



THE NEWSLETTER OF THE DONALDSON RUN CIVIC ASSOCIATION

www.drca.org

Fall 2022

### PRESIDENT’S LETTER

**Bill Richardson**  
**Bill@drca.org**

We will be devoting our next meeting, on **Wednesday, November 16**, to a discussion of the County staff’s 135-page Preliminary Concept Plan Report for “Plan Langston Boulevard”, made available this past August. As noted in the accompanying article, this plan proposes fundamental changes to the entire Langston Boulevard (formerly Lee Highway) corridor. We would like to get your reactions to these proposals, particularly as to “Area 3,” the segment of the corridor closest to DRCA, which includes the current Lee Heights Shops. As usual, our meeting will be at **Taylor Elementary School, at 7:30 p.m.**, with a social half-hour beginning at 7:00.

At the same time, the County is in the midst of an equally fundamental change to residential zoning in Arlington, which is the “missing middle” proposal discussed at our June 8 meeting. As of the date of this letter, this proposal would eliminate single-family only zoning, so as to permit multifamily residential development throughout DRCA and all other neighborhoods across Arlington County, from duplex to “8-plex.” DRCA has been actively involved over the past several months, in coordination with ten to fifteen other civic associations, in highlighting for all five County Board members the concerns about this proposal we have been hearing from you and that are reflected in your responses to our survey on this question. See the accompanying article on page 3 for more detail on these issues.

### IN THIS ISSUE

President’s Letter	Pages	1, 2
DRCA Membership Meeting		1, 8
Membership Dues		2
Plan Langston Boulevard		2, 3
Missing Middle Update		3, 4
Marcey Road Park Open Soon		4
Holiday Decorating Contest		4
DRCA Ice Cream Social		5
Lorcom Lane Speed Limit		5
Traffic Circle Update		5, 6
Forestry & Natural Resources Plan		6
Membership Application		7
Hire a Neighbor		7
Stay In Touch with DRCA		7

The “missing middle” issue was also central to the October 5 debate co-sponsored by DRCA among the three County Board candidates, one of whom supports the proposal, one of whom opposes it, and one of whom is exploring whether some changes should be made to it. At last count, over fifty people attended this debate at Hamm Middle School. I want to extend the board’s great appreciation to DRCA board member and former County Board candidate Susan Cunningham, who moderated this debate with her usual diplomatic skills and served up a “lightning round” that got quick answers to many of your questions about a wide range of issues. We also continued to rely on the very effective cowbell of our professional timer, former DRCA board member Mike Green,

(continued on page 2)

The next Donaldson Run Civic Association meeting is at  
Taylor Elementary School  
Wednesday, November 16 at 7:30 p.m.

# PRESIDENT'S LETTER

(continued from page 1)

which he has employed over many years to stifle candidates' impulses to exceed the time permitted for them.

Finally, many thanks to those who helped DRCA organize a very successful first annual Labor Day ice cream social, which was a great way to meet new neighbors and catch up with old ones. Please stay tuned for more details about our third annual holiday decorating contest and associated festivities.

I hope all have a Happy Thanksgiving. And until then, don't forget to take advantage of the Cherrydale Farmers Market, every Saturday morning at Hamm MS.

## WHY PAY DRCA DUES?

*Kathy Rehill*

DRCA is a volunteer run organization that uses dues to produce and mail our newsletter to all the homes in the Donaldson Run neighborhood, pay for the costs associated with owning a website and email distribution system, and maintain or replace the kiosks where we post newsletters and the signs that announce the Donaldson Run neighborhood.

We are happy to let you know that there is now the option to pay dues electronically through Paypal! You can continue to pay by check but if you would like to use PayPal, just send your dues to @DonaldsonRunCivAssoc. While dues are not mandatory, they enable DRCA to distribute neighborhood information. Paying your annual dues means you are a member in good standing and can vote on DRCA business. If you'd like to check on your membership, send an email to treasurer@drca.org and I will reply with your dues status.

