



THE NEWSLETTER OF THE DONALDSON RUN CIVIC ASSOCIATION

www.drca.org

January 2026

PRESIDENT'S LETTER

Bill Richardson

Bill@drca.org

Happy New Year to all!

Our next DRCA meeting, on **Wednesday, January 28**, will feature a discussion with two County Board members – **Susan Cunningham** and **Takis Karantonis** – on the pending initiative to craft a new introductory chapter for the County's "comprehensive plan." This document will likely be central to what Arlington County will look like in the coming years. Because of its importance to such controversial issues like whether to expand housing densification beyond transit corridors, we have also invited our four neighboring civic associations to this meeting: Cherrydale, Old Dominion, Dover-Crystal, and Waverly Hills. Please feel free to invite those you know from these neighboring areas. For further details on this initiative, see the accompanying article on page 3.

We will also provide a brief introduction to County staff responsible for code enforcement matters in our neighborhoods, including **Penny Samuda** and **Deborah Colbert**. To ensure plenty of time for our discussion of the comprehensive plan, they will be asking you to address any specific code enforcement issues off line, or in the back of the meeting room.

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Because Taylor School has a conflict on January 28, our meeting will be held at St. Andrew's Episcopal Church, 4000 Lorcom Lane, in the "undercroft" room. As usual, our meeting will be held at 7:30 p.m., preceded by a social half hour with light refreshments beginning at 7:00.

I hope to see you there.

**The next Donaldson Run Civic Association meeting is at
St. Andrew's Episcopal Church
4000 Lorcom Lane
Wednesday, January 28 at 7:30 p.m.**

ANNOUNCING THE WINNERS OF THE 2025 DRCA HOLIDAY DECORATING CONTEST!

The Donaldson Run Civic Association held its annual Holiday Decorating Contest in December. As usual, our neighbors exhibited their holiday spirit with some creative, cheery displays. Congratulations to this year's winners and thanks to all for your festive decorating!

Best Lights
4112 26th Road N.

Best Doorway
2504 N. Upland Street

Best Tree
2251 N. Vernon Street

Best Traditional
2260 N. Upton Street

Best Block/Cul de Sac/Intersection or Street
3100 Block of N. Thomas Street

Best Inflatables
4200 31st Street N.

Best "Griswold" (most humorous)
4532 25th Road N.

Judge's Choice
4247 Vacation Lane.



INTERESTED IN SOMETHING NEW? CONSIDER JOINING THE DRCA LEADERSHIP TEAM!

Anne Wilson

This spring, the Donaldson Run Civic Association (DRCA) will be holding its biannual elections. We are seeking neighbors who are interested in helping guide the activities and direction of the civic association for the next two years. If you have some time and an interest in the many aspects of

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	Dana Miller	202-841-3696
Treasurer	Kathy Rehill	403-1064
Director	Alisa Cowen	407-5324
Director	John Fisher	623-1111
Director	Charlie Henkin	294-4002
Director	Laura Yoeckel-Kelly	362-5380
Editor	Mary Cooper	407-8045

our neighborhood, you may want to consider joining our group of committed volunteers. The benefits of being a board member include having a direct impact on DRCA's advocacy about issues including density and the environment while working with a collegial group of neighbors. We strive to have all parts of the neighborhood represented on the board, and we would benefit from having someone who could help with technology issues, such as managing the DRCA web site.

A nominating committee for the election will be announced shortly via the DRCA email list. If you are interested in learning more about what is involved, contact Anne Wilson (anne@drca.org). And if you are not already on the email list, please consider signing up at main+subscribe@drca-group.groups.io.

COUNTY BEGINS PHASE ONE OF AN UPDATE OF ITS COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Bill Richardson

As noted on page 1, our January 28 meeting will focus on a discussion with two County Board members of the pending update of the County's "comprehensive plan." For details, see https://www.arlingtonva.us/files/sharedassets/public/v/1/commissions/documents/lrpc/11-12-25_lrpc-comp-plan-update_staff-presentation.pdf.

