



# **FY19 Budget Roundtables**

## **Emerging Themes**

### **October 2017**

#### **SECTION 1: OVERVIEW**

In October 2017, the County Manager and his Executive Leadership Team hosted 7 public roundtables focused on the budget for Fiscal Year 2019. Two additional roundtables were also held with Chairs of Commissions and Advisory Groups; as well as with the Arlington Chamber of Commerce and their members. During this period, over 200 participants from neighborhoods across the County, nonprofit organizations, and business leaders came together to share their ideas on budget considerations, taxes, fees, programs, and services for the upcoming Arlington budget cycle.

These roundtables aimed to build a conversation with participants on two key questions, which prompted an interactive discussion between participants:

- (1) To what extent do you believe Arlington residents and businesses would be willing to pay more for services or programs through taxes or fees? Can you share specific types of services or programs where you think there would be broad support for an increased fee/tax to support the costs?*
  
- (2) What, if any, services or programs, could be reduced, if necessary? What types of impacts could these types of reductions potentially have for different stakeholders in the County?*

This document includes the emerging themes along with each of the related points shared by various participants throughout the 9 roundtable conversations. Participants were also invited to answer the following question either during the roundtable or on a written worksheet. “*Given the budget pressures the County faces this year, do you have any additional suggestions for the County Manager as he develops the FY19 budget proposal?*”. The written responses are captured in Section IV, and mirror the emerging themes identified during the discussions.

While the conversations were prompted by the questions outlined above, the discussions captured a broad range of suggestions for the County Manager to consider beyond specific taxes, fees, and/or reductions. In a review and analysis across all 9 roundtable sessions, there were 13 emerging themes that surfaced. It is also noted that 7 of these emerging themes surfaced in every roundtable, highlighting several consistent topics, suggestions, and concerns.

### ***Most Common Themes***

- Revenue Considerations:
  - Taxes
  - Fees and Cost Recovery
- Good Governance: Fiscal Stewardship
  - Fiscal Stewardship
- County Services and Project Delivery
  - Cross Agency Coordination
- Capital Projects
  - Costs of Projects
- Schools
  - Costs for Education and Schools
- Diversity and Equity
  - Equity Considerations
- Affordable Housing/High Costs of Living
  - Funding Affordable Housing

In almost every budget roundtable, participants stressed the need to ensure that government was operating as efficiently as possible, with a focus on getting the most for our tax payer dollars. There was not agreement from participants about the right approach to tax increases. In some cases, participants expressed a willingness to pay more; while others were not supportive of any increases. Similarly, there were various thoughts, ideas, and concerns regarding potential fee increases.

There appeared to be a sense of common concern throughout the sessions regarding the spending for capital projects and schools. And, there appeared to be some alignment among participants about the importance of aligning spending with the County's vision and public statement about being a diverse and welcoming community. This was coupled with a significant level of discussion regarding the importance of creating affordable housing options across the county.

A complete list of the emerging themes and subthemes can be found in Section II, with the related comments shared by participants in Section III. Section IV includes written notes to the County Manager, and Section V contains a list of participating neighborhoods and organizations.

## **SECTION II: EMERGING THEMES**

(\*\* Themes that surfaced during all 9 of the roundtable discussions)

### REVENUE CONSIDERATIONS\*\*

- *Taxes\*\**
  - In Support of Tax Increases
  - Concerns for Increasing Taxes
  - Impact of Tax Increases
  - Property Value and Taxes
  
- *Fees and Cost Recovery\*\**
  - Consideration for Additional Fees
  - Consider unintended impacts when assessing fee increases
  - Developer Fees
  - Incentives and Community Benefits
  - Permitting
  - Public/Private Partnerships
  - Bond Options
  - Exploring Revenue and Investments
  - Opportunities for Reduction/Elimination

### CLOSE OUT BUDGET

- *General Budget & Close-out*

### GOOD GOVERNANCE\*\*

- *Data and Open Government*
- *Fiscal Stewardship\*\**
- *Creative Approaches*
- *Policies and Regulations*
- *Use of Auditors*
- *Transparency*

### COUNTY SERVICES and PROJECT DELIVERY\*\*

- *Focus on the Basics*
- *Cross Agency Coordination\*\**
- *Use of Contractors*
- *Considerations for Change in Service*

## CAPITAL PROJECTS\*\*

- *Costs of Projects\*\**
- *Alternatives to Building New Facilities*
- *Cycle of Capital Maintenance and Replacement*
- *Relational Costs of New Buildings*
- *Green Space*
- *Land Acquisition*

## SCHOOLS\*\*

- *School Quality*
- *Urban Schools*
- *Costs for Education and Schools\*\**
- *School/County Coordination (co-location and multi-use)*

## TRADE OFFS

- *Social /Opportunity costs*
- *Performance Management*
- *A balanced approach to revenue and cost savings*

## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

### DIVERSITY /EQUITY\*\*

- *Equity Considerations\*\**
- *Diverse Audiences*
- *Social services and Safety net*
- *Aging*

### AFFORDABLE HOUSING /HIGH COST OF LIVING \*\*

- *Defining Affordable Housing*
- *Funding Affordable Housing\*\**
- *Multi-generational considerations for affordable housing*
- *Aligning affordable housing with our social safety net*
- *Using incentives or other tools for advancing affordable housing options*
- *Strategies for developing affordable housing units*

## PROGRAM EXPENDITURES

- *Defining Essential*
  - Essential Services
- *Quality of Life*
- *Programs and Services*
  - Social Services and Safety Net
  - Aging
  - Investments in Transit
  - Walkability
  - Transportation Infrastructure
  - Neighborhood Conservation
  - Parks and Recreation/Dog Parks
  - Fields
  - Police and Fire
  - Libraries
  - Trees and Gardens

## PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT and COMMUNICATIONS

- *Engagement Practice*
- *Communication and Information Availability*
- *Customer Service and Satisfaction*
- *Establishing Project Parameters--EARLY*

## GENERAL

- *Innovation and Future*
- *21<sup>st</sup> Century Arlington*
- *Use Creative approaches*

### **SECTION III: THEMES with RELATED COMMENTS**

*Note: This section includes discussion and viewpoints shared by participants during the FY 19 budget roundtables.*

#### **REVENUE CONSIDERATIONS**

##### ***Taxes***

##### ***In Support of Tax Increases***

- I want to add my voice to willingness to pay more---as a longtime resident—and take advantage of all of the senior programs. I am all for subsidizing fixed or low income. And I would be willing to pay more for taxes.
- We live in Arlington; I don't mind paying our taxes. We don't have kids—and comfortable with the taxes we pay, and would be willing to pay more. I like the services and the qualities that are offered for residents. Parks, sidewalks, bike share---it's why I live here...and I am happy to invest in my community.
- I want to second the comment---I don't have issues with the taxes I pay. When I call government, they answer the phone, the community policing officers are amazing. Schools are great—and need to keep our kids well educated.
- If someone can explain WHY we are raising taxes----and how the funds will be used, I would be willing to pay.
- I think we get great services in Arlington county...it may get to a point where I can't afford the taxes—but I think it's money well spent; and I would be willing to pay more for services we receive.
- My wife and I recently moved to Arlington and amazed us at the high level of services that are provided to residents. Programs to pick up TV, dispose of metals, shredding. We like it here for services.
- For the record—I would pay more taxes to maintain services provided by human services. It helps us maintain diversity in our county. And it keeps us safer—public health.
- I want to live in Arlington. I own 2 homes---and I would pay more taxes
- I too would pay more taxes---to support paying our firefighters, police and teachers more – so they can potentially live here in the county.
- Our core services are critical. And I too would pay more for taxes. But we need to make sure that funds are available for more pay –to support workers in their ability to live in Arlington.
- Tax rate is a steal compared to other jurisdictions.
- I would be willing to pay for specialized waste disposal services. (microwave, old sofa, etc.)
- I would be willing to pay more to reduce transit times
- I would pay more for arts and entertainments. Encourage people to live and work here to also play here
- I don't hear a lot about people upset about taxes, as we get good services. Better than many other areas in the country.

- I have lived places where tax rates---have been much higher. I don't see that topic being discussed here in Arlington (on my list serve, at gatherings). People don't seem to be stressed --by the current tax rate.
- I am not sure about paying more (taxes/fees), but I don't hear people talking about tax cuts? But when I speak for myself and my family. Yes—we pay a lot, but we get a lot back. We get a lot of services. Could there be savings identified? Yes, but I don't feel like there is a lot of funding wasted. I am happy to pay taxes, because I feel like I get something in return.
- Seems like our tax rate is lower than neighboring counties (Fairfax, Alexandria). But important to note 'what is your tax bill'. If we want to address affordable housing, that we need to make the case -to community that we need to invest if we want to have a strong middle class and support people that live in poverty

### *Concerns for Increasing Taxes*

- Keep tax level -including fees, at current levels. Taxes and fees are driving people who have lived here for a long time. It only really works for people who have pensions—and we don't all have pensions.
- Caution raising taxes and fees—especially on essential services-water, electricity as examples--look at Puerto Rico...
- Taxes and services have gone up—and need some level setting for decision making.
- I asked about the increase in the budget over past years, because I have not had a 5% increase in my own wages. Having the county increase budget, it means that I have to pay more in taxes and fees; and my salary is not changing at the same rate. I have to live within my own budget and so the County should stay steady and not increase the budget every year.
- I am not willing to pay more real estate tax; but I would be willing to pay more for discretionary programs (classes, etc.)
- I too do not want to pay more in taxes and prefer we look at manage our spending.
- I don't want to pay more taxes—
- If our population is growing, then, our tax base should be growing....
- Offended by question – do we want to be taxed more? Hold the line.

### *Impact of Tax Increases*

- It's important to look at Virginia poverty level—not just federal, and this tells us that there are many more people below or at the poverty line (as it is adjusted for regional costs).
- Age in place alterations, real modifications ---like reducing stairs. We are not thinking about how to use houses ---and not providing advise (free), for people. Arlington building is expensive. Need to focus on use of 28,000 single family houses and configuration.
- Tax rates---There are many people who can't afford the tax rate. Aging in place becomes more difficult as people move to live on social security checks.
- One program I am concerned with is the real estate tax relief program. We were surprised to learn that some people are exempt from paying taxes for years, making others pay more? If the philosophy is for aging in place in Arlington, let's look at how best to do that. I do

NOT recommend that real estate taxes are exempt when they live in houses worth 600-800,000. I approve of deferral---but when the house is sold-the back taxes should be paid.

- Need to look at exemption side of real estate tax relief...1) deferral; and 2) exemption. Consider more Deferrals and FEWER exemptions. Would yield more revenue

### *Property Value and Taxes*

- When I compare our property taxes-----to other states---our tax is very reasonable....
- As my property value goes up---my taxes are also going up—and makes it hard to retire and afford to keep my house. Challenge for people on fixed incomes.
- Now that I know that commercial and resident tax rate are the same—why do we give commercial businesses exemption based on value of property—that they are not paying taxes for a period of time.
- People that live here a long time, and wondering if we can explore ‘homestead’ exemption? Not based on age or disability—but based on length of ownership.
- Back to ‘homestead’ exemption. Maybe a deferral is more sensible, as when the house is sold---the value increased due to the county investments in infrastructure (school, transportation), so funds should be returned to the county at the time of sale.
- Offering something up on the housing side: the exemption part of the real estate tax relief program. Why do we still have that? There are two parts to this program: deferrals and exemptions. An exemption basically benefits the heirs of the property, the growth in property value via taxes is never realized by the county.
- Looking at tax deferment and this is a great way to harness the value----as they sit on high value property.
- When there is a growth in ‘McMansions’ in neighborhoods impacts taxes! Especially for older adults. Average real estate tax in Arlington about 8K/year. Not just taxes but also Fees.
- One idea on housing –we should charge somebody— (buyer or seller) when they are going to tear down a small house --to build a McMansion. Or affordable apartments –turned into expensive town houses. Might need to go to Richmond—but would be worth pursuing.
- Taxation on McMansions –not sure our tax system accounts for disparities of wealth in the county. Any thought for a McMansion surcharge—maybe dedicated towards affordable housing?
- Wish that other people would pay more taxes.... I see a lot of large homes going up- and thinking about that the volume in those homes for heating and cooling. Charge more for utilities for those larger homes –with environmental cost sharing. Incentivize more efficiencies.
- Think about taxing based on lots and square feet on properties. Incentives to have more trees
- Land use—making it easier to subdivide a LOT to offer more opportunities to build affordable housing, which provides same tax revenue, but splits between multiple owners.
- Tax base for Large scale houses on land
- Look at tax rate for vehicles...