## PLAN LANGSTON BOULEVARD (PLB)

*Charlie Henkin*

As described on the County Plan Langston Boulevard website, the purpose of the PLB "planning study" is to develop a comprehensive vision and policy framework for the future of the "Langston Boulevard Study Area" through County Board adoption of an integrated county plan. Such a plan would provide the basis for updating the so-called General Land Use Plans (GLUPs) throughout the entire Boulevard – many of which were adopted in the 1960s. GLUPs provide a basis

The Current is distributed free of charge to all households in the Donaldson Run Civic Association (DRCA) area. DRCA, like all civic associations in Arlington, is a neighborhood organization, administered by elected volunteers. The DRCA promotes information sharing and discussion on neighborhood, local, and regional issues. DRCA is not affiliated with any political or religious group or with the Donaldson Run Recreation Association that operates the swimming pool on Marcey Road. Meetings are held at 7:30 p.m. at Taylor Elementary School (2600 North Stuart Street). Follow this newsletter for meeting dates. Only dues-paying DRCA residents are eligible to vote. DRCA boundaries are: Military Road on the east (including Marcey Road, North 26th Street, North 25th Place, and North Ridgeview Road); 26th/31st Street on the north; Lorcom Lane on the south (including North Randolph Street and 27th Streets south of Lorcom Lane); and Vernon Street on the west.

### DRCA Board

President	Bill Richardson	525-5270
1st VP	John Seggerman	403-2844
2nd VP	Amanda Weaver	202-365-3292
Secretary	Jen Mehmood	571-259-9864
Treasurer	Kathy Rehill	403-1064
Director	Alisa Cowen	407-5324
Director	Susan Cunningham	527-7705
Director	John Fisher	623-1111
Director	Charlie Henkin	294-4002
Editor	Mary Cooper	407-8045

for developers to propose commercial or rental projects which are not currently permitted "by right." Such by right development often constrains projects in terms of height/number of stories that prevent profitable development, or, if allowing profitability, would nevertheless preclude an integrated approach to development that could help the county meet certain goals. Without such a plan, by right development could occur in ad hoc fashion, losing opportunities for synergy in pursuit of county goals as well as incentivizing of private funding for county projects.

In August as a step towards this final planning study, the County published a Preliminary Concept Plan (PCP) that updated its 2016 Visioning Study with revised recommendations. These include a reduction in some building heights

(continued on page 3)

# PLAN LANGSTON BOULEVARD (PLB)

(continued from page 2)

to be allowed along the corridor -- but still at levels to which DRCA has expressed concern.

The PLB process is part of a lengthy approach to land use, traffic, and infrastructure planning between public and private funds – any of which can be altered after the final study is adopted, and is undergoing evolution currently in some aspects such as parallel roads that were inadvertently placed through a number of neighborhoods in the PCP drafting. Any potential changes to the General Land Use Plan and Zoning Ordinance amendment, or other similar Comprehensive Plan amendments, to implement the adopted plan’s policies and recommendations would be considered through a separate planning and engagement process. The changes would facilitate plan implementation and realization of the plan’s goals, including provision for additional height and density in return for providing community benefits and improvements. The PCP reflects a continuation of the PLB Vision for an urbanized thoroughfare that provides for walkways and bicycle paths along or parallel to a somewhat constrained vehicular roadway. The PCP facilitates non-vehicle access for additional residents in the high-rise developments to shops, which in turn would rely on these residents to be profitable. The plan thus integrates commerce, residential expansion, and road planning in return for stated community benefits, including affordable housing commitments, storm water mitigation, and green areas while providing a more urbanized lifestyle for an estimated additional fifty percent of corridor population.

The thirty-three percent reduction to the six lane traffic between Kirkwood Road and Veitch Street as proposed, would raise substantial rush hour or emergency traffic issues – apart from additional traffic from hundreds of residents in the new high rises--and would have to be approved by VDOT.

Of specific interest to DRCA is the proposed seven story high rise occupying the current parking areas in front and back of the popular Lee Heights shops and the 12-15 story high rise to be built on the Lyon Village Shopping Center to provide an incentive for storm water mitigation of the pipes underneath the parking lot. The degree of and charges for parking under either new property is unknown.

In all its aspects -- committed developer interest in projects as depicted and the costs the county would incur to support the necessary

infrastructure -- the PCP has no details and will not in the final study. This is expected since the PLB would take decades to be largely realized and many things (including heights allowed) could change. The final time plan and County Board adoption is stated as “2023” and subject to change.

## UPDATE ON COUNTY’S MISSING MIDDLE HOUSING (MMH) UPZONING

*Charlie Henkin*

In previous newsletters we reported on the results from our DRCA survey on Arlington’s Phase 2 “Draft Framework” on Missing Middle Housing (MMH). Missing Middle refers to housing in which more than one residential unit (other than an Accessory Dwelling Unit) would exist on a lot, but fewer units would be allowed than in high rise developments. It includes duplexes at one end of the spectrum and garden style apartments and 8-plexes at the densest end of the spectrum.