What exactly is a comprehensive plan? State law requires all local governments to establish and periodically update such plans, which must address the "physical development" of the County. While the County has sometimes suggested that its plan is not binding, state law also provides that the plan "shall control the general or approximate location, character and extent of each feature shown on the plan."

Arlington's plan includes twelve components. These include affordable housing, Chesapeake Bay preservation, energy, forestry and natural resources, historical and cultural resources, public spaces, recycling, sewer systems, storm water management, transportation, and water distribution. Perhaps the most critical of these components, however, is the "General Land Use Plan" (GLUP). *This is the primary policy guide for future development in the County, including the Zoning Ordinance.*

The GLUP now includes some clear limitations on where high-density development should occur. To encourage the use of public transit and reduce the use of motor vehicles, its goal is to concentrate this within "MetroRail Transit Corridors." While encouraging construction of "townhouses, mid-rise and high-rise dwelling units" within these areas, the GLUP seeks to "[p]reserve and enhance existing single-family and apartment neighborhoods." Thus, its goal is "tapering down" development so as "to limit the impacts of high-density development."

This approach is consistent with state law, which requires the County to "consider" – though not necessarily to adopt – strategies "to promote transit-oriented development." Such strategies, according to state law, "may" include "locating new housing development . . . in closer proximity to public transit options." In various settings, however, some County Board members have indicated their view that this social compact may need revisiting, in order to promote construction of more housing.

The Board has now proposed a two-phase review of the comprehensive plan. It is beginning with drafting an introductory chapter that seeks to establish "guiding principles." DRCA's executive committee has been concerned that public engagement on how to draft this introductory chapter does not adequately notify Arlington residents of whether and to what extent it may end up supporting an abandonment of the social compact on housing densification now embodied in the GLUP. The targeted focus groups have included only 100 residents, the vast majority of whom did not live in single-family home neighborhoods.

Last month, DRCA's executive committee filed a letter with the County Board expressing these concerns. A copy is available on our website (www.drca.org). As the Arlington County Civic Federation (CivFed) has noted in a resolution on this question passed in June, there are vague references in the County's description to "people-centric" principles, "replac[ing] . . . existing goals/objectives," and a "vision for growth and development," with no details. The six principles guiding the review are so broad and opaque as to support virtually any revision to the GLUP.

Thus, we asked the County Board to expand its public engagement, to meet with groups of civic associations (or groups of them) likely to experience the most change with any update of the comprehensive plan. We very much appreciate the Board's response, which has been to make Board members available to hear your questions and concerns about this update and the process for it.

We also hope the Board will take seriously our preliminary suggestions, particularly as they relate to the scope and location of housing densification. Among these is the state law requirement that any future growth must address concurrently, so that it does not later overwhelm, the other key infrastructure elements of the plan. Another is to follow the December 2024 CivFed resolution to examine more carefully our present and potential future housing stock permitted by the existing Zoning Ordinance, to study the effects of upzoning in similar markets, and to differentiate between the need for affordable housing and other housing, and between one bedroom units and larger ones.

We look forward to a lively discussion with County Board members of this process, which will be critical to the future of Arlington and its neighborhoods. Please try to attend so that the Board can hear your views.

LECKEY GARDENS STATUS

Charlie Henkin

The Leckey Gardens site is currently developed with two three/four-story residential apartment buildings containing 40 units and their associated surface parking lot, constructed in 1949. It is located between N. Woodstock Street and N. Woodrow Street in the Waverly Hills neighborhood. The Lee Heights Shopping Center and its surface parking lot are located directly to the north and Woodstock Park is located across Woodstock Street to the southeast of the site.

The applicant, True Ground Housing Partners, Inc. (formerly Arlington Partnership for Affordable Housing), has owned and operated the site as affordable housing since 2000. True Ground has submitted applications for a General Land Use Plan (GLUP) amendment and a rezoning. They submitted a Site Plan to demolish the two four-story buildings and construct an 11-story residential building with 249 units, one hundred percent of which will be Committed Affordable (CAF) housing units, available only to those earning less than sixty percent of area median income. The Langston Boulevard Area Plan (LBAP) recommends up to ten stories for this location. It is consistent with the eleven-story height due to ground slope.