- If you understand the rationale for higher taxes, provides visibility and support for higher taxes. Neighborhoods might be a good example.
- For more information, visit [About Real Estate Taxes](#)

### ***Fees and Cost Recovery***

#### *Consideration for Additional Fees*

- Fees seem to pop up and forgotten about and all of a sudden, we're paying all these fees. I don't want to pay more fees in general. There isn't always the purpose for the fees, and seems more like the fact that you can put a fee on it.
- I would imagine that broadly, people would say no way I am not paying more. but if you ask more specifically about a service then that's easier to answer. this question of what would you pay more is hard to answer, also within a vacuum when I don't what other jurisdictions are paying. example: I live in dc and I don't pay trash fee because its rolled into my property tax.
- to pay more for services. We hear that despite county being prosperous---we still don't have enough money to cover human services. --and related services. There are places that have a sliding scale or fee based service model for things like trash? (as an example).
- Consider thinking more creatively----about these fees? Consider charging based on usage. Examples --recycling; additional vehicles; collection from developers—for larger properties (assess fees)
- Developer fees I understand because it goes back to the development fund. But parks don't and that's a cost recovery model.
- The fee I have in mind is the recycling fee as an example.
- Caution- there is so much demand for hotels that a lot of these multifamily have hotel like rooms - are you seeking any fee for that? example: Oklahoma visitor booked a corporate apartment on hotels.com - is hotels.com paying a fee?
- Metro system, they don't want to go into a death spiral where they keep raising fees and people keep leaving, but they need to find the right balance and are asking the localities for support for that.
- Fees for classes: gymnastics fees are high but I'm willing to pay for it because it's great, and I would pay more. You also should make sure that not everyone is subsidized.
- As a non-resident, I would pay more for classes.
- Vehicle fees: maybe folks that have more than one vehicle—should pay more for the second?
- I think people would pay more for parking fees.
- Fees are unbelievable - I would be willing to pay more for that door to door service plus the debris pick up. Personal property - is one where people don't like to pay.
- DPR has a cost recovery model—easy for those that can pay for classes, leagues. But not as easy on open park /open field use. Apply FEE model to other users --beyond leagues and classes. Also, consider increasing fees for field use
- Add Fee for shredding twice a month (instead of once a month).

- Child care—is an additional challenge -for families—as the costs are so significant. Limited child care options and to get licensed they have to have access to outdoor space.

*Consider unintended impacts when assessing fee increases*

- Fees for Community Centers—maybe suggested donations for DROP in. Be thoughtful about how the fare gets increased. Don't use the ART bus transit model that was done last year—announce RTA as part of budget proposal. Need to consider IMPACTS on people that might not be able to afford it.
  - In an abstract sense, I think people don't want to pay more for services, but candidly we should. Marketing the incredible services that Arlington has might make people understand just how exceptional we are. Parks & Rec, part of what they do brilliantly, is that they have an enterprise model that makes sure it funds itself but it makes sure that people of all SES can participate. Because we have such wealth disparity, we want to make sure that poor kids can be a part of all of Arlington has to offer.
  - Fees and increases comment – really need to pay attention to potential for regressive impact of any fees. Put the fees where they can be handled without burdening low-income, increase fees for luxury items.
  - Pay as you go---maybe we need to think about base model standards.....for dog parks. If you want something like the 'clarendon' model (with water features), then, there is a fee for membership—into the gold-plated version (apply to other things. Come up with a base model. I recognize this might create inequity...so need to set boundaries—in fee structure.
  - Think about what programs or services do I pay for now---and what would I pay more for? I can't come up with many. Maybe piecemeal amenities, like access to park facilities. However, we need to be careful not to get into a situation ---where people are paying higher taxes to live here, but then have to pay to use county facilities. So, worry about increasing too much.
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- I recently flew on an airline where everything is ala carte, on top of the base fee. If we consider real estate taxes as base fare. Then we need to consider what the base (real estate taxes cover)? How would that work—for additional services and fees? I think we have to be careful.
  - Affordability/reduced rates of the kids' sports activities also important – part of who Arlington is.
  - 55+ program important – however fees should be income-based (many don't need subsidies)

*Developer Fees*

- We have developers—who are also blocking parking, tearing up sewer lines, wondering if they should they be asked to contribute their fair share during development?
- Developers, there is commercial real estate; and also, turnover of older homes. Tear down 3 bed rooms, build 7 bedrooms. Seems like these units put additional burden on trash,

transit, use of parks. Are those developers paying fees for that infrastructure demands? Or is that passed to other residents?

- If developers are using county services—like zoning, sewer line, closing roads, shouldn't they be contributing. (note—most of the developers—DO pay fees for these types of things).
- I actually think it would be good if the county can say—what services are being used? Level of service? Who is using what? What changes have been implemented? Are there areas where you made changes to the service (fees, as an example for recycling), where would there be disproportionate impact. Do an analysis of impact and determine whether that is going to be worth it? Ancillary costs that would increase costs?
- Note –this is what you are getting for what you are paying. Describe what people get for funds and additional funds/fees. Having that information out there—makes things easier. And provides more options on the operating side.
- Decreasing ability to move vehicles, putting in bike lanes, costs should be borne by developers. What is new development going to do to traffic/parking? Transfer costs to developers and plan it out 10-20 years in advance.

#### *Incentives and Community Benefits*

- 18% annual increase in real estate tax – look at tilting at user fees to pay for services – easier to make fees non-regressive than taxes. As an aside, CM should propose expansion of proffer system to require contributions to community amenities. Fairfax does it better. Re state constraints, if Fairfax can do it, why can't we?
- Can we offer incentives----to people who live here—and not drive. Or charge people who DO drive into Arlington?
- Talk about retaining teachers and public service, then, consider retention incentives (bonus at 5 years –to encourage people to stay
- Consider doing a value assessment ---and consider community benefits –and upfront contribution for schools ---during development application.
- Look at new models – such as asset-based community development (ABCD) using people in communities to look at what is needed in that community (vs. consultants and staff – too top heavy) – and help solve problems. Problems with affordable childcare in Nauck for example.
- It seems that there is an enormous amount of development (in courthouse for example), and this seems to potentially put additional pressures on schools, water, sewer, etc..... can we consider having developers PAY fees for development that would benefit the entire community?
- The increase coming from single family homes; but apartment residents have big impact on park use. We need an investment on open space and parks....as this is key element for making it livable. Maybe we should consider using 'proffers' system—and require developers to offer community benefits including park space/schools.

### *Permitting*

- Any proposals to increase taxes requires evidence that permit process is improved. Lack of differentiation in fees between big and small businesses. Big business should incur higher fees.
- Increased permit fees are not justified, process does not work properly. Residents have to wait forever, talk to 2-3 people all of whom tack on fees, incomprehensible process.
- Recommend training program for people in permitting – inconsistent responses from staff.

### *Public/Private Partnerships*

- The libraries do a lot of creative things—supported by ‘friends of libraries’, so the county isn’t buying things for specific types of activities or equipment. There are examples in other areas when the community is told something can’t be purchased due to budget limitations (e.g., benches in long bridge park, as an example). It might be helpful to consider the ‘friends of library’ model for other areas of the county, and explore ways to build external support to have these types of philanthropic contributions.
- Arlington is successful in public-private partnership---in the community art space. Maybe we do this –but are there opportunities to expand out to parks and recreation areas? Take care that we are not pricing out families that can’t afford it

### *Bond Options*

- I believe Arlington will pay more for the services that we have. the way in which we approve bonds is generally good. how we communicate what residents are receiving in turn for their taxes should be better. Parks and Rec does brilliantly that they have an enterprise model where they set fees on a range, as long as people aren't overwhelmed on the high-end. we get amazing services. why don't we do a public safety bonds for public safety infrastructure? I believe Arlingtonians would pay for it.

### *Exploring Revenue and Investments*

- We need long term facts to have this type of conversation. I have owned the same house for over 20 years, but my property taxes have tripled. But it is unclear what services are provided in return for this increased revenue.
- It would be useful to see the trends in how revenue and spending has changed over the past several decades.
- Are there efficiencies that could be gained in various areas that would provide savings?
- Is there a possibility to have a multi-tiered property tax---(within Dillon rule)?
- When giving large companies offsets---wondering if this works as a way to lower their tax rate (indirectly)?
- It would be good to reflect the county’s vision, and explore how these elements align with Arlington’s budget. Also recommend we align the budget with Arlington County’s Comprehensive plan.

- This is also an opportunity to use the budget process to help people understand the connection to the elements for the comprehensive plan and other services provided.
- On the facilities end, the co-location thing is fine, the cost of facilities that we build. A conversation with the architect of the Wilson school – it's a LOT of money. The architects design to the budget that they are given. Build buildings on a tighter budget.

#### *Opportunities for Reduction/Elimination*

- I can live without the \$300,000 for plastic toys at the water treatment plant? Public art?
- Do we need the swimming pool? (long branch). Maybe we don't essentially have to have it---
- Dog Parks
  - One less Dog park
  - Scale back the dog parks.
  - Dog Parks....? Do we need to spend as much as we spend?
- Public Art
  - Possible reduction area – several large developments going into Ballston and the public art was mandatory. Does it add value or bring revenue – is anyone looking at that? Why does it exist?
  - Why paying a particular artist to put a structure in place so it is just looked at?

#### ***CLOSE OUT BUDGET***

- There is money in the close out budget---and every year we spend money on things that are not previously approved and not in the budget. Move money forward to address the items in the budget. Explore areas of reduction where the funds are not used the year before?
- Question about close out practices on budget---and allocation of budget. As opposed to using the close out to address the GAP.
- CLOSE out funds are One-time funds—only things that you need ONCE. Not for ongoing expenditure needs (like operations). Maybe the close out funds should not be focused on the same thing every year?
- Close out funds-16% of budget- should be put into the general fund – important part of our community
- Why does 15% go and its decided at the end of the year – should be discussed.
- Close-out and carryover funds – 16% of budget but how is that money used? (and only 5% is required to be held)?
- The closeout proposal from the CM includes 5.2 million for affordable housing, and wondering if we could use those funds instead to pay off some of the debt.
- Different voice on affordable housing. I would say that I thought it was great news to spend 5.2 million of close out into affordable housing. we are losing affordable housing units. We are losing civil servants, older adults, young families.

## ***GOOD GOVERNANCE***

### *Data and Open Government*

- Better understanding of efficiencies Better, more data for decision-makers to make informed, data-driven decisions. Data made public. As far as revenue goes, programs/classes should be expanded – they operate at a loss though...
- Number of vehicles sitting at parks—without use. How many vehicles does Arlington have? And can we evaluate the use?
- Number of buses that are underutilized. Consider yearly pass for metro—to transition from roads to buses /subways as opposed to trip by trip. Consider adoption here In Arlington.
- Ditto on efficiency points...why we do what we do—speaks to our value. Looking at poverty map---is disturbing. We are very segregated as a county-and it broke my heart. That's a bigger issue—about what is driving where we are heading and decisions we are facing...
- We have to find out how parks are used?
- Better understanding of efficiencies and data for citizens to make better decisions. Justify cost impact....at the beginning of the process.
- Think creatively-when we look at all options. Creative space—will come down to zoning ordinance....so that we build in adaptive use of spaces.
- For more information, visit [Open Data Portal](#)

### *Fiscal Stewardship*

- I would like to see the departments dive deep about cutting services, and not things like community policing, rather than figuring out where there are inefficiencies.
- We don't know what services you look at. Do what the private sector does? We look at what we do and find things that are no longer relevant. Perhaps they were top of the line 5 years ago but not anymore. We have to trust your expertise to review that.
- We need to rely on you all that there are services, residents don't understand that
- Need fiscal information for projects at the beginning of the planning (not like Christmas in July). The community is not asked –what we could cut back from budget during the development of projects. The Community is not asked about “IF” we need a facility--- before it comes out for planning.
- You won't get more broad support unless you can convince the public that what you have now is being used in a good way.
- Unlike other people in the group, I am not interested in paying more taxes for the services. I would rather the county look at how they can be more efficient and look at expenditures.
- The county can certainly operate more efficiently.
- Be more efficient-and looking internally in the county.

### *Creative Approaches*

- I think the county needs to get creative—and not to look at zero sum gain. Year to year is a real challenge and hoping that these discussions---that are the beginning of long range planning.
- Creativity is the way we should try to approach the whole budget and spending. Our resources are shrinking and we have more people. So, we have to look at existing tools and keep them; but we are going to have to be creative on how we put them together or provide services.
- Reconfiguring land use—and making it more efficient. INVEST---on return. Invest in planning staff that brings tax base back to the county. Identify ways to get MORE from field, by superimposing different playing configurations on ONE field (multi-use approach). Needs funding base, and creative alternatives.
- If we don't give management some ideas—we will lose our opportunity.
- Consider substituting volunteer work for potential professional services.
- Inform our process—what is the county missing that the county could spend money on---that benefits everyone. Principles of defining what we want the county to look like? Meaningful to create the vision for the county—as a foundation for the county.

### *Policies and Regulations*

- We have new laws and regulations (environmental, safety, etc.) ...that increase what services we need to provide...
- Land use policies; zoning policies; support needs without always having to spend more money....

### *Use of Auditors*

- Need to help break down the resistance to have external auditors to look at how operations and government is run. Citizens need an independent reflection of how well the budget and funds are being spent—to avoid waste.
- One possible -County created internal auditor to the Board—but he has no staff and funding. Other jurisdictions have a much more robust internal audit function...to the Board. Audit offices typically find efficiencies—and savings for more than the investment. It's important that the audit office has sufficient staff.
- Vicious circle ---but then, hit diminishing returns. Internal auditor to the board get more funding so he can hire more staff and oversee efficiencies of programs and projects. Ensure we are getting the best bang for our buck. Typically pay for itself.
- I would like to propose—that we look at what the county is spending and what we are doing with it. A few suggestions, the independent auditor is still around (yeah). His job is to look for opportunities---to look for efficiencies. Having more auditors would help him do that—and it would be money well spent.

## *Transparency*

- Using a surplus—and how we use it. Having a transparent process and knowing how things are integrated into the budget at the last minute—and swayed by unique groups.
- Important to communicate the costs of projects early and often with residents.
- Transparent process is important for good governance.