The County Board considered this draft framework at its July 12 “Working Session.” You can review the draft framework at <https://bit.ly/MMHS-Phase2>. The draft framework estimates that MMH units would be affordable to households with incomes as low as \$108,000 (for 8-plex, small units) to \$244,000 (for a duplex). MMH is not intended nor designed to serve the need for affordable housing, defined as serving households with income about half the lowest MMH level. At the same time the report noted, “[l]arge single-detached houses would still be more financially attractive for most redevelopment.” According to the draft, the market for large homes is strong, and MM housing has more risk and complexity. Thus, the draft predicts, “housing and population growth due to MM housing would be modest and dispersed.”

The net effect is estimated to entail only about twenty lots and a hundred and fifty residents per year over a ten year period. If these projections are accurate, such a modest effect does not appear consequential, pro or con, for the initiative.

Prior to the July 12 meeting, questions posed in our survey as well as more broadly in the county about the impacts of this proposal included:

- How reliable are these estimates of the extent of likely MMH deployment, and the likely income at

(continued on page 4)

## **MMH UPDATE**

**(continued from page 3)**

which MMH ownership or rental would be affordable?

- What effect would the proposal have on widespread concerns about the effects of housing redevelopment on storm water management, diminishing tree canopy, and public parks? The law caps required tree canopy to as little as ten percent of the lot for MMH, half that for single-family homes.

- Would MMH redevelopments present challenges for school and infrastructure investment and needed tax revenue over time? Or would such effects be minimal if MMH units are spread across all County neighborhoods?

Since our last newsletter, in addition to the July 12 work session, at least two current county board members have publicly suggested modifications to the draft, and one of them (Matt DeFerranti) attended a “Meet the Candidates” event on October 5 sponsored by DRCA and three other civic associations. The two other candidates running against Mr. DeFerranti are Adam Theo (a supporter of MMH who opposes compromises on the original MMH proposal of up to 8-plexes throughout the county) and Audrey Clement, an opponent who insists there be an “honest assessment” of the consequences of MMH. Both of these are Independent candidates without party affiliation.

At the October 5 meeting, DeFerranti said he and Libby Garvey agree that a cap at twenty lots per year undergoing MMH development should be put in place so that the initiative can be assessed on a pilot basis, and that there should be a “tiered approach” limiting smaller lot development to duplexes and tiering up to perhaps no more than five units per lot for larger lots. Ms. Garvey had also expressed reservations about 8-plexes and perhaps 6-plexes at the July 12 work session. If this compromise were to be adopted at least one other board member would have to agree with it, which as of this writing had not occurred.

The current schedule is for another MMH proposal to be considered at a November County Board meeting with a vote in December on the product that emerges from that November meeting. The Board can amend that schedule if it chooses.

## **MARCEY ROAD PARK TO OPEN SOON**

***John Seggerman***

After pandemic-caused delays, Donaldson Run residents will soon be able to enjoy again Marcey Road Park. If you can remember, it was three years ago that the Department of Parks & Recreation (DPR) engaged the local community in a Concept Design Kickoff Meeting. The County's renovation project is just about complete and DPR hopes to re-open the park in mid-November.

The renovation includes design and replacement of the basketball court, three tennis courts, LED lighting, parking, a picnic shelter with tables, site circulation, furnishings, drainage, stormwater management and landscaping. Some late changes to the plan include a concrete (quieter than previous material) tennis backboard, new benches and other minor modifications.

## **COMING SOON! DRCA HOLIDAY DECORATION CONTEST**

***John Seggerman***

Are you ready to get in the holiday spirit? Next month DRCA will hold our Third Annual Holiday Decoration Contest! Awards in the past have been in a number of categories:

Best Inflatable Display  
Best Lights  
Best Doorway  
Best “Griswold” (most humorous)  
Best Traditional  
Best Block/Cul-de-sac/Intersection or Street  
Best Tree  
Judges’ Choice

So get your inflatables, lights, wreaths, and other festive decorations ready for a fun contest that brings our neighborhood together during the holiday season. Details will be provided in the coming weeks so please keep your eyes peeled to the io group listserv, Nextdoor and our Facebook page. To subscribe to the io group, send an email to: [drca-group+subscribe@groups.io](mailto:drca-group+subscribe@groups.io). We are looking forward to enjoying some truly festive displays this season!