The positive aspects of the project include undergrounding of utilities, meeting the thirty-five percent tree canopy recommendation of the LBAP, with significant native shade trees, and stormwater management including an underground vault and an additional underground pipe to hold and slowly release floodwaters from the west. The Langston Boulevard Alliance has been working with the applicant to improve the architecture, which various commission members discussed at the Site Plan Review Committee meeting.

True Ground has requested reduced parking from the 1.12 spaces per unit requirement to .88 spaces per unit for a total of 218 versus the required 274 spaces. Since all of the apartments will be family units and a majority of the new units will be multi-bedroom, with no units specified for seniors, at least one family provider may need to park a work vehicle in addition to a family vehicle. The Waverly Hills Civic Association and others have objected not only to the height but also to the parking ratio, noting the deficit of parking spaces and the likely spillover onto local street parking. In addition, the apartments will compete with on-street parking for Woodstock Park.

True Ground is asking the County for a significant investment of millions of taxpayer dollars in the

project. The County Site Plan Review Committee met twice on the project. The next steps are February meetings of the Planning Commission and County Board review. These are both public hearings and residents may sign up to speak.

LOT COVERAGE REFORM

UPDATE

Bill Richardson

As reported in our October newsletter, DRCA is one of now 26 civic associations in diverse neighborhoods that seek to expand the scope of the County's pending "low residential" study to include a look at meaningful reforms of the current lot coverage and building footprint limits in the Zoning Ordinance enacted over 20 years ago.

We have been particularly baffled why, in the face of such widespread concerns from our group representing 31,000 households, the County Board has chosen to reverse course from its commitment over two years ago to conduct such a study. Instead, it has narrowed the scope of its pending inquiry to the stormwater management effects of impervious surfaces more generally. It has chosen to do so despite staff findings that the only real change over the past decades has been the growing size of new homes, rather than increases in sidewalks, patios, and other impervious surfaces.

Our group of civic associations, together with the Arlington Tree Action Group (ATAG) and others, has continued to advocate for a more comprehensive study of this growing problem, and for greater urgency in addressing it given the accelerating and irreparable damage to our mature tree canopy and to our depleted stock of smaller and more affordable homes. We have attended staff's open houses, met individually with County Board members, appeared before the County Board at each of its past three meetings, and spoken before the two advisory commissions with input into this issue – the Forestry and Natural Resources Commission and the Climate Change, Energy and Environment Commission (C2E2). Most recently, we have met with the Planning Commission at their October meeting with staff devoted to this topic, and accepted their invitation to follow up with separate meetings with their individual members.

Our letters and slide presentations on this issue are available on our website (www.drca.org). I encourage any of you who are concerned about this issue to make your views known to the County Board. You may do so either by e-mail or in person or virtually (e.g., at Open Door Mondays with County Board members). Please let me know if you have any further questions about it.

WHAT IS THE LATEST WITH THE WALGREENS SITE?

Laura Yoeckel-Kelly

The former Walgreens at 3130 Langston Boulevard is a 1.68 acre parcel of land. It is bordered by I-66 on the west, Kirkwood Road on the south, and is within the Lyon Village Civic Association boundary. The building is currently a 13-story L-shaped design with three stories on Kirkwood Road. Topping the third story is a planned courtyard.

This design process began in November 2024 and a meeting was convened December 18, 2025 to present changes to the original plan. While details supporting the plan for this site are still being worked, the intent has remained unchanged. The plan is for a 13-story building that includes 300 residential units and 7520 square feet of retail space on the ground floor. From the July 2025 to the December 2025 community meetings, the number of residential units requested decreased from 310 to 300. The number of parking spots increased from 360 to 364 in support of both residential and retail needs and this equates to 1.05 parking spaces per residential unit. The amount of retail space decreased from 8260 square feet to 7520 square feet. Due to stormwater issues, the building has shifted 10 feet closer to the houses on Kirkwood Road.