## ***COUNTY SERVICES and PROJECT DELIVERY***

### *Focus on the Basics*

- Arlington has been a trendsetter—and continue to be a trendsetter, that we don't fall behind—like Fairfax or Falls Church or Alexandria. (Transportation, affordable housing, parks/recreation). If other jurisdiction gets ahead—we lose competitiveness.
- Desire to do basic well – prioritize over gold-plated – no gold-plating until we get basic services right.
- Architecture: good does not need to be expensive... ACG falls short on maintenance... roadways in disrepair...
- Address the Basic necessities. I don't think about cutting programs but it is important that we are making sure we are being efficient. Example, do we need to replace all of our sidewalks and roads—are we going about it in the most efficient way. I also look at programs in schools and services. Are we aiming for world class effort---when maybe it's not needed in every case? Are we approaching projects in an efficient way, first meeting 'basic 'needs before getting 'fancy'? It's about prioritization.
- What is the goal for Arlington? for me -it's not a destination city. That is ok for me, but what is our goal? And how will we achieve it? And not exceed expectations. Meet the basics first—and then, look at the fancy things. It will take super hard choices.

### *Cross Agency Coordination*

- Efficiencies between schools/county: Efficiency with schools—is critical, as there are many services that both schools and county use—so integration is important.
- More conversations between schools and county to identify better efficiencies and reduce redundancy (ex, technology)
- Shocked at lack of discussion between depts.
- Public private partnerships---using energy /AIRE as a model and explore other areas to leverage other resources.
- I want to second efficiencies for projects and cross departmental activities to reduce waste and inefficiencies. Paving, repaving, without coordination between multiple agencies (VDOT, County, other). Needs to be someone accountable for working across project teams and departments. Coordination can provide savings by streamlining and reducing duplicity.

- I was on a community facilities group—and agreed that there are overlap of resources between APS and County. I know we are working on co-location –at the Wilson school (with fire house).
- Knock down SILOs and Coordinate services across government. How can community members (not just staff) work together, to make sure we bust silos and also get information out about how to navigate.
- Helpful if the CB and CM -provided a report on the Comprehensive plan, so that residents can be aware how different programs are integrated and work together.
- Commissions working together---ensure that we have a strong communication and message; update commission websites; service information. And getting to people don't need...
- JFAC is an example of planning together; but HOW we have the conversation on school/county board coordination. Sustained ability to listen over the course of a year—will lead us to a more coordinated solution. This takes time and extraordinary hard work, but we have to curb cost of construction on school side. We have the best schools in Virginia, but not for EVERY student.
- You can also look for efficiencies----but there is a boundary around those as well....
- Get good value for what we're paying for. Better allocate space -- look at scheduling fields/space and how the resource is managed.
- If we want more service/funds, can we use resources/space that already exist.
- We live in Williamsburg and they ripped up the street 4 times---and now bumping out all of the curbs.
- In terms of VDOT redirects, need a one-stop shop for better customer service
- Think creatively in how we shift things we do. Can we use ART buses for high school instead of school buses? Also helps with independence of students.
- Efficiency challenge. Streets are being repaved-more than once in a short period of time. First the County, then VDOT, then someone else comes in and does it again. We need to look big picture.
- Dig deeper and look for efficiencies.
- More efficiencies in processes and look at what are processes are costing people working with us (housing developers, long lead time, etc....as an example.

#### *Use of Contractors*

- Are there services that could be more efficiently...cutting overage on contracts? Or other efficiencies? How well are we currently using resources that we have?
- Right now, the contracting office---has no transparency—and oversight. I have tried to find someone in the contracting office. We need someone who is tracking specifics for a contractor, including cost, schedules, etc. what are the penalties if they are not on schedule on budget. Contracting management.
- Looked at cost cuttings, but have not talked about revenues. 66 tolls as an example? Concern –does Arlington get any of the funds for the easy passes ----and we could raise revenues.

### *Considerations for Change in Service*

- Security – fantastic first responders – not paid enough – need to be able to support them...Bike lanes – too many, underused.
- I also think that allowing the county board---has an aide, or a clerk---would help them answer the many questions—would help them be more efficient.
- There is one service that I think is wasteful—and that is street sweeping. No one removes the cars to do the sweeping, and so I think it's pretty inefficient.
- Drew Community Center is only open 6-9pm. Could it be more?
- Efficiency of spending—like expansion of pedestrian infrastructure). Seems like adding sidewalks may seem silly—but it's really a much better solution
- Don't need a new building for everything
- Fire truck comes every time 911 is called. Is that really necessary? Should we look at that?
- Commercial real estate not producing revenue, starting to hurt, still in the middle of that
- Multi-purpose use of facilities – community centers, schools, libraries, vacant office space, why can't we use vacant office space? Community centers? Capital expenditures – ACG should not be building 1-2 story structures – travesty – put affordable housing on top. Reed School example.
- Metro/APS are big things – why focus on things like leaf bags?
- We also need to look at spending on 'staff' and allocation of staff—relative to the number of parks, programs, facilities, etc.—that are needed.
- I see a lot of repaving—on roads that may not have need; but we stick to our schedule
- Solar panels on schools that have impact on reducing operating cost in future.
- Consider Adaptive REUSE---thinking about using empty office space for schools. We are not a suburban community anymore, so maybe we don't need to necessarily have open parking and open space—for all environments.
- I think development and opening the spigot as there is a lot of land (along lee highway and other corridors that have not seen development). Could private service providers come in to offer those supports (day care for example).

### ***CAPITAL PROJECTS***

#### *Costs of Projects*

- It seems like we have a disconnect---the long bridge aquatic center—looks beautiful. Maybe we don't need to fund it at the level—and still have it—but not make it SOO nice.
- Are there big projects—that maybe don't need to exist---can we just take the 12m gap, can we put those on hold (delay?) ...to fill the gap? Or a couple of projects? Instead of nickel and diming services?

- You can't just say that we are going to cut 14m off the cost of a capital project—to face a gap—for ongoing operational costs.
- Arlington having this reflex—of gold plated and premium, but maybe it comes down to environmental issues—and simple low cost—is to water its trees, which I believe is pretty low cost, but have long term benefits. There has been a recent analysis—that shows the monetary value of trees. Don't let them die....
- Maybe we need to look at the capital projects—and how much money is going into development vs operational. I find the costs of some of the park renovations seem to be high. For example, the requirements for dog parks—are many, and maybe we need to be more flexible---about how we move forward with renovations and projects.
- maybe we need to be more willing to not have
- For parks, maybe there are smaller spaces where we can do something, that does not have to cost as much to meet the requirements. It seems like we are spending a lot on things we could do something at a lower rate. We don't need 'state of the art; for everything. I don't think it degrades anything. When I lived in DC—we had a park that was great, but much more simplified and lower costs.
- As a 30-year-old, I have trepidation in raising a family here—and cannot imagine doing so in AC. I make decent money, but the way we define world class could be gold-plated or happiness index for less.
- High dollar projects – resources could be better applied elsewhere.
- We have to look at ourselves – it's us – we (residents) ask for these things that often drive up the costs of projects.
- Don't want to hear about any additional fees for anything until we start making sense... huge underlying problem of gold-plated attitude... guess is it comes from the CB historically... needs to stop. Willing to spend more on taxes if we have to. Lubber Run design is crazy over the top. Whoever makes these decisions seems to think we are bottomless pits.
- echoes gold plated concern, inability to navigate by wheelchair amidst gold-plated bus stop –
- I love living in Arlington—but there is a lot of gold-plating. If I am renovating my house—I want everything but I can't afford everything. I am thinking about 'streets'— Example –Lee Highway Visioning process, the vision was wonderful –but may be implemented without consideration for costs.
- I think the parks are great; but I don't think we need the high-end playground equipment that costs more money. They are very fancy but kids learn equally from nature (trees and grass).
- Also building ropes and balancing on playground—that are for older kids; but older kids are not hanging out in the parks. And, then younger kids try to play on equipment that is not age appropriate.
- \$500,000+ bus stops, over the top park amenities. National Gallery of Art visit – why do we need an Arlington Arts Center?
- World class attitude...

- Not a lot of common sense, disconnect between budgeting process and planning process
- Staff won't talk to residents about money – 4MRV e.g. - staff allegedly cannot talk to residents about money and/or say no to resident requests – disconnect. Important to introduce cost parameters... real disconnect with parks... and need for open space... schools are not the place to invest in architecture,
- Having sat on too many planning processes... biggest driver for world class approach is the people...we want this and that... people don't understand back end implications to projects... disconnect between planning and full cost implications
- Staff allegedly cannot talk to residents about what things cost. Not being allowed to have those discussions. Would like a sense of magnitude of costs?
- We have all of these fancy light posts—do we need those? In schools, the PTA is paying for playgrounds to be updated, not government.
- I am not sure why the dog park in clarendon has a water feature. Is it nice—yes, is it necessary? No.
- The million-dollar bus stop; and now the half million-dollar bus stop---on Columbia pike.
- This goes back to not having to buy the platinum of everything. In our neighborhood--- this was a topic, even most recently at Lubber Run, and surprised how much it was going to cost.
- For more information, visit [Capital Projects](#)

#### *Alternatives to Building New Facilities*

- On facilities, co-location is fine, but I am concerned about costs to build new centers, schools, etc.
- I am an aroura highlands resident—and close to crystal city residents. When we went through school citing, and why we couldn't put a school there. A board member indicated cost of renting –would cost more than building. I haven't seen those numbers-- -but not sure if you take into the full lifecycle of a project (including maintenance and operating), that we can really assess the comparison. Especially in overcrowding....
- Do we need to build office space for county staff? Can we rent existing space? Need to consider lifecycle costs of new buildings, maintenance, operations, land acquisition costs.
- Look at things more holistically—for CIP maintenance. There may be facilities nearby that are not completely utilized---like on school property—to explore co-sharing.

#### *Cycle of Capital Maintenance and Replacement*

- The term 'end of useful life' is often used when replacing things, and not sure how this is determined. Replacing things that are still 'good', and maybe could last longer. We need to reconsider the timing of projects and platinum plating.
- Renovations and maintenance have to be done over time –especially in schools and other facilities.
- CIP maintenance is interesting as it is a big expense in the county. Example of Aurora—to dig up courts, and then, come back and redo them a few years later. We may be wasting funds in some ways.

### *Relational Costs of New Buildings*

- The County has not considered the potential impact proactively –before they approve new development. To conduct an analysis of impacts on schools, fire, police, other services. And make sure that there is enough money to support services.
- I wanted to comment about development. It is true that we have seen a lot of high rise residential and development; but I think we learned recently –that a lot of the research done indicates that the school age population is coming from single family neighborhoods—not high rises.
- Towards the schools, I love living here and love the services. But I think we spend a lot of money for our students. Every time we set up a choice school, we set up a need for additional transportation funding. I am not sure we need to spend our money building big expensive schools (like Wilson).
- When building new facilities? —need to budget for operations and maintenance. And, need to show revenue producing options for some of these types of investments (like swimming pools).

### *Green Space*

- I think it's really important that as the county moves forward with forming the budget—that they don't listen to people---that are saying. “why are we paying for metro? I don't ride? Why are we paying for schools? I don't have kids in schools. But the community benefits in the whole aggregate. If metro and schools go down the tubes, we are all sunk.
- Green space is very important and –overcrowding of schools. So, we need to take this into account—when we are budgeting.
- High density –and redevelopment in housing ---from garden apartments to high rise, without green space. That is another issue that the community is not happy about.
- Example, Costco lot owned by developers. They are building a residential high rise. They have a plan to put in other like buildings. There is supposed to be a community benefit of green space—but not for 30 years. What happens---is all of those residents—will squeeze onto the little green space that exists. Now—we need to figure out how to find little lots to start compensating for not having public spaces? There is a systemic issue—that is happening in the county that could potentially be helpful. At the end of the day—we still need to provide services for everyone moving in...
- Green space---(not open space, not people, not courts, ...just Green Space)
- NYC has a school right across from UN. A rental building—that appears to be working. Working with developers to look at community benefit. ...including creative kind of school. There is limited land available...There is all of this empty space in crystal city. Get revenue, be creative. As an example. The county is now working with developers to include ‘polling space’...

## *Land Acquisition*

- We have limited space---in this county, and so need to be more proactive to acquire property instead of developers—so that the county can use for facilities, needs, and green space.
- There is not enough land or money to give any of it away
- Specific example: the university system in Arlington. All universities have this problem of underutilized space. the site process for mason was a lot of community benefit. we've decided to invest long term in this area and we are very thankful that public servants are conservative with debt and concerned about the long term. grateful for that, continue that, and look forward to investment ideas that is competitive. be on the cutting edge. it's a tough job and we say thanks. we're all in the same boat.

## **SCHOOLS**

### *School Quality*

- Number of kids and classrooms----are significant. And they flow all the way through....
- Two young children who will be joining Arlington County Schools—and we definitely can't live without—and wanting to make sure they are HIGH quality schools.
- My family moved to Arlington for two reasons.....schools and public transportation. A lot of people come to Arlington because its commutable and have the best education in the region. Those two things should never be touched.
- Connection between growing schools—with growing needs for PLAY areas (pools, parks, fields, etc.)
- We're getting good value for what we're paying for.
- Schools –choice options. The most important thing is to have great teachers –with good salaries and benefits that allows you to recruit and retain high quality teachers. Teachers start here and are trained, but they then build their own family and can't afford to live here. Same for fire and police. We are not helping young professionals and public service employees live here.
- I would like to see the county -coordinate with schools to assess impact on school capacity and related costs. It feels like the county is not carefully considering the impact of schools when recruiting new businesses (big companies) into Arlington. They bring new employees—that may have kids that will need school services. Holistic view of benefits and impacts.
- I feel like larger class room sizes are a detriment for quality of education in our schools.

### *Urban Schools*

- Advocating for use high rise buildings---for housing middle school students, converting temporarily---locate students into high rises. I think we have an opportunity. we have been slow in the county---to have anything but single level schools. We should consider

going multi levels in schools—and look at Crystal city and Rosslyn—for middle/high school. This would help us limit capital expenditures for schools.

