

# LEE HIGHWAY ALLIANCE

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Lucia deCordre

March 1, 2018

Dear Chairperson Cristol, Vice Chairperson Dorsey, and Members of the Arlington County Board,

On behalf of the Lee Highway Alliance (LHA), we appreciate your support over the past five years. Together in 2016 we developed a preliminary vision for place-making in the Lee Corridor. After announcing that planning would begin in 2017, the RFP was finally issued in February of 2018. In response to the recently released FY 2019 Draft Budget, below are our recommendations. We request that you change the budget to better reflect community values:

### **A. Lee Highway Planning Initiative (LHPI) - End Delays & Provide Equitable Planning**

- Land use is a tool to reach revitalization. Yet Lee Highway languishes as the County's only unplanned corridor – decades of lack of policy and disinvestment impacting 42,000 people, 18 civic associations, 300+ businesses, and a smart work force. As taxpayers, we deserve a dedicated focus and sufficient resources.
- Office, retail, jobs, services and housing are drastically changing. Arlington is growing younger and older. Millennials attract employers who create jobs. Baby boomers (Silver Tsunami) live longer and want to age in community. Lee Corridor planning represents an opportunity for planning that tests a new model for jobs, housing choice (Missing Middle, Senior Housing), and services for all ages and incomes.
- Arlington needs affordable housing. Six HCD clusters have been approved in the Lee Corridor. To reduced future residents' costs, comprehensive planning must be in place to link HCDs to jobs, transit, and day care.
- For those landowners who can't wait for better policies, by right development has begun. Some of it will have a lifetime of 30+ years, producing lower tax revenues. Without visionary planning, investments in higher value projects flow to surrounding jurisdictions.
- *'Think forward' with bold leadership. Drive investment forward like the County Board of fifty years ago who planned the Metro corridor. Change is coming. Push planning now.*

### **B. Partnerships – Request for Equal Treatment & Sufficient Funding**

- Although the best plans start at the grassroots level, connecting with the public is not easy. Issues are complex and stakeholders are preoccupied with short term solutions. Other partnerships have been funded for decades. It is now LHA's turn to successfully engage diverse stakeholders in long

range planning. LHA will work with County staff to ensure that communication gaps inadvertently left by the consultants are filled. LHA will work with County staff to ensure that communication gaps inadvertently left by the consultants are filled. In addition, as required under our County Partnership Agreement, LHA will support AED and the County's economic development initiatives for balanced land use and fiscal sustainability. Sufficient funds will facilitate successful planning and LHA's non-profit operations.

- *Re-allocate \$25,000 from overall funding of partnerships, increasing LHA's grant to \$85,500. This will support our office lease (where community meetings are held) and one full time consultant at a fee of \$80,000/no benefits – a modest amount for a senior Executive Director and much less than the staffing at other partnerships.*

Strong economies and place making don't just happen. Every delay means missed opportunities. Rigorously engage us and bring new thinking, clarity and creativity to our 'main street.' Create a 29 Corridor where we all come together to prosper, live, work, and play. Thank you for your leadership.

Respectfully, the LHA Board of Directors –

Sandra A. Chesrown, President (Resident Member & Vice President, Waverly Hills Civic Association)

Ginger B. Brown, Vice President (At