## **DRCA ICE CREAM SOCIAL—WHAT A TREAT!**

*Jennifer Mehmood*

The DRCA Ice Cream Social on September 3<sup>rd</sup> at Taylor Elementary School was a huge success and well attended with a steady stream of neighbors catching up or meeting for the first time. A majority of attendees visited our booth to discuss on-going neighborhood issues, membership, and future engagement opportunities. A popular attraction was Arlington County Fire Department's fire truck with several fire fighters. Balloons and bubbles further added to the festive atmosphere. The day was extra sweet with complimentary freezer pops and generous servings of Ben & Jerry's ice cream. Indonesian and Mexican food was available for purchase from two food trucks. The DRCA board looks forward to planning future neighborhood engagement events. Stay tuned!



***Neighbors enjoy Ben & Jerry's ice cream and a visit by Arlington County firefighters***



***DRCA President Bill Richardson chats with neighbors at the civic association tent***

## **COUNTY BOARD REDUCES SPEED LIMIT ON A PORTION OF LORCOM LANE**

*Bill Richardson*

At its October meeting, the County Board approved a staff recommendation to reduce from 30 to 25 mph the speed limit on the part of Lorcom Lane between Military Road and Langston Boulevard. Staff anticipates the posting of these reduced limits by or before early November, accompanied initially by a "new" sign.

This action followed a staff study identifying eighteen crashes on this stretch of Lorcom Lane over a six-year study period, three of which involved speeding as a factor. The staff also noted the high volume of pedestrians and bicycles now crossing Lorcom Lane in this area.

In response to staff's inquiry about this proposal, at least twelve DRCA residents also pointed to traffic issues at two different points along this part of Lorcom Lane. As a result, DRCA has asked the staff to conduct traffic investigations at these two points. The first is the Vacation Lane intersection, where residents have noted the danger to pedestrians and the difficulty in getting out onto Lorcom Lane, and have suggested various possible solutions. The second is the Langston Boulevard intersection, which DRCA residents noted does not clearly provide for the need to yield to pedestrians, for cars turning right from Lorcom Lane onto Langston Boulevard.

We will let you know the results of staff's investigation of the traffic and safety issues at these two intersections.

## **COUNTY STAFF ANTICIPATES DECISION ON PILOT TRAFFIC CIRCLE THIS FALL**

*Bill Richardson*

In September, DRCA board members asked for an on-site visit with County staff to discuss future developments for the pilot traffic circle at Military Road and Nelly Custis Drive. Staff established this pilot to study whether it would serve to reduce speeds at this intersection and increase safety for

(continued on page 6)

## **PILOT TRAFFIC CIRCLE**

**(continued from page 5)**

pedestrians and bicyclists. According to staff, there has been some reduction in speed by those travelling from Military Road and from Nelly Custis. At the same time, a number of DRCA residents and others have expressed concern about whether the circle is necessary and working as intended.

One of the concerns is that the layout of this three-way intersection, and the relatively small size of the traffic circle, combine to create some confusion about “who goes first.” A larger circle may also be more effective in requiring traffic from these two directions to slow down more as they approach. Staff indicated that they have been looking at a redesign for any permanent circle that may be adopted, expanding the circle from its current 60 feet to one that would be 85 to 90 feet in diameter.

We have asked staff to show us such a redesign before any permanent solution is adopted. They have responded that they are working up cost estimates for such a redesign and cannot share the new design with us until the head of the Department of Environmental Services (DES) has had a chance to review it. We have asked for an opportunity to comment on it before the County takes any final action.

You may provide comments on this project on the following website:  
<https://www.arlingtonva.us/Government/Projects/Project-Types/Transportation-Projects/Military-Road-Safety-Improvements>

## **DRCA PROVIDES INPUT ON DRAFT FORESTRY AND NATURAL RESOURCES PLAN**

**Bill Richardson**

In September, DRCA provided extensive comments on staff’s draft update to the County’s Forestry and Natural Resources Plan. Our letter is posted on the civic association website at [www.drca.org](http://www.drca.org). We also testified on these recommendations at the September meeting of the Forestry and Natural Resources Commission, an advisory committee of County residents also charged with reviewing the draft plan.