- I would love to see an urban school in Ballston or other part of Arlington. Because we insist on a suburban school environment.
- Why don't we build schools differently? Build UP more. Look at co-location more. (Campbell fields not used.) What about housing for seniors on some sites? "we build schools like we're a suburb"
- I want to support density and mixed-use development in Rosslyn-Ballston corridors; and provide services IN the corridor—not having to send my kids to school miles away. I want to walk to school with them—in a compact environment.
- I would be comfortable sending my kids to neighborhood –walkable schools—and consider urban environment.

### *Costs for Education and Schools*

- Cost per schools---what is the correct portion?
- Cost of last three schools? What does average school cost somewhere else.
- Schools---spending 47% for 16% of the population. This might be an area for review. Schools get everything they want....and an audit would help looking at this...
- We are not going to be able to spend our way out of the school problem, it just is not the best way to go...
- How does revenue sharing with schools compare to other jurisdictions? I don't think the percentage is sustainable. I love the schools, I used them, but long term our schools are fabulous. when I think of gold plated – I think of iPad in schools.
- The costs/ sq. foot in schools is really high- we've already spent that money, but should we have? does the schools board and APS run without concern to these budgetary issues? Finnish teacher was visiting and said that iPads weren't used but cell phones. and when the 5 kids don't have cell phones then the school buys 5 cell phones. they don't buy everyone a cell phone.
- Schools – approving huge numbers of rental and condo units putting pressure on schools w/ highest per capita expenditures, above the national average on new school construction, class sizes less than they could be. Concerned about spending more and more because we want to be world class.
- Suggestion to make the schools be more accountable and more efficient in their spending.
- We need to sit down with school boards---and reset the amount of spending for schools. It's the teachers and instruction that is important. Not fancy slides in the middle.
- We are essentially paying for a private school (HB-Woodland) that the County is paying for....at a high price.
- Now we are looking for ED center building for a new high school, that will be expensive.
- How is money going to Schools being allocated? Need to expand schools.
- "Don't want to say increasing school budget when it's just increasing school budget."
- Look at kids who don't need laptops vs. kids who do need (need-based)

- Technology for younger children – not necessary. Second graders should not have iPads (research shows negative impact of screen time on kids)
- Talk about cost per student, but the cost has been rising as population has been rising. There should be ways to realize economies of scale with a growing student population.
- Don't understand why schools cost more in Arlington. Schools are absorbing most of money.
- School increases are coming from large families in single family homes, when older homes are sold, new families move in. Maybe SFH are sources of revenue, consider transfer tax upon the sale of SFH. Agrees with gold plated everything complaint, e.g. Clarendon dog park. What's wrong with mud for dogs? Doesn't have to be world class everything.
- APS designs – seem to be driven by architects – put money into teachers, literally into classroom
- The Process typically includes “give us your wish list”, without any discussion of costs... why not have commission reps rank amenities rather than try to include it all. Prioritize with financial impact in mind, which would be more effective.
- What is driving world class mentality? Root cause – why do we have to spend more per student?
- Is APS using Smart Spending tools?

*School/County Coordination (co-location and multi-use)*

- With all of the new building development (libraries, schools, community centers, recreation facilities, etc.), is there an opportunity to share facilities and space between the County and Schools, and build efficiencies. For example, if there is a new school, can you make the library –open for public access—providing access for students and residents.
- Can we also consider better coordination between the County and Schools regarding school transportation? Can we help older students utilize ART buses, instead of school buses to decrease costs for school transportation?
- 40% of budget that is schools---where is there opportunities for economies of scale? Often, we talk about student population going up—can we think creatively to work with APS.
- Can we have multi-use and co-location of facilities. We would need to accept more density---but co-locating fire stations and housing? As an example.
- Really support combined use of properties, there is a huge waiting list for community gardens. Our county parks have a lot of space—if you just had 3-foot garden along edge of fencing---would allow more people to access to growing gardens. Consider changing rules ---
- General points about fitting pieces together---and the need to continue to have schools and county working together (including joint committees) for long range planning. But unfortunately, we don't always look far ahead...

- can schools become recreation centers---and co-locate in one place as opposed to building new community /recreation centers?

## ***TRADE OFFS***

### *Social /Opportunity Costs*

- I echo some of the comments. Arlington is wonderful, I have lived here about 10 years. I think asking to give more---when property taxes are high---doesn't seem right. We do tend to buy big ticket/high-end things. And, this is when we don't have enough affordable housing.
- While we want to have world class features---if we have a budget gap---I would rather make sure that we have affordable housing --and provide opportunities for us to have a diverse community.
- County population expected to increase by one-third if we follow General Land Use Plan -- hopefully someone is thinking about where money is going to come from -- not just money, but think about social costs. I would like to know what cost implications are (long-term) for County projects and plans.
- What are the tradeoffs? What are the opportunity costs?
- We don't need gold plating on everything. Especially if we can't afford to support 'affordable housing' .... maybe we should not fund other types of projects (like the long bridge, or other).
- Columbia Pike and cleanliness. Can CPRO help -- they get \$\$\$ from County.
- Strongly support comment re service providers -- crisis in affordable housing -- residents having to live in Fairfax or Loudon (staff, police, teachers) that increases traffic. Need to support NC.
- we have urban challenges, residents don't want to send kids to schools in a high rise.

### *Performance Management*

- Demonstrating VALUE---what you get for your taxes. People may be willing to pay more for fees/taxes, if they would understand the trade off or utilization.
- Issue that FAC has been exploring---that each department performance measures align with budget requests for each department.

### *A Balanced Approach to Revenue and Cost Savings*

- Pressures coming from outside of decision making process --of County board and CM (1) metro; (2) schools.
- Revenue---look at programs---like gymnastics---look at ways to offer them after school or evenings. Look at scheduling and increase revenue? If you are not filling class at prime slot...fill with more popular programs. Could potentially off set programs.
- Apply for housing grants? 401 k --look at baseline funding requirements for savings --- and not consider in factor for determining qualification for affordable housing.

- Rate of growth of housing grants may need to be looked at---as it is unsustainable. Need to assist with tax relief. It's a tradeoff. Not any easy answer....
- Look at balancing spending –against allocated budget----
- If you want more of something else...and don't want to raise taxes. We are taxed out. Then, the only other options are to look for efficiencies and cut spending.
- Budgeting is a series of tradeoffs; never have all of the money we want; and have more wants than we can fund.
- Two residents were injured on lubber run paths – and we were told paths are outside of the project scope – what money do we have and what compromises are we willing to make?
- CONSIDER sending a LIST of all programs and services out to residents so they can see the totality of all services.
- Community is made up of composite parts...difficult to single out any one of those elements that are important.
- Important to look at expenditures -for each program.
- Every person—has a constituency that is important...and, so we have to think backwards....
- Should Utilization of services be a decision factor?
- Does the County ever just say NO?
- Arlington county ---at large---human side to Arlington county board and staff. Message is that these issues are important to you—then, you need to be out in the community and talking to staff and board members. They are very thoughtful and informed. They are real people—just like us, and it is our role as citizens -not to take shots at staff; but to get involved and be actively engaged. Have face to face contacts—including on Monday morning. A different way of addressing problems and emotional passion...
- The budget should work for everyone and not just the people that show up to advocate for their pet issues.

### ***ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT***

- This will help everything else. Our tax base on commercial side is down, but Fairfax and Alexandria are doing more in this area—and we are in direct competition with Arlington, especially because they have land.
- Skimping on Economic Development is a bad decision.
- We are ignoring potential of redevelopment of single family homes. We can get a lot more revenue if we tapped the land use tax for larger home development. Difficult to communicate with zoning on this.
- Commercial vacancy rate is something that continues to be a problem. AED is good, but needs to be continued.
- Have to have a robust metro system to support economic development.
- I keep hearing about 20% vacancy rate---- Same tax rate between single family homes, multifamily, or commercial. The value of property—is important.

- I will not throw out a service to cut because that would be dangerous. strategic big initiatives bringing in business to bring revenue - I don't want to see that trimmed because they help bring up revenues.
- Revenue side –up or down, I echo taking on the long-term view. Arlington residents are Smart people. If they saw the investments—they would understand the importance and need for investments and development Need to incentivize new businesses to come to Arlington.
- When I look at the 17% vacancy rate, I would like to see as much money as possible being invested in commercial property. If we could fix that problem---so much of the gap would go away.
- Economic development slice seems small...given our vacancy rates. Maybe look at meals taxes...that could go toward Economic Development.
- Columbia pike---this is an area that has great potential---but the vacancy rates are eating into tax base We have to invest in Columbia pike---there is economic opportunity -and we have to keep up.
- IT is driving economy---way to economic development
- For more information, visit [Arlington Economic Development](#)

## ***DIVERSITY /EQUITY***

### *Equity Considerations*

- We also have to be careful, not to create an inequity—for areas where maybe people don't have as much money and would have a challenge contributing to extra amenities for public use.
- People concerned about equity in schools—but that applies to other services across the county. Value to have mix-used housing to build a community that adds age, income diversity. Not necessarily monetary value-but something that we should have on our radar.
- We also have to build equity on the amenities available in all areas of the county. For example—in crystal city—which is dense and doesn't have parks—and has limited green space. Even though people are paying a lot of property tax—sometimes rolled up into their rent, they are paying for services, and so equitable distribution is important.
- I can't think of any services that I currently pay for directly. However, I have a friend in Ballston -where there are lots of high rises. She uses the county facilities to play tennis. They often don't make reservations, although they can make reservations and pay for the time. It seems like we do not necessarily collect fees on a regular basis---and we need to consider the impact and equity between people that pay taxes and people don't.
- For budget purposes, how often does the county look at pay scales to readdress the market rate? For the larger scope, look at position, job classification?
- Do you look at the cost of churn within your workforce? Can you put that person in Arlington housing that would tie them to Arlington?

- One of the reasons we live in Arlington—because the community is a caring and want to live side by side. It’s important that we have a package of services that includes services like AFAC, APAH, and other key services for the ALL of Arlington.
- There is a bias that I was indoctrinated with in my youth and that is that sports made you a balanced person along with schools. Seems like we need to move sports up on the priority list or all age groups, so that you get to older adults, you don’t weigh 300 pounds, but have a balanced lifestyle.

### *Diverse Audiences*

- What are we doing –to go out to millennials—posting where they are see...
- Older residents—that live in facilities----in those elder care centers...
- Diversity in Arlington –is critically important. Need to make sure that we are funding things like EDCD, APAH, AFAC, etc.
- We are different, as Crystal city is a high-rise community, so our interests and needs are different. We don’t have single family homes.
- I am concerned about the funding included in last year’s budget for \$100k to support individuals who are undocumented. I am fine paying for schools and health care, but not sure about supporting their legal aid.

## ***AFFORDABLE HOUSING /HIGH COST OF LIVING***

### *Defining Affordable Housing*

- We have to look at the medium income and the goal for what is ‘affordable housing wage’. But the income levels in Arlington require much higher income levels given the high cost of living.
- Sticker shock re moving from renter to homeowner. Have to explore what are the real drivers of price and cost?
- Missing middle – we are too popular, and living next to DC is big draw
- Missing middle – affordable vis-a-vis affluent.
- AC claims diversity is important, trend seems to be towards affluence and less diversity. Investments in affordable housing still very small.
- For more information, visit [Affordable Housing Master Plan](#)

### *Funding Affordable Housing*

- Affordable housing, I think I would be willing to pay more in taxes to have more units.
- Raising existing units impact affordable.
- We have a master plan---for affordable housing, but we are not funding it appropriately.
- We listen well—but then, the County does what they want, with the developers or others who have the loudest voice gets what they want.
- When you raise taxes—it impacts everyone—people that CAN afford it and people that CANNOT afford them. There are a number of people who live in Arlington on poverty--

-and they can't afford to live here in Arlington (and they can't afford to absorb tax increases). Including the individuals who you are trying to help in the affordable housing units.

- Should the Affordable Housing funds be put into the General Fund? How should that money be handled.
- Affordable housing----and the plan, we hear that the county spends too much per unit, the process, AHIF.
- I would reinforce the need for affordable housing. Arlington county seems to be more expensive. The master housing plan—includes 600 affordable units a year, but we need to make sure there is dedicated funding if we are going to have this as a reality.
- If this is a priority—and value, we have to make sure we are not displacing people----and align our funding priorities.
- We need to preserve affordable housing, services, and other key elements of our community.
- We adopted the affordable housing master plan---we still continue to lose market rate affordable housing. I recommend we make this a priority-and help people understand both the diversity an economic aspect.
- Encourage County to make the AHIF funds a regular investment as part of operating as opposed to a one-time fund allocation on an annual basis.
- For more information, visit [Affordable Housing Investment Fund](#)

#### *Multi-Generational Considerations for Affordable Housing*

- Taxes have been rising faster than GDP, inflation, and income levels. People that have lived here for a very long time are getting pushed out of their houses because of this. People with fixed incomes can't stay here as taxes and fees continue to outpace them.
- County employees (teachers, service employees, etc., can't afford to live here....
- Property tax can be a major component of the affordability of your house. Small program for real estate tax relief -- but it is small because that is coming from the state assembly and constitution.
- There seems to be a lot of push seems to be on attracting more rich people. As you make things nicer, you price out people.

#### *Aligning Affordable Housing with Our Social Safety Net*

- How many people qualify to live in affordable housing in Arlington? how do we make sure people that really need the support get this, is there a way to stretch money across units
- Demand for home ownership house---is competitive...and costs drive up...
- More money for housing grant---and look at how to get people into stable housing for cheaper...
- I am sad to see that housing is 'mushed' in with human services, but it's so important.
- Schools---are important, but if kids don't have consistent stable housing, it's not healthy.