Items that were requested of the design build firm include: create more interest in the wall of the building that faces Kirkwood Road as it is 180 feet long; clarify whether the planned third floor courtyard can support landscaping presented in the plan; clarify whether a 50-foot overland relief corridor will be included in the plans.

Currently this plan is inconsistent with the Arlington General Land Use Plan (GLUP) which was approved in 2020. In that Plan, this parcel was designated as C-2 Service Commercial-Community Business District and based on the current design, would permit 178 residential units. The intent is to change the zoning of this parcel to C-O-2.5 Mixed Use Zoning District.

The applicant, Rooney Properties LLC, is working with the Arlington County Planning Staff and detailed information can be found on the Arlington County website:
www.arlingtonva.us/Government/Projects/Project-Types/Site-Plan/3130-Langston-Boulevard

The next step is for a hearing before the Planning Commission, prior to the proposal being presented to the County Board. Let us know if you are

interested in providing public comment at that hearing.

COVENANT ENFORCEMENT SUCCESS

Stephanie Tebor

The single-family home currently under construction at 2352 North Vermont Street is a testament to what neighbors can do when they unite to preserve and protect their neighborhood.

In 2024, several of us learned of plans to replace the small brick rambler on North Vermont Street with a triplex, as part of the county's "missing middle"/Expanded Housing Opportunity (EHO) initiative. We were stunned--not only by the proposal's brutalist architecture completely out of step with the neighborhood, but also by the size and scope of the project. The proposed "densification" would decrease the tree canopy, increase crowding, traffic, and runoff on the narrow street, and completely change the neighborhood's character that for generations has consisted exclusively of single-family homes. And at well over one million dollars each, none of the proposed units would be "affordable."

Research revealed a covenant on the property dating back to 1929 restricting lots to single-family homes only. A well-attended neighborhood meeting indicated unanimous support for enforcing that covenant. Subsequently, the county approved the builder/owner's EHO permit for three towering townhouses on the property. Nearby neighbors hired an attorney to address the EHO applicant, and a second time to enforce the covenant with a new owner after the EHO policy was reactivated by the courts this past fall. The new owner backed down, reportedly telling a neighbor he did not want to alienate the neighbors, and planned to build a single-family home, which he is in the process of doing.

Unfortunately, this is not a one-and-done situation. The county is continuing to push EHO legislation through the courts with enthusiastic support from developers. With several nearby rental and vacant properties the neighborhood remains vulnerable during ongoing litigation. We have needed to retain our lawyer to assure future compliance and protect the neighborhood against similar covenant violations. If you would like to help pay for the attorney's successful efforts please drop a check made out to Arlington Land Use Group (memo: 2352 North Vermont Street/covenant) into the "covenant" envelope taped to the door at 2356 North Vermont Street, c/o Malcolm Martin, or call (703) 508-4836 for more information.

MEMBERSHIP DUES

Kathy Rehill

Our neighborhood is made up of approximately 970 households of long-time residents, new homeowners, and renters. We welcome all to join the Donaldson Run Civic Association (DRCA) meetings and support this all-volunteer run organization with an annual \$20 membership contribution. We use the funds to print and mail a newsletter, maintain a website, subscribe to an email service, and put on community events as funds allow. Dues also allow you to vote on DRCA issues at membership meetings. Please return the form on page 7 to update your email info, select if you want the newsletter by print or email, and pay dues by mail or PayPal. Check your label on this newsletter to see if your dues are up to date.

Why join? Our civic association brings your issues to the Arlington County Board and the newsletter provides a way to communicate with you on these important issues. In 2026 the hot issues we are following are:

1. Whether to revise the lot coverage, building footprint, and height provisions of the Zoning Ordinance;
2. How to condition redevelopment of sites such as the Kensington Senior Living property next to Lebanese Taverna at Lee Heights pursuant to Plan Langston Boulevard; and
3. Whether the County's comprehensive plan should be revised to endorse proposals to promote increased density in single-family neighborhoods like ours.

