

May 3, 2024

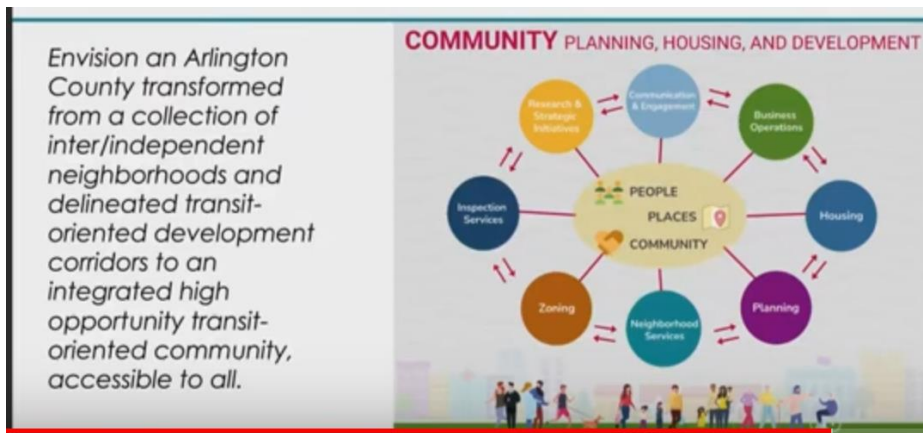
## Arlington County Board Democratic Primary Candidate Election

### Question 1: Comprehensive Plan Update

CPHD Director Samia Byrd briefed the County Board on March 14 on the CPHD Work Plan for FY 2025. She and her staff described the planned revision of the Comprehensive Plan and General Land Use Plan that will get underway this year. Their briefing and slide (see image at end of this question) suggest that staff will recommend moving away from the 40-year “compact” that currently preserves some low-density areas and concentrates density around transit corridors.

**Do you support a Comp Plan revision that does away with a “collection of neighborhoods” and amalgamates Arlington into a single mass transit medium to high-density county? Would you oppose efforts to remove low-density areas in the county from the Comp Plan and General Land Use Plan (GLUP)?**

**If you agree with the vision statement below, where would we get the capital to invest in the necessary transit to support a new vision that presupposes more mass transit outside the current corridors? How and when would you begin funding the necessary services to support a GLUP that may allow more density in all areas?**



### Candidate De Vita Reply

No. I don't support doing away with suburban neighborhoods. I don't want to see Arlington become a city. I think that neighborhoods give the County character. I also oppose adding density. We already have enough density. I do agree that any absolutely necessary additional density (assuming there actually is such a need) should be centered around mass transit.

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## Candidate Farnam Reply



*Do you support a Comp Plan revision that does away with a “collection of neighborhoods” and amalgamates Arlington into a single mass transit medium to high-density county? No.*

The collections of neighborhoods are what makes Arlington the place we know and love. It is what gives the county its charm and makes it a desired place to live. I would be hesitant to transform all of Arlington into a medium- to high-density county.

*Would you oppose efforts to remove low-density areas in the county from the Comp Plan and General Land Use Plan (GLUP)? Yes.*

*If you agree with the vision statement below, where would we get the capital to invest in the necessary transit to support a new vision that presupposes more mass transit outside the current corridors? How and when would you begin funding the necessary services to support a GLUP that may allow more density in all areas?*

I do not wholly agree with the vision statement in the graphic above. I do concur that Arlington should be accessible to all, but I differ from the statement above in how we would get there. The county has focused on increasing density while also assuming less people will drive. That’s an assessment that is aspirational when it comes to car usage and not based in current reality.

Many people have cars, particularly in areas of Arlington where public transportation is not easily accessible or where people commute outside of the city for work. Arlington, therefore, needs to ensure that the housing unit to parking spot ratio reflects actual data, not an aspirational desire.

Many in Arlington, especially those with children, have and need a car to get around. This is a reality I don’t see changing in the short term and Arlington needs to plan accordingly. Without sufficient parking, businesses are impacted. It is a complaint I’ve heard regularly from business owners throughout Arlington as I’ve been campaigning. This also impedes traffic because when delivery drivers need to pick up food or other items from businesses, they often double park if a parking spot cannot be found. This frustrates more than just business owners and delivery drivers.