- So, if we want to be one kind of community—million-dollar houses and good test scores, then, that is different than ‘the Arlington I know’ ...to support diversity and affordable housing
- I like the affordable housing benefits—I take advantage of these programs.
- Affordable housing units should FIRST go to people who are living in Arlington (not moving from other places).
- There should be a relationship between affordable housing support to those individuals that provide core services for Arlington (fire, police, teachers).
- People who are low income are often pushed out of the county because they can’t afford to be here. And, some of the services are essential, and probably would not be able to afford paying additional fees.
- An example, is on Columbia pike----it is concerning that we might be setting people up to not be able to afford to live in an area that has been typically the most affordable of the county. If we want diversity, then we have to put affordable housing as a priority.
- I support affordable housing across the spectrum---it contributes to our diversity and makes economic sense. It’s a reason to attract employers and tourists. Housing for low wage workers---are equally important in our community.
- We have to take care of folks who can’t afford housing and other services. The DHS and housing budgets are really critical—don’t cut these. We have federal officials talking about cutting these types of services so important for Arlington to continue to support these types of investments. We have to invest in affordable housing. We now have a plan—we should invest
- Would like for affordable housing for families who need it...and to help them if they need it, but if they can work—I would like help to get them jobs.

*Using Incentives or Other Tools for Advancing Affordable Housing Options*

- Affordable housing for teachers, firefighters, and police. We confuse “affordable housing’ with people that work here. What happens when their wages go up? What are we doing to help homeowners and business owners stay here.
- If we want to target specific groups (police, firefighters, teachers), it seems like that would be offered through a tax credit.
- Affordable housing targeted to workforce (Public service and also private sector providers –like day care workers and nurses as an example).
- The idea that the more supply we have the more the cost will go down-Not True. Development for the sake of development is asinine. Entry into “co-ownership” is a good way to enter
- Developers...could they be looking at other options? Could funds be available to other people for affordable housing? (small development vs AHC)
- I think that affordable housing could benefit from having more fees---and this plays into the diversity and values of our county. To the extent that developers have additional fees, I recommend these be used for affordable housing.

### *Strategies for Developing Affordable Housing Units*

- Important to use affordable housing money wisely and to make sure it is well maintained. It is important that landlords make a full assessment of how affordable housing money is spent, before moving forward with new building or high cost renovations. Could more units be funded, instead of making expensive renovations.
- I have a general big picture view---what is driving raising housing and putting up 800k townhouses?
- Affordable housing—cost over 350K -to produce a single unit of affordable housing; twice the prices of a market rate unit. Is building new units best use? Or should we rent housing units-----(block program)? Subsidize rent? Would that be more effective. If you take funds from federal government---you can't limit the application to Arlington residents.
- Affordable housing—is now building units from the ground up; as opposed to upgrading existing units –which would cost less overall. Instead of taking vacant properties.
- On affordable housing, it's also important to have affordable services. If the metro rail is not working –what are the alternatives. Finding a creative solution and investing time with folks in Richmond is super important.
- People that want to make sure affordable housing all over the county---but units in north Arlington is going to cost more than south Arlington. need this recognition.
- We also need to share space and services, and so—we need to look at opportunities, Arlington Mill being an example
- Look at single-family home rezoning. Large homes into multiple rental units.
- Mind blowing how much you have to pay for an apartment. We should be looking at different housing options for everybody so Arlington is for all – sooner or later we're going to price everybody out.
- Incentivize small multifamily instead of a teardown and large house.
- Consider senior housing in co-located at community centers, and multi-generational building/housing

### ***PROGRAM EXPENDITURES***

#### *Defining Essential*

- All services are essential
- Essential services must be supported—Public Safety, fire, police, schools. Assuming those would not be touched
- We need to differentiate between what we want—vs what we need. For example, there are services we all need...like water; But if you reduce library hours—I would not be happy, but I could live without it.
- Important to define what is an actual need? Can we all agree that there are a set of core services?

- It's important to take a futuristic view. For example, could we do without—IT services in this 21<sup>st</sup> century---there are probably some certain basic services that ALL of us won't need and have into the future. Maybe we don't need as many ambulances—because I won't get sick as often.
- Important to define what are basic services? Is affordable housing a basic service? Or are we basic thoughtful caring people. And we need to balance our absolute needs with the whole population...
- If we become an elitist community, I am not sure I would want to live here
- Water and Sewer must be essential!!
- I want to talk to 19% of public safety and environmental services ----most of what our neighborhood talks about or concerned about---are these types of services. Trash, fire, police.... I want to make sure these things STAY on the table—and don't get lost in the conversation. It's not sexy----but important.
- If we only focus on metro, affordable housing, schools---we will lose the essential services for water, sewer, streets, utilities. We have to be careful...

### *Quality of Life*

- Goal for people to live independent, quality lives. (whether jobless, homeless, etc.) How do we provide more positive opportunities – the human resources aspect. Including bike paths, kid sports, parks. Volunteering (vs. worrying about livelihood).
- Parks & outdoor areas, libraries important. Pure number of parks and outdoor areas, and access to broader library system.
- Great sports system.
- Incredible public space along the river [that could be used]
- Our community is most likely to invest in transportation. Arlington has an amazing quality of life---schools, transportation, parkland---is important to maintain what we have achieved. Pretty unique and we must hang on to this and invest in these important elements.
- Great grant programs—that we might consider tapping.
- Would like to know if we increased property tax---but don't want to price people out of their homes. But seems like there are a lot of very nice homes and people might be able to afford more...
- Emphasize how important it is to provide services to help people with disabilities get jobs and related training.
- Interested in sustainable food system. How do we feed ourselves in 2050? Climate change could impact our food chain. Can we have developers have roof top gardens—to support growing food; or even indoor space. Require /incentivize apartment buildings for providing space to grow food. Climate change will come quickly-and we will need to address this and position ourselves to be prepared for these challenges and impacts.
- How are we making Arlington county better for people that live here? Important to keep climate change and environmental stewardship that needs to continue (AIRE as example), including leveraging residential utility tax.

- This is a great county---I love living here and services
- Nice place to live—but I would not want to take a vacation here. There is not really a ‘go to’ place
- Quality of Life is important for Arlington---open space, public art, preserving our past. Everything that makes Arlington a good place to live are important
- Nature Centers are fabulous.
- Staff—offers creative solutions for land use (especially parks, multi-use, etc.)

### *Social Services and Safety Net*

- People with disabilities living in group homes in an integrated environment are at risk, due to potential changes in CMS. And, unclear what the financial supports received by ACG will be moving forward. what would citizens be willing to look at in terms of integrated services and exposure to community.
- I echo points about investments in DHS and housing to keeping our community.
- Advocate for Mental health services and other disabilities (like the Clarendon House).
- Continue to support the STAR program---specialized transit for Arlington Residents with disabilities.
- Useful principles – programs that can leverage outside subsidy – those seem like smart investments. Stronger position than sole source – broad support for special needs and programs wherein participants have worked with county to improve efficiency. Intelligent investments needed.
- Proud of Arlington for investing in immigration services. We need to keep our sites on Arlington residents that might need food and other services.....
- Looking at joining facilities – heavy plug for multi-use facilities and co-located services. We might have to accept more density for that. Building community understanding of the value of density and the value that brings to the budget.
- Virginia hospital center. County must be vigilant about making sure they are financially healthy and maintaining high quality health care services
- We can’t generate income -and clients can’t generate income. The strength of our community is based on how we provide for individuals who need these services. Examples include the opioid crisis.
- Drug related issues, mental health, people with intellectual disabilities---need to be able to support these communities
- Safety net programs benefit the community. we have seen an increase on people accessing our services - calling the hotline, accompaniment to hospitals, shelters, we are financed through private funding and through the county. affordability - one of the great things about Arlington is they prioritize equity in fees.
- In terms of the safety net, while we’re getting input from people in the community, we don’t want to diminish the safety net at all. Concerns about affordability are big even for people who aren’t on the lowest ends of the income scale.

## *Aging*

- The services that we provide—especially age in place, navigate the community. We need to stay the course.
- Aging in Place.
- Choice of staying in Arlington vs leaving for older adults.
- Need to address both ends of the age spectrum.
- For more information, visit [Aging and Disability Resource Center](#)

## *Investments in Transit*

- Multi-modal options (transit, walkability), is essential for aging in place.
  - Multimodal approach is essential (metro, ART transit, bike, pedestrian)
  - I want to raise the issue of the bus system. I was blown away –when we started ART, as running a large bus system requires a lot of fixed costs (buses, mechanics, operational centers, etc.). this is not always positive and I wonder if we need to re-examine our role in providing public transit and let WMATA run it with their larger infrastructure. It seems like it’s hard to keep up with maintenance and breakdown.
  - Counterpoint on ART bus system. If the ART system is underutilized can we coordinate better with schools -for students.
- 
- I hear the buses are empty---I love the 43, but the 92 bus seems to hardly have anyone on it...and seems like it takes a long time to recognize and adjust.
  - Difficult to get into DC, need more designated buses (vs. bus that take to Metro).
  - We are seeing an increase in traffic---and we are all for metro, which will take some of the stress off...
  - I understand that they are going to toll I66. Is there a way to get some revenue back to the County for transit? (yes)
  - The things that are driving our budget up---is a good case, for investing—and keeping our housing values growing.
  - Metro has fueled the growth of Arlington---and if we want to maintain this, it’s important investment.
  - Metro is important.
  - Everyone who moves here---knows that we need the METRO, and we need to fund the metro.
  - I would like to take the longer-term view. Given the value of Metro to businesses in this County (for employees, customers, etc.), I think businesses in Arlington would potentially pay more or have a regular fixed amount contributed to support METRO. A dedicated source of revenue at state level would be better—but either way –we need something.
  - Now that we have to compete with Tysons and other communities that now have metro. If we don’t invest—we will be in trouble. We still have low tax rates---if people really understand where it is going.
  - Need a designated funding source for Metro.

### *Walkability*

- Any jurisdiction can have tax incentives, but Arlington has walkability and so we have to continue to invest in transportation infrastructure to entice companies.
- Need to think about connectivity on sidewalks and street crossing—where I don't feel safe. So, while we are spending a lot of money in some places—there are other places where I don't feel like pedestrian safety is always taken into consideration.

### *Transportation Infrastructure*

- What happened to tolls on I66.... does Arlington get any of these funds? (Projects associated with transportation and mobility in the corridor).
- We are also hearing—about route 1 and 23<sup>rd</sup>---and the congestion that is growing in the crystal city, pentagon city. And the Eads street traffic to/from Potomac yards—is increasing the impact.
- I too am expecting when Ballston gets done—the amount of traffic...
- But then, tolls on 66---what pressures will this have on route 50 traffic?

### *Neighborhood Conservation*

- Neighborhood Conservation (NC) program is broken – really abysmal – not enough money, process doesn't work well, takes too long, Columbia Pike parking taken out to create bike lane – he is being told to go through NC process - new bike Blvd. makes things unsafe for pedestrians – told that they need to go through NC – reallocation needed. Residents want sidewalks, safety, all of which should come before high price aquatics center
- Different view on NC – too much expectation put in – perspective that NC is how infrastructure is funded. Cannot do low dollar improvements since NC has become source of big project funding. Patrick Henry as one example...
- NC is an example of how we don't have oversight of how commissions function – way broken – costs rising, long timeframes, pressure on bonds which are maxed. Recommends participatory budget process to allow for community input in decision making. One last point – we don't talk enough about "foundational services" that allow us to deliver services efficiently. Trades Center/Shirlington e.g. we do not find these core services important. All depts. looking for land resources. We have to support back of the house services.
- Lots of disconnect with NC – cannot get streets repaved unless we put in 5' sidewalks which work in urban corridors, doesn't work for small yard neighborhoods. When you cannot get street fixed because you won't put in 7' sidewalks. NC needs to be looked at. There is a 5' exemption. Look at fundamentals and practicality commercial vs residential priorities.
- The neighborhoods seem to be forgotten in the budget discussion: neighborhood conservation, complete streets, urban conservation. Improving quality of life in neighborhoods?
- For more information, visit [\*Neighborhood Conservation\*](#)

### *Parks and Recreation/Dog Parks*

- I would like to pick on parks and recreation ---we have had many instances when our neighborhood has said we don't want this—and we are told we are getting it, (Spray ground we didn't want). We have a park that is being redone—and the neighborhood doesn't want it. So, it would be good to work with the community first on setting priorities before spending money. (NOTE: from other participant: I beg to differ, I love that spray ground).
- Arlington Mill is another example, but this was built with a lot of money, and it doesn't seem like it's getting full benefit of use. (NOTE: from other participant: I want to counterpoint---there are a lot of areas of the county where needs are not being met. Our group is meeting here at Arlington Mill a lot. Maybe there is a communication issue of sharing the news and usage.
- I think the county has a strong need for recreation and park needs for both kids and adults. And for places for people to meet. As the county grows, we need to have these facilities. I have been very happy with parks and recreation.
- I think that parks and recreation add a lot of value.
- I am concerned that sometimes people just don't participate—in the planning of parks and recreation building. Even when we tried to communicate with our civic association—silence. Until the construction comes. And then people react, after the project has already been approved and designed.
- In our civic association, we did have involvement---and just did not end in the same place with DPR
- I am in this neighborhood----(Arlington Mill), and we have this center and a park at the top of the hill.
- If you go on the county website—you will be able to see a map of civic association.
- I think that some of the costs for parks and recreation are recovered –by fees.

