentagon. We are also most appreciative of the help Arlington received from public agencies and volunteers from the region and other states. It is our hope and expectation that out of this tragedy, Arlington will be a stronger community, ever more welcoming and supportive of the people who come to us from so many nations to find better lives and who contribute so much to building a vibrant, wiser community. Just as Arlington provided the nation a model in responding to a crisis on September 11, Arlington can be a national model as a caring and learning community in which each individual is important.*