BEYER OFFICE SEEKS TO ADDRESS LOCAL POST OFFICE PROBLEMS

Bill Richardson

We have heard a number of complaints by DRCA members that our local post office lacks adequate staffing on its routes, backup for carriers who are sick or on leave, and the ability to handle hold mail orders reliably.

In response, we have asked Congressman Don Beyer's office to look into these problems. Late last year, they met with USPS leadership, including the Northern Virginia Regional Administrator and the Virginia Director. USPS has undertaken to direct additional assets to North Arlington in particular, and has expressed confidence to Beyer staff that their efforts are working. Please let us know if you continue to experience recurring post office problems during the coming year.

NOTES FROM YOUR FRIENDLY ZACH TAYLOR PARK STEWARDS

Amy White & Jeff Elder

Hello neighbors! Winter is the perfect time to tackle a pervasive invasive species in our area: English ivy. First brought to the U.S. by the English colonists, ivy has spread rapidly across our area. That's a bad thing because a carpet of ivy on the ground prevents other native plants from growing. Our local birds and migratory birds, all our pollinators, and many other creatures need those native plants to live and reproduce new generations. Ivy can also prevent new saplings from growing when we need the next generation of trees to replace those we're losing. Clearing a carpet of ivy can be satisfying work, particularly after it rains and the ground is loose. Then you can plant some wonderful native plants—asters, sunflowers, golden rods, bee balm—that will soon have your yard dancing with bees, butterflies, dragonflies (they eat mosquitoes!), and birds.

Also, English ivy is a real problem because it tends to grow up tree trunks. While it may look green in the winter, ivy can seriously damage a tree. It makes the tree heavier and more likely to fall in high winds or a storm. Ivy shades out the sun, thus preventing photosynthesis on a tree's leaves. Ivy's dense covering can also lead the tree to become too damp which can invite diseases and create an ideal habitat for mosquitoes to hang out. Ivy's roots also compete with the tree roots for water and other resources, which may be detrimental during our hot summers.

On our workdays in the park, you'll see us cutting ivy off trees and pulling it off the ground. Please join us every third Saturday from 9 to 11 am! If you have ivy in your yard and can't get to it yourself, let us know. We can likely help out. Amy can be reached by email at abwphw@comcast.net.



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: \$20 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, via PayPal @DonaldsonRunCivAssoc.

HIRE A NEIGHBOR

Calling all neighborhood teens! Do you shovel snow? Walk pets? 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, 17 y.o., 571-317-4962
- Iris Aitken, 16 y.o., 571-242-7994
or iris_aitken@icloud.com
- Zoya Ridgway, 13 y.o. text 703-864-8271
- Maia Corson, 15 y.o., 571-329-5871,
maia.corson@gmail.com
- Iris Aitken, 16 y.o., 571-242-7994
or iris_aitken@icloud.com

Mackenzie Rau, 17 y.o., 703-655-5718,
Mackenzie.rau21@gmail.com

Cat Sitting

- Zoya Ridgway, 13 y.o. text 703-864-8271
- Ayla Mehmood, High Schooler, text 571-599-8282

Experienced in caring for cats with special needs.

Dog Walking/Sitting

- Zoya Ridgway, 13 y.o. text 703-864-8271
- Maia Corson, 15 y.o., 571-329-5871,
maia.corson@gmail.com
- Iris Aitken, 16 y.o., 571-242-7994
or iris_aitken@icloud.com

Guinea Pig/Hamster Sitting

- Zoya Ridgway, 13 y.o. text 703-864-8271

Lawn and Garden Care

- Iris Aitken 16 y.o., 571-242-7994
or iris_aitken@icloud.com

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

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

**The next Donaldson Run Civic Association Meeting
is on Wednesday, January 28 at 7:30 p.m.
A social half hour will begin at 7 p.m.**

Agenda:

**Discussion on County Comprehensive Plan
with County Board Members
Susan Cunningham and Takis Karantonis
&**

Introduction to County Code Enforcement Staff

**NOTE DIFFERENT LOCATION:
St. Andrews Episcopal Church
4000 Lorcom Lane**