### *Fields*

- As kids are growing in number—and need more place to 'play', it is pushing out adult PLAY. The ability for county residents to stay active
- Affordable housing:
- I am very pleased we have it and need to stay the course

### *Police and Fire*

- Making sure we are supporting -and continuously making improvements for facilities and equipment
- Government Salaries: If we don't pay our government employees---well, we are also going to have a challenge retaining.
- There is still a need to provide services, like police. Keep in mind there are a lot of people who also work here—beyond those living here

- Your safety net organization, like police and fire, see the same issues with commute times and compensation. the county funding is valuable because we don't technically get increases from those contracts. we train them then 12-18 months, they leave.
- Crime is down in Arlington - is there a reason to continue investing in a criminal justice system? what are the needs for the current population that connects with the criminal justice system? we are a safety net nonprofit and extremely grateful for the county's support. safety net needs continue to grow and appreciate the county's support for continuing to support our nonprofit and other safety nets.
- Retention in public safety – fire department is losing people who have been around for 5-7 years, so they are skilled and then we lose them to other jurisdictions. Part of it is that they are commuting from other jurisdictions and they have to travel pretty far. It might be a generational difference – people might not want to be a firefighter for their entire career, etc. Competitive compensation for public safety is very important.
- For more information, visit [Arlington County Police Department](#)

### *Libraries*

- I love libraries-and saw that central library is getting renovations. I am not sure why we are spending money to improve the building. I support more books.
- We have such vibrant libraries---and we need to keep them open and going, I would not want to see these reduced.
- I could see examples of where we might consider cutting back hours for libraries, but not closing them.
- For more information, visit [Arlington County Libraries](#)

### *Trees and Gardens*

- County gardens (along with Parks) .... are important and families live off of these all year long.
- We pride ourselves as a world-class city, it's so important to maintain HEALTHY trees.

## ***PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT and COMMUNICATIONS***

### *Engagement Practice*

- Keep people engaged---what are the results or at least how the information was used—exchange of VALUES (follow up with people who participated) .....
- If we want to engage with the broader population, we should pre-engage with the advocacy groups, so that they don't freak out during the budget announcement in February
- This would allow groups to feel heard and for them to get to a comfortable place and it is more of an open dialogue
- Don't spend all of the staff time in getting feedback from community—and then the board will make a decision. Example-JFAC.

- When we talk about certain processes---it's not productive if you are not laying out the expenditures and budget at the beginning. Why do big picture visioning and planning without the foundational information? it's like you can't have everything on the Christmas list...
- Staff try to be responsive to every resident comment during the planning and design phases
- There are people who are busy and can't make meetings—so, just because 20 people are free and can come in to the BOARD meeting, not fair to listen to those people and change their priorities at the last minute. Board should stand by numbers and data.... not fair to rest of the county.
- Taking an assessment of who is showing up so then you know who is not. Going to faith groups around the county. It's become clear that a lot of faith groups don't feel actualized. It's about meeting people where they are. We say we're going after millennials, but are we actually meeting them where they're at? Are we holding one of these forums at one of our elder care centers? Affordable housing—is an interest---budget hearing should include a more diverse audience and participants. So, timing of opportunities—race, ethnicity, income, class....
- Put feedback options on line----so they don't have to come in person
- Great things that is being done in the County—is to develop and implement a public engagement plan. I would like to see this fully funded, so that we have the best level of engagement possible. I really like the neutral facilitators (not staff) to work with community—and come back to the county to start implementing these things.
- Public engagement—processes, need to continue to meet and communicate and listen.
- Engaging kids in schools? All of these kids are looking for science fair activities, etc. Have a project. Challenge kids to make creative solutions to this issue. If half of our budget is going to schools, we should get school-aged children and families involved.
- Engage commissions now – not after budget is proposed. What commissions have the most budget knowledge about specific budget areas? Get input early in process. Give residents information on how to recommend budget reductions.
- Living within our means – clarity desired re useful input from citizens on larger issues?

#### *Communication and Information Availability*

- Communications have taken such huge strides, but we still don't have good information to base decision making on the final outcome.
- Interested in seeing more information on what the auditor is doing...would like to have access to Ongoing Engagement/Communication
- Different ways of advertising (meetup, Facebook, etc.) but there are so many of use that online is not an option. Doing more hard copy mailers. The quarterly Citizen – there should be a detachable survey for people to mail back to the county.
- If staff did a group amongst staff that might be able to realize efficiencies
- To keep people engaged, please publicize the results

- I don't think people understand what the county faces—in terms of budget and demands. And don't understand the revenues are tight; and real lack of space. I don't think that single family home owners don't understand how high-rise residents and buildings.... add to the tax base.
- Somehow---there is a lack of communication –with the community.... consider using the CITIZEN or other methods.
- Put information online. Can't come to meetings much. Especially new residents
- Parks needs to communicate more....
- I knew about park redevelopment in Ballston....and I have had a different experience on the other end—with good communication from the county –and opportunity to provide input. IT's not all doom and gloom....
- Things that show up on my list serve (neighborhood), people were hot and bothered about school related issues about 18 months ago. A few local projects—that have been challenging in our neighborhood, but seems like these were not big challenges.
- We need to feel like we are being listened to and being appreciated.
- If you can stomach –read Arl NOW comments. There is a body of people that are unhappy—but feel like it's the same people.
- Best resource is the people that live here...
- The people who live here are awesome—and we live here and know about this place and should draw on expertise and have staff be respectful of residents; and listen to residents.

#### *Customer Service and Satisfaction*

- The Personal Property Tax – mail out the survey with that letter. It's falling in line with an existing process. Or when you submit your CAP program. "Click here if you'd like to complete a survey"
- Lack of interest on evaluation of meetings to include commission meetings

#### *Establishing Project Parameters--EARLY*

- Logistics and transportation impacts—are not included in the front end of planning and development. So, information on budget for these new large facilities are not made available until after the design and build.
- How do you avoid the hot button topics...? proposal on programs/projects need to include costs and utilization (how many served? Who is served? Share with broader constituency)

### **GENERAL**

#### *Innovation and Future*

- New initiatives require resources. For example, looking at aging in place—requires STAFF. So, then, how do we balance priorities or identify other resources. Consider cost

center models (like inspection). Could we do something similar for permits with developers? We can't get to the next level without making investment.

- Think about innovation—that provides more community partnership to create projects. People invest resources into projects to bring down the costs—produce more with less. With resources county has—consider leveraging.
- It is scary to look at what climate change will bring us, and it will come quickly. It will be a quick change in our lifetimes. How are we going to address that and how are we going to position ourselves for the future, those known impacts that are coming down the pike?
- Many options for exploring how we spend/save money –we need to get out of the box.

### *21<sup>st</sup> Century Arlington*

- We should tell you what additional services or enhancements are needed. Ultimately the board will need to make decisions, but would like to see improvements like electric stations and enhanced public transportation...looking to be more futuristic and direction for modern and efficiencies.
- As veterans of the Arlington way---we know that squeaky wheels get greased. The other 200K people –will go about their lives; and so, if we need to pre-engage with the advocacy groups and regular squawkers. Instead of the CM rolling out the budget all at once; but introduces the budget to the advocates early----and have an open dialogue, as opposed to a public hearing –that everyone stands up at the microphone.
- I have never been involved---and saw the ad and thought it was important to do.... can't remember seeing this type of invitation before. The invitation is one way to outreach—and do it more often...
- I don't have that much knowledge; and enjoy the quality of life. I have found this fascinating.... but not sure I want to become more involved....and listening (making suggestions as they come up).
- Think about the 'future' residents. But there is someone out there that will be offered a job—and we want them to live in Arlington. how can we make it great for the future residents? Good way to think what they would like.

### *Use Creative approaches*

- Different ways to advertise on 'meet up' and other places? Maybe some communities--- we may need to do hard copy mailers.... (like the citizen) .... consider a detachable survey that I can MAIL IN....
- First, taking assessment of who is showing up-and know who is not there; look at faith groups—and have not being actualized –meeting people where they are...
- Different kind of idea.... engaging kids in schools—all looking for science fair activities—work with teachers—challenge kids to come up with creative solutions to roof top gardens as an example. If half of budget going to schools—get families paying attention!
- Processes –that county touches every tax payer-like personal property tax bill---take survey HERE.... align with existing process. OR CAPP.....payment system.

## **SECTION IV: WRITTEN MESSAGES for COUNTY MANAGER**

Below are written messages submitted by participants following the conclusion of each roundtable addressing the following question: “*Given the budget pressures the County faces this year, do you have any additional suggestions for the County Manager as he develops the FY19 budget proposal?*” These messages mirror similar themes to those provided during the roundtables.

### **REVENUE CONSIDERATIONS**

#### *In Support of Increasing Fees/Taxes*

- Review business recycling fees for parity; re: size of business and size of fees.
- Pressure Richmond for greater flexibility in fees and taxes (i.e. plastic bag fee).
- Increase property taxes residential and business small percentage each year.
- Increase BPOL to the max.
- Strategic tax increases should be considered.
- I would pay more in real estate taxes and for county services in order to maintain DHS services for low income Arlingtonians. It makes our community so far and more diverse.
- I would pay more in real estate tax and services to increase the investment in work to increase commercial/office occupancy.
- Arlington has a great reputation for providing progressive services. I am comfortable paying additional taxes in order to maintain and continue these services.
- As a non-county resident, thrilled to be involved in county programs especially youth activities. There is room to raise the non-county resident fees. Your value is high and we (outliers) should pay for the opportunity if taking a spot from a resident with a tight supply.
- Willing to pay a higher personal property car tax although I know that’s a political hot potato.
- Don’t be fearful of increasing taxes to cover shortfalls, once budgets have been thoroughly reviewed
- I am very happy with Arlington County services. It is important to me to have good schools, parks and recreational facilities, police/public transportation/metro access and social services. I am also happy to pay for these, even if that means I pay more in property taxes. These are investments for our future.
- The dilemma facing the county today to either cut services or raise taxes is a short term defensive tactic. Either decision isn’t going to be popular, there may have to be a little pain in the short term, but it has to be done. I am worried that in order to reduce the tax hike amount or reduction in services that larger budgets for long term strategic plans will be trimmed. tax increases.

### *Concerns about Increasing Fees/Taxes*

- Please get rid of the commercial recycling fee and work with property managers/owners rather than renters.
- not willing to pay a higher meal tax.
- same fees that were linked to beneficial services to the people who pay taxes are good. But where that link is not present and the fees are small, it just seems like nickel and diming and could be removed in a revenue neutral way.
- I want to use this communication to express my desire to see NO tax rate increase for this coming year. This is for several reasons: 1) for those that own land we will pay an increase since assessments always seem to go up; 2) given the recent federal legislative agenda regarding taxes I think it prudent to stay the course to help reduce anxiety and impact should the federal tax situation change as I could see that as having a major impact to the local economy; and, 3) there is definite room for improved efficiency and cost savings in the current County budget. I think this third point is one that you as a Board member should be requesting of the County and APS staff. Every organization can always improve how they function and find ways to be more efficient. One such step might be to review functions across all County positions to see if streamlining could occur- specifically why do we have a separate team within APS that does a budget when that budget technically falls within the County wide budget process? The County Manager has a capable staff so it's unclear why just APS has their own personnel. I think the duplication of roles between APS and the County functions is a good first step in such a process. It has always bothered me when I hear that certain things are controlled by APS and not the County. Technically it is all part of the County so to have these distinct organizations does not seem to be in the citizens of Arlington's best interest.

### *Tax Relief/Deferrals*

- Make real estate tax relief deferrals not permanent services
- Eliminate exemptions in Real Estate Relief Program (make all assistance deferrals)
- Real estate tax should be deferrals not exemption so the funds could go to developing senior & assisted living facilities when the elderly would be safer
- Explore property tax deferment as an alternative to relief. It can have the same benefits for ongoing in place and affordable housing while still harnessing property values.
- 
- What tax burden is on renters from commercial taxes? tax question
- I appreciate the breaks that you give people – tax breaks for people of very modes and income. Low income breaks for County classes. tax relief

### *Close Out funds*

- I would urge you NOT to continue electing to take closeout funds and apply them to pet projects or items that quite frankly do not fit the description of how these funds are to be used. Instead, roll this money to next year's budget so that it can be applied to offset any increased costs and help ensure no increase in taxes.

## **GOVERNANCE**

### *Accountability*

- I also think the internal auditor needs staff to look at spending & efficiencies within government. Serving in government is intended to serve the people but that means looking at the data and making the best decision for the greater good. You may not always be popular but sometimes that's what you need to do. It's part of being a leader
- Before cutting programs or increasing taxes, look at efficiency and accountability, re how well are we managing the resources we have? Transparency is also a key. (suggested internal auditor)
- Presentation: Connect your decisions to the County vision & Master Plan goals.
- Property taxes on the average single-family home have tripled over 20 years. Where is the money going? Have other revenue streams declined? What expenditures have grown faster than others? Why? Are there efficiencies to be realized?
- Better use of public land and facilities to meet neighborhood needs, land trust.
- More staff for independent auditors and More staff for each county board member
- Agree with comments re: better oversight of contracts, increasing efficiencies in government processes
- More oversight of contracts to stem waste and cost overruns, incentives under-budget delivery.
- There appears to be a glut of vehicles not being used at Bon Air park. Why is this – if it saves for parking then that is ok, but if Arlington has a glut of vehicles that has to be addressed. Need to have a professional audit done and we need to build the staff for internal auditor of the County.

### *Planning*

- I believe that Arlington's current value proposition to residents and businesses comes from the vision and strategic decisions made in our past.
- Communicate larger picture, long-term vision as well as practical issues.
- The budget presentation should include long-term (20, 25 year) overview of how revenue streams and expenditures have changed in real-terms.