Our comments emphasized DRCA’s longtime concern about the expanding and irreparable loss

of mature trees resulting from development in our neighborhood. In light of this concern, the comments concluded that the draft plan fails to communicate the requisite sense of urgency, or to include any specific steps the County can take to achieve the goals of tree preservation, not only on public land but also on private land, where most of these mature trees are located.

Here are the principal concerns expressed by DRCA about the draft plan:

- Lack of commitment to parks and land acquisition and open space
- Failure to fix lot coverage – the “McMansions” issue – before extending opportunities for similar teardowns (and loss of mature trees) to “missing middle” redevelopment
- Greater opportunity for neighborhood input on redevelopment by “special exception”
- Strengthened tree preservation ordinance to permit hearings on designation of specimen or heritage trees on private property for special protection, as permitted by state law
- More rigorous County implementation of Virginia’s Chesapeake Bay Preservation Act, as applied to exceptions for development within Resource Protection Areas (like Donaldson Run stream)
- Expansion of county authority under state law for tree canopy protection following residential development
- Requirement for residential construction workers to be trained in best practices to preserve mature trees during construction, in accordance with recognized industry standards
- Commitment to continuous maintenance of trees after they are planted on County land.

**Professional Help Around the House**  
*will return in our next issue.*

*Please refer to the Summer newsletter for the last version of that section:  
<https://www.drca.org/newsletters-current>*

**MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION FOR DONALDSON RUN CIVIC ASSOCIATION**

Please check your mailing label on page 8 to see how many residents in your home are members and the latest year for which dues have been paid. Dues cover a calendar year. Contributions are not tax deductible. Note that only members whose dues have been paid 60 days in advance are allowed to vote on civic association business.

Dues: \$15 per household per calendar year. Payment for 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 years (circle one)

Total dues: \$\_\_\_\_\_ Newsletter contribution: \$\_\_\_\_\_ Total enclosed: \$\_\_\_\_\_

New resident: Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_ Email only copy of newsletter Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

Name(s):  
\_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ email address: \_\_\_\_\_

Address:  
\_\_\_\_\_

Are you already on the DRCA email list?\_\_\_\_\_ If you are not on the DRCA listserv, we recommend that you sign up for it so that you will be notified of issues in a timely way. Would you like to be added to this listserv?\_\_\_\_\_

Special Interests/Volunteer Areas/Comment  
\_\_\_\_\_

Please make check payable to Donaldson Run Civic Association.

Mail to: Kathy Rehill, Treasurer, 2701 N. Wakefield Street, Arlington, VA 22207 or if you prefer to pay electronically, pay via PayPal @DonaldsonRunCivAssoc.

**HIRE A NEIGHBOR**

Calling all neighborhood teens! Do you babysit? Shovel snow? Walk dogs? Your Donaldson Run neighbors need you! Send an email to Mary@drca.org and we'll list the service you'd like to provide.

**Babysitting**

Ella Paris, 14 y.o., 571-317-4962

Mackenzie Rau, 14 y.o., 703-655-5718,  
Mackenzie.rau21@gmail.com

**Dog Walking/Sitting**

Maggie Buchko, 7<sup>th</sup> grade, 484-803-3189 or  
maggiesdogwalkingbusiness@gmail.com

**STAYING IN TOUCH**

*Kathy Rehill*

Did you miss info about our Labor Day Ice Cream Social? Do you want to keep abreast of issues affecting our neighborhood in between the quarterly newsletters?

To stay in touch with the civic association in between mailings, please subscribe to the DRCA email distribution. It is the best way to stay up-to-date on what is going on in the neighborhood.

To be added to the list, please send an email with your name and street address to: drca-group+subscribe@groups.io.

Donaldson Run Civic Association  
c/o Kathy Rehill, Treasurer  
2701 N. Wakefield Street  
Arlington, VA 22207

**PRSRT STD**  
**U.S. Postage PAID**  
**MERRIFIELD, VA**  
**Permit No. 2863**

This is your neighborhood newsletter.  
See page 2 for Civic Association information.

**The next Donaldson Run Civic Association Meeting  
is on Wednesday, November 16 at 7:30 p.m.  
A social half hour will begin at 7 p.m.**

**Agenda:  
Discussion of the County's  
Preliminary Concept Plan Report,  
Plan Langston Boulevard**

**Taylor Elementary School**