I’d like to ensure the housing unit to parking ratio is changed to reflect the actual percentage of vehicles per unit. I’d like to see more 15-minute parking spots in front of businesses, especially eateries, to accommodate delivery drivers.

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## Candidate Peterson Reply



Throughout my time as a member of the Fiscal Affairs Advisory Commission and during my four years on the Planning Commission, I have been a strong advocate for applying smart growth principles to Arlington’s development. Our development density should be focused on our public transit corridors and utilize the successful Metro infrastructure that allows Arlington residents to live car-free or car light. Arlington needs more family-sized units in highrises along our transit corridors so that families and children can enjoy walkable neighborhoods and public transit.

As Arlington continues to grow, I will carry forward the vision outlined by previous County Boards to achieve transit-oriented development. Arlington is a national model for this type of development, and I will continue to support it. As a County Board member, I would also continue my work to advance resolutions which directly address the legacy of exclusionary zoning and the impact that zoning has had on the property values of people of color.

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## Candidate Roy Reply



Yes, I would actively oppose efforts to remove low-density areas in the County from the Comprehensive Plan and GLUP.

This effort to revise the Comprehensive Plan appears to be a way to retroactively validate the County’s misguided Expanded Housing Options (EHO) program of scattershot densification.

Fifty years ago, Arlington’s leaders made the courageous decision to build the Metro lines not along the freeways (as in Fairfax), but along the major commercial arterials of Wilson Blvd and Crystal City. Since then, thousands of homes in multi-unit high rises and townhouses have been built within easy

walking distance of transit, as well as the dense commercial and office development spurred by

Transit Oriented Development (TOD). They did this while preserving the County's historic and charming tree-lined neighborhoods.

Arlington today is one of the most densely populated counties in the country and its TOD is a national model. A potential change of this nature to the Comprehensive Plan and GLUP, would undermine TOD and Arlington's longstanding environmental leadership, by promoting densification everywhere, including in areas without easy access to transit. In addition to increasing use of cars, this proposed change will likely violate lot-coverage objectives, destroy our precious tree canopy, and reduce the bike-ability of our streets by promoting car traffic.

We need long range, comprehensive planning that has community support, not scattershot densification that is taking Arlington in the wrong environmental direction. And if we want to increase housing opportunities without destroying our hard-fought environmental victories, we should preserve TOD, insist on open space in large development projects, and not allow developers to buy their way out of lot coverage and community benefit requirement.

NA-since I do not agree with the vision statement from the County.

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## Candidate Spain Reply



We have made great strides in planning for better communities, but we must do more to become true leaders in creating diverse and sustainable environments using inclusive processes.

Our housing policy has come a long way since the days of redlining and exclusionary zoning. Still, we must continue to reform our planning and zoning policies to make our neighborhoods more diverse, welcoming new families, and preventing our elderly residents from being displaced.

County staff have proposed updating our Comprehensive Plan to be "people-centric" and set goals for widely shared, deeply felt community priorities like a livable built environment, harmony with nature, economic resilience, and interwoven equity.

I support a Comprehensive Plan revision that envisions Arlington as an integrated, high-opportunity, transit-oriented community accessible to all. This will help Arlington meet our highly demanded housing needs while retaining the feel of a collection of neighborhoods. Increasing density will not erase neighborhoods; it will enhance them. So, no, I would not oppose efforts to remove low-density areas in the county from the Comp Plan and General Land Use Plan (GLUP).

It's time we look at how we plan for the future and evaluate our General Land Use Plan (GLUP) to ensure it aligns with our long-term goals. Our piecemeal approach to planning through small

area plans and special GLUP studies adds unnecessary obstacles to development and slows progress. We need to streamline our processes to be more inclusive of all community members, including renters, low-income residents, and disinvested communities. Our planning processes should also consider the interests of future generations. We must expand our planning team rather than eliminate staff to prepare for the future.

As your future County Board member, I am committed to advocating for reforms in our housing and land use policies. I believe these changes are crucial to creating a more inclusive and diverse community. However, it's not just about policy changes. Increased investment is also necessary to realize the vision of more transit-oriented development corridors, a vision I fully support. I am dedicated to making our neighborhoods more sustainable and welcoming to new families, preventing the displacement of our elderly residents, and expanding affordable housing options that are highly accessible to local transit.