## *Fiscal Stewardship*

- It is my impression that financial impacts for potential projects are not considered until after a decision is made. This seems irresponsible because if you can't afford the annual operating cost of something (like land) than you shouldn't buy it. Decision makers & citizens deserve such information in order to make informed decisions. Law makers should also look at the long-term budget impact when bringing on new facilities and lands (e.g. The new pool can be paid with bonds but how will we pay to operate it?)
- Utilize Capital Investments wisely to invest in future and keep ongoing costs down. High schools could have spent more and been a huge success story if they included enough seats for future growth. I know that is on the school's side, not the county, but the present holds.
- We should look for efficiencies in processes and also repercussions and costs to users of services and opportunities. E.g. process for applying to build affordable housing is so lengthy and cumbersome that it creates risk and adds cost for developers, and therefore, uses more of the funds.
- Spend our money as carefully as we do.
- Why discussion of budget fall when we had an excess that can cover it. It's not found money
- Don't just cut new programs but look for efficiencies of services to cut out/in departmental budget that may be a better choice
- I am writing as a follow up to my recent attendance at the County's Budget outreach session last week. It was my first time attending such an event and my interest is a result of recently attending JFAC meetings this past year. At these meetings I was awestruck with the lack of information being provided to enable informed decision making. Specifically, throughout the discussion of potential land purchase things like operational costs, long term budget impact, and traffic impact were not addressed and in response to my requests on why this information wasn't being provided it was stated that County staff would not assess such impacts until after purchase of land by the County. Such a practice seems like poor management to me. One would not go to a restaurant and order dinner before understanding the cost of the meal and their ability to pay for that meal, a scenario I liken to this instance. As such, I think taxpayers are owed such information prior to the Board making these decisions. I understand that often these purchases are being done with bond funding but the actual use and functioning of these properties ultimately will come from the yearly budget so due diligence should be performed on long-term impacts. It seems irresponsible not to consider such data and per staff they aren't instructed to provide it as its not being requested by you, the County Board.
- I know it's not original with Mr. Regula — former House member from Ohio who was ranking and then chair of Interior Appropriations on the House side...but he always used to remind everyone of the phrase: Must Do, Should Do, and Nice to Do. And I think that's a good phrase to remember in budgeting for FY19 and beyond. From what I heard around the room I think the sentiment is shared. People didn't seem to really want the

“nice to do.” And they also wanted efficiencies within and across departments (ripping up streets and sidewalks ALWAYS comes up...). I think though advocacy is inverse to the phrase and so we will probably see vociferous appeals for the nice to dos. But NO, they are not Musts or Shoulds.

- I know governing is not an easy job so I thank you for your service. That said, I also think that we as a County need to start being honest about potential project impacts when it comes to schools, roads, and infrastructure as every decision has the potential to impact services and budgets within the County. Without the inclusion of this data at the outset, the County is choosing to put themselves in a potentially bad situation. As a taxpayer I look to my local officials to be leaders and to recognize that they are making decisions for the greater good and not for a few special interests who actively lobby them. Just because you don't have people coming out in mass on one issue or another does not mean that your constituents aren't interested, it may just be that their daily life doesn't allow them to participate to that level but we do care and we want a government that is being fiscally responsible and prudent, not one that's trying to push an agenda.
- A great deal more (is there any now?) should be spent on monitoring, assessment, evaluation and lessons learned--not just planning compliance inspections. I think less should be spent on affordable housing as it currently exists-- which seems to benefit developers and out of county residents more than people who live and work here. But they do have a lobby.
- The County seems to have moved administration mgmt. to the complaint and voice count, much the same as our US Congress. How well has that worked?
- My take away- though it might be nice if Arlington County could afford to be "driven by a Bentley", given the current economic and budgetary reality, we would like to see our government run like a good solid Ford Truck.
- I believe the residents and businesses will grumble in the short term but your tough decisions today will pay off for us tomorrow.
- I support an offensive strategy to fully fund and solve the bigger strategic items in the budget. Do not trim them. Increase funding for AED and speed up the plan to bring in new businesses, reduce office vacancy, and increase the most important and necessary revenue stream to the county: (1) Solve the overcrowded school problem. Don't put a band aid on it; (2) Fully fund metro; (3) Invest fully in the future with your other strategic items.

### *Creative Thinking*

- Be creative and “think outside the box”: Land trusts
- Also, approach budget process with as much creativity as possible. The world is changing and we need to be adaptable to survive and thrive. Approach the tools we have and tweak to maximize efficiency, productivity and results.
- Charge for day parking for students at county high schools. The rest of us pay for parking. If they choose to drive, they should pay.

## **ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**

- Have community help you fill business occupancy/rentals – crowd source occupancy.
- New Revenue: Partnerships, Grants, Charging Developers more economic development.
- Arlington County is attractive enough to not need to buy/ bribe businesses to move here
- Invest in Columbia Pike and other areas of potential new economic growth.
- Disincentive for vacancy. They have potential tenants, just not saying yes because it is not in their interest.
- Encourage concerts and festivals to increase tourism dollars.
- Help our commercial owners to develop their properties.
- I have a small business in Arlington, VA; but are unable to afford a location to run my business. Building toward the future. Sew-time able to work out of school systems so far, but would like a commercial affordable unit to function in 2018 and on forward. Wanting to stay in Arlington, VA; Ballston- Courthouse area.
- Please make the site plan process easier so our exciting private developments can be built faster (and a little cheaper).
- open the spigot for redevelopment along older commercial corridors, like route 29. If we let them, the private side can provide public services, like daycare.
- Growth is so important to the long-term vitality of Arlington. Don't lose track of the vision and values of Arlington as we face short-term budget challenges.
- Continue to maximize partnership with strategic organizations, like BIDs that provide 100-fold leveraged investment, support economic environmental sustainability for our county as a whole and make the key neighborhoods better and better.
- Focus on programs which will bring business to Arlington to help with revenue.
- Don't value- engineer streetscape. If we want to collect meals taxes, then we need neighborhoods to attract visitors.

### *Community Benefits*

- Consider having developments pay for school costs up front.
- I would like to know what one can do that is self-employed to add to the community. sew-time, I can teach children to sew but they are not affordable communities. Are there grants to support? If I can help on any board, please let me know.

## ***CAPITAL PROJECTS/FACILITIES***

### *Costs of Capital Projects*

- Please spend less on “Beautification” (public sculpture, Nauck town center, etc.) and protect the quality of schools.
- As a "mindset" look for ways to have Capital Projects less flashy (gold plated).
- I support the programs but am concerned that some of our building plans are overly elaborate- Long Bridge Park Aquatic Center, Wilson School/HB Woodlawn. Maybe we can scale back while still providing the same services.
- County should spend project money more conservatively- don't air for the best design, etc. with each street project for example. We need good enough, not best.
- Renovations of public facilities- be more conservative- does Central Library really need to be renovated?
- While this is not a completely neon term idea, I'd really highly recommend you look at the aquatic center budget, both to build it and to run it and maintain it. I'd suggest there one savings there- in all honestly + think we have great pools already throughout high schools- and we don't need to strive to create something big and world class here.
- I don't believe fancy park/ playground equipment is necessary. Just nice trees and fields.
- Are library overhauls necessary? I support maintenance and a good budget for books and librarian salaries, but not fancy renovations if there is a budget shortfall.
- Please stop creating new projects just because something better is available (Central Library). Many resources are perfectly adequate and only need to be maintained. Residents have to live with 1-3% raises while county budget has increased 5%, County budget should reflect realities.

### *Co-Location*

- The County needs to get creative about both ways to raise new revenue (TIF?) and achieve efficiencies – co-location of uses, including affordable housing.
- Any time invest in a new facility need to determine how to program space for more hours of the year (beyond school hours Sept-Jun) to reduce development costs.
- What ways can resources be combined or better used?
- Take another look at facilities. How can we schedule better, so that we can find multiply uses for the spaces?
- consider multi-use zoning and regulation of schools and public spaces.
- Blend schools and parks – not stand alone,
- Continue compact mixed-use development to leverage county costs.
- Focus on multi-use of existing county/private facilities rather than constructing new facilities.

### *Capital Maintenance*

- Review CIP Maintenance: redoing projects that were just completed, "end of useful life" for facilities is not necessarily true, before "maintaining" ensure that a holistic plan has been conducted.
- More efficiency of services- i.e., paving streets and then VDOT comes in and rip it up.
- Cost analysis for build, maintain and replace a school and county buildings versus rent.
- Streets are paved too often in our neighborhoods Puzzled by street and sidewalk repaving and "improvements." How does this work get determined?

## **SCHOOLS**

### *Costs for Schools*

- The APS budget is basically a political blank check which is overblown, inconsistently administered with bias, very poor efficiency, and cost effectiveness is a joke. Further the real County support for APS vastly exceeds the reported percent in the budget as there are very large County subsidies in other segments of the County budget for APS.
- Decrease money for school take home computers.
- Break down school budget more. + school rooms and resources-comps.
- Consider applying for TA grants to implement smarter school spending suite of free tools to determine how to allocate funds more effectively (i.e.: rethinking special Ed staffing, bus schedules, other potential efficiencies).
- Through this roundtable and other community forums there has been notable very little discussion of the schools' portion of the budget. Given its size, I think this should be more of a topics.
- I am one parent of children in Arlington schools, but even I am getting concerned about school expenses. I would encourage more discussion to impose more discipline.
- Rein in the unchecked APS spending which provides pressure on the budget (281 sq. ft./ student vs. much less in neighboring jurisdictions).
- Eliminate "free" iPad/ computers in schools- most residences can't afford. Sliding cost scale for lower income students
- Please work with the schools- they need to reduce their budget; i.e., cut out choice schools.
- The auto-pilot construction activities based upon theory rather than real results (e.g. nubs and curb extensions) should be curtailed. The ART bus system should be evaluated to justify its continuation or modification. They mostly run empty at very high recurrent costs and are being made redundant with Uber and Lyft. The School Bus system needs review as well--with a cost per school bus rider per day published--which is no doubt exorbitant and could fund more teachers. With the expansion of the APS walk or bike zones, many of the routes are relatively empty. Plus, most of the buses cannot stay within lanes on nubbed corners. Basically, all eligible sign up and then selectively use with no penalty. The County is incurring ridiculous construction costs to support the APS plans.

Tell me the facts on the cost, purpose and motivation for the improvements at Manchester St and Rt 50, where APS now wants around 10 BMCA students to walk to Kenmore. Let me know the results of the County Board admonition to the County Manager on a report on use permit compliance for Ashlawn. The County spends millions on construction to solve a problem that thousands could solve. APS should take a more careful look at cost recovery and cost sharing. The School Board should be forced into a zero-based budgeting mode to allow the County Board to make intelligent rather than political decisions on costs. There appears to be huge wastes in contracting and protections for developers. Interest groups seem to have more influence than property owners. The student population (roughly 12%) consumes in reality a significant portion of the budget (roughly 50%?); and the over 65 population (roughly 10%) consumes maybe 11 % of the budget. There is a definite inverse correlation between age, taxes paid and expenditures. Certainly, we should invest in our future, support our young, and provide best quality education. But the investment decisions have become blind and dumb. Also, the lack of enforcement eligibility for schools, and the affordable housing and high-rise development subsidies exponentially enhance the downstream liabilities

### *School Planning*

- De we have enough extended day care for kids? My daughter got her some in but had to be online at a specific time. What happens to the kids who couldn't get in? Especially people of limited means. I want a County for a highly variegated populace.
- HB Woodlawn needs to be enlarged so that it serves 3-4 times as many students. It is not efficient or equitable to support this "private school"
- Instead more focus on acculturation, language skills, for the children- immersion in a language will have them speaking fluently in a year or less. You're not serving them well by keeping them in a "linguistic ghetto."
- Use ART busses to alleviate school system transportation constraints- NOT as in kids pays the fare but rather as school bus (free to kids, official school transportation- e.g. for high school).
- Do not back away from providing the best technology for the students. Prepare them and our region to be players/talent pool in the future.

### *School/County Coordination*

- Much better coordination with schools needed, MUCH BETTER planning re: impacts of new housing's new corporate tenants on schools

## ***PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT***

- The “Arlington Way” is not working. We need to take another look at how we do things.
- For survey: Satisfaction with facilities and/or programs. Improvements/ enhancements/ additional deserved services. What information a county programs and operations they would like, in what form, when services, service delivery modality programs, etc. That were experienced in other locations
- Always ask why and how these decisions support what we value ...
- To that end, look at equity and diversity. We do need to find a way to hear from citizens who cannot afford time to come to a public meeting and an equitable way to share business. Continue opening communication on these issues.
- Public Engagement Process: (1) This format failed to accomplish its intent; (2) You need to run this if you are going to have a group discussion; (3) To identify needs, process a list of services and have a vote; (4) Many folks are not good at brainstorming far better to present ideas, lists, etc. for a response; (5) The leader needs to control the process; (6) Going “around the room” is ineffective—many people cannot limit their comments – unless the leaser is prepared to cut the off, don’t do it – we end up with monologues.
- I did find the roundtable very interesting and well managed and facilitated. really.
- When making budget decisions, tell County residents why you are doing what you’re doing!
- Outreach: Advertise these forums in the community more – mailers work w/churches, non-profits and other groups to get new voices.
- These very important services often only attract attention after deficiencies arise, and so are less likely to gain public outcry for support during the Feb-Apr budget process; thus, the proposed budget is the best opportunity to ensure continuity for these services.
- Have on-going conversations throughout year open to public on budget, fiscal responsibility, etc.
- Use of ABCD to engage communities who are familiar with their needs and priorities.
- Make sure these [budget] pressures are in alignment with our/ county residents'/ values
- fully fund civic engagement action plan especially neutral facilitator by 3rd parties.
- Publish/get comments on policies that shape budget decisions.
- Please put together a trade-off app online that gets residents involved in making the necessary budget tradeoffs.
- In a nutshell, the County budget is infused with planning numbers unguided by assessment, evaluation, audit, or lessons learned. Also, it is a self-perpetuating machine driven by the overwhelming County and APS staff inputs versus the limited capacity of the modestly compensated and politically motivated County and School Boards. But until you come to grips with that, community inputs will be nothing more than selective window dressing. If you don't know where you are going, then any path will get you there. Arlington has a few freeway biases, but other than that, no idea on where it is going.

- It was great to see you at the Budget Round Table on Friday. I found the Round Table to be an extremely valuable opportunity to share ideas with members of other Arlington communities as well as with County staff. I am so glad I was able to participate. The facilitators did an exceptional job. I think everyone felt that they had an opportunity to speak, and were heard. Given the diverse demographic makeup of our group, I found it most interesting, and refreshing, that we seemed to be on the same page concerning so many of the issues.
- Please be open to all of the people who live in the County or Arlington VA. Please listen to the unheard the disable –needs you!!

## **AFFORDABLE HOUSING**

- More affordable housing and following through on the Affordable Housing Master Plan of getting to 600 units (AHC already has a plan and ideas for this). More money for housing grants and more money for AHIF. By providing housing that is affordable for all people, it will help alleviate other issues the community is facing like mental health/health, and unemployment because housing stabilizes families and helps them to be able to get on their feet. We can then begin to cut back on spending money on emergency rental assistance and only putting a band-aid on a long-term issue
- I support affordable housing, but I hope you find most efficient means etc.
- I don't have specific suggestions for how to fix it, but we are still segregated as a County (ethnicity, economics and income, etc.)
- Affordable housing is very important. Perhaps look at housing grants.
- AHIF should be in budget not after the fact.
- Long-term plan to move AHIF off annual close-out allocations to regular budget process and increase it annually to ensure AHMP goals get achieved.
- It's time to make the entire annual AHIF allocation a part of the annual budget, starting with FY 2019.
- The AHIF allocation needs to be increased to meet the need. I note 3 of 4 good proposals denied in the NOFA process for lack of funds. We continue to lose MARKS despite having passed the AHMP two years ago.
- Critical fund AHIF lending in base at levels needed to meet adopted Affordable Housing Master Plan.
- Consider Zoning Δ's to increase housing that's affordable—rental units collocated with single family homes, incentive coops, community land trusts, don't allocate too many affordable housing units for special purposes which might have consequence of vacant units when need is still high.
- Be creative and “think outside the box” Intergovernmental affordable living.
- move AHIF to a budget item.
- I would like more affordable housing information.
- Increase funding for Affordable Housing Investment Fund in FY2019 by 30% in order to meet Affordable Housing Master Plan commitments. The program leverages out of

county resources, helps the neediest and special needs among us and has far more demand from deserving projects \_\_\_\_\_ available subsidy.

- Development/revitalization of neighborhood are good and needed but it should not keep long-term Arlington County resident out of the County.
- Keep Arlington diverse affordable and keep funding community and organization that help low income hard working Arlingtonian in Arlington. ECDC saving Arlington since 1983.
- Prioritize dedicated funding for affordable housing to meet County's admirable Housing Master Plan goal of 600 new CAFs/year. This could also be helped through waiving various development fees for affordable housing.
- I love living in Arlington although I am not a low income, I sometimes worry about being able to afford living here. Let's keep Arlington affordable for those from all income levels and backgrounds through increasing affordable housing!
- Maximize dwelling use of buildings.
- Please consider funding the Affordable Housing Master Plan to meet our goals. Co-location is needed- Arlington for Everyone.
- Think about how to keep Arlington affordable for future residents by increasing the housing supply.
- Affordable housing, Devote the \$5.2 million from FY2017 carryover to AHIF the county adopted the Affordable Housing Master Plan- It should improve and support it.
- Thank you for support of affordable housing, housing services and safety nets; please don't cut. Worry

## ***SERVICES AND PROGRAMS***

### *The Basics*

- Let us think about basic quality of life factors – Health, Safety, Traffic, Affordable Housing, Green Space, for all County Residents before raising services for some.
- Arlington has been a trend setter; it should be continued. We should continue to be competitive and provide solid services to the community
- Ensure these [budget] pressures aren't expenditures that are above and beyond the basics: which could be sanitation, trash maintenance, ensuring that public safety officers have the compensation to actually live in Arlington.

### *Environmental Sustainability*

- Climate change predicts, among other impacts, major disruptions in where food can be grown. I would recommend that Arlington County engage in long-term planning to address the impacts regarding sustainable food systems.
- Please explore requiring new buildings to support rooftop food production and/or indoor growing. Future food production will increasingly be indoors why not multi-residential

buildings including interior rooftop gardening? This also offers entrepreneurial opportunities and jobs.

- divide services like E-CARES. Instead of one each community could have one
- We need to implement 2004 urban forest master plan. This is very important for our community's livability, health and fighting global warming.
- Fund trees and tree watering.
- Prioritize environmental sustainability programs- AIRE, recycling, composting shift to 100% renewables.

### *Diversity/Equity*

- Focus on keeping and growing our diverse population, including economic diversity, ethnic, language, national origin/immigrant community diversity. I work with people who are new comers to the U.S. and see how important it is to hear from and integrate them.
- Sliding scale (income-based) for County services such as the over 55 fitness classes, the pool, pool classes, etc. Asset based community development and consider performance based contracting to ensure that funding is having the intended outcome, is spent equitably, and is tailored to a community's challenges and opportunities
- No subsidies for those who don't need them.

### *Human Service/Safety Net*

- I ask that you remember all of Arlington's residents when funding safety net programs and affordable housing initiatives. A diverse community creates long term community success.
- I support all funding and further funding on providing resources like legal aid to protect immigrants from being deported/separated from their families and homes
- Thank you for your thoughtful process, to continue supporting essential services and safety net programs that keep Arlington a safe community for everyone.
- I need more help with Human Services programs serving children, families, and older adults as well as providing assistance with health, housing, employment and mental health.
- Minor \$, but so appreciated; finding for hotline operated by Doorways, for young teens/adults to get support with sexual abuse. Have increasing traffic showing untapped needs.
- How can we keep reaching those with all sorts of disabilities that they currently have or will develop?
- Human resources in schools that really know the kids (i.e. keep at YHS).
- Senior housing with supportive services.
- Maintain budgets for human services and housing- the message is that these services make economic sense for the long-term health and growth of the county.

- keep funding safety net groups- they help maintain some diversity in Arlington; which benefits the community as a whole.
- Arlington County is a place of residence for culturally and ethnically diverse community. The County has been assisting a lot to its low-income residents in various social services. My organization, ECDC, has been given various kinds of services to low income resident free charge of fees, such as immigration, employment, interpretation translation and other services. So, I suggest that when the County submits its budget should consider also the interest of these groups of society.
- decrease or do away with bilingual education, forms, etc. People stay in poverty when they can't speak the language
- Please consider maintaining level funding if not slight increments to safety net services that reflect increases in cost of living and will allow us to maintain quality of services and staff that will not leave to other areas of the region due to higher salaries and less commute.
- Please continue to protect the safety-net and non-profits which are vital for residents and help create thriving and diverse Arlington community.
- keep safety net programs. Mental health, homeless shelter, HHS assistance.
- Look at NYC model for free lunch for all. It reduces stigma while also having some savings in needing to track and monitor student and family eligibility.
- Same for the over 55 programs. Nice that we have an over 55 program-including it's own dedicated bus (are you kidding?) for which ridership seems scant. And we have in the County many commercial, and a few Medicaid based residential care facilities for elders. But there is no dedicated day care facility for dementia (Fairfax has 4, not counting the Insight facility near NRA which was started by ALz Assoc). With the prediction that one of 3 over 65 will have dementia-mostly Alzheimer's- how is that not a priority concern for the 11% of pop who no doubt pay a disproportionate % of property taxes? While the county offers \$50 million and plus for developers to rebuild and construct, what has the county offered, if anything, to non profit organizations like <http://www.insightmcc.org/> to improve options for families with loved ones affected by dementia? The answer is nothing.

### *Public Safety*

- Please look after the ~19% of spending on public safety and environmental services the proposed budget.

### *Libraries*

- Please include additional funding for the Libraries (perhaps \$100,000) to make the Connection Pop-Up Library in Crystal City (currently funded by discretionary one-time funds) a permanent structure. It's become a central meeting point in Crystal City for a wide variety of audiences, integral to our civic life and development

- Increase the library budget

#### *Parks/Sports/ Dog Parks*

- More park rangers are required to monitor parks including dog parks.
- Parks & Rec/Summer Camps/Adult Ed- Keep up the great work- love these
- Support sports

#### *Permitting/Contracts*

- Do more to have the 20,000 plus dogs residing in the county that are not currently licensed top get them to license.
- Also contract veterinarians in the entire region not just in Arlington

#### *Nonprofit Partnerships*

- Do not forget about the small nonprofits who provide A LOT of support to Arlington residents with unmatched support from Arlington County.
- Remember the least fortunate in our community- do not reduce funding for the Arlington Food Assistance Center that helps over 5000 families (over 10,000 individuals) in our community- the elderly, the disabled and the hardworking underemployed among us.
- Thanks, on behalf of OAR participants and their families, the OAR Board, and the OAR team for your continued support of such a critical mission. Our programs have a 90% success rate right here in Arlington because of your dedication to the second and fair chances in Arlington County.

#### *Transit*

- Use bus to discourage overdevelopment especially mansions.
- Work w/ Richmond to push for dedicated funding for WMATA, not relying solely on annual and local government contributions (very uphill battle? I understand)
- Ask our reps in Richmond to push for dedicated funding for METRO to reduce negative impact of un-expected annual demands from WMATA.
- Is ART redundant? It seems by observation that ART follows METRO routes. What is ridership like? Is it a worthwhile expense as currently structured?
- Extend buses from non-metro areas directly to DC.
- Look for creative public-private arrangements; i.e., rethink public transportation so that anyone in Arlington can get to anywhere in Arlington and the METRO region conveniently and timewise about the same as driving using uber-like technology and flexible routing.

- As the METRO continues to increase county support requirements, I encourage the county to consider investing in alternative, innovative, and sustainable methods of public transportation.
- Although I feel strongly about everything I said in the meeting, one thing I noticed that it seemed as if no one was talking about was inter-city bus transit from Arlington to DC. I know metro/bus/transit is always a big deal so want to make sure this point was heard. The reason someone like me will never move to or rent in somewhere like Columbia Pike is that I can't afford Arlington rent and a car. You can put "premium bus systems" along the Pike but I still wouldn't ever move there because the time of transfer from bus to metro and to in many cases go the opposite way of where your DC destination is, outweighs the benefit. It would take 1.5 hours to bus-to-metro whereas just uber-ing [or as I might suggest, busing] would take you 45min/1hr shaving an hour or more a day off your commute. The Loudoun County commuter bus actually is filling this gap in some areas because we are not providing the service. The Circulator kind of has the right idea but in Arlington it only goes to Rosslyn which already has a metro. An extension of the "Circulator" to areas that really need inter-county-transit (like the Pike or 4MR) could be a huge benefit. Especially post-I66 tolls people even from areas like Westover would be interested in a service like this.
- Continue to invest in mass transit. Money saved on not driving is a benefit to citizens!

### *Transportation Infrastructure*

- Where is the money that will be collected in tolls for EZ Pass? The roads in Arlington may be more congested and need to think about this.
- At times, there appears to be a number of buses that are underutilized. Please adopt a yearly METRO pass that is affordable and reduces the amount of traffic. This will assist low income people as well and perhaps get more people riding public transportation.
- Ensure key transportation arteries, like Carlin Springs Road are considered as future development/schools are proposed

## **SECTION V: NEIGHBORHOODS and ORGANIZATIONS**

Individuals who participated in the roundtables came from all over the County. Below is a list of participant's neighborhoods and organizations

- Arlington Forest
- Arlington Ridge
- Ashton Heights
- Aurora Highlands
- Ballston
- Barcroft
- Bluemont
- Boulevard manor
- Buckingham
- Claremont
- clarendon
- Clarendon House
- Columbia Heights
- Columbia Pike
- Courthouse
- Crystal City
- Dominion Hills
- Douglas Park
- Dover Crystal
- East Falls Church,
- Fairlington
- Fort Meyer Heights
- Glebewood
- Glen Carlin
- Highland Park-Overlee Knolls
- Lacy Forest
- Leeway Overlee
- Lyon Park
- Lyon village
- Madison Manor
- Maywood
- Nauck
- North Highlands
- North Rosslyn
- Old Dominion
- Radner-Ft Meyer
- Rock Spring

- Rosslyn
- Shirlington
- South Arlington
- Tara Leeway
- Wakefield
  
- Waverly Hills
- Waycroft Woodlawn
- Westover
- Williamsburg
- Yorktown

### *Organizations*

- Arlington Commissions and Advisory Groups
- Arlington Chamber of Commerce
- Arlington Food Assistance Center
- Alliance for Housing Solutions
- Arlington Partnership for Affordable Housing
- Arlington Free Clinic
- AYUDA
- Business Improvement Districts
- Community Service Board
- Culpepper Gardens
- Ethiopian Community Development Council
- Friends of Urban Agriculture
- Project PEACE
- Service Source
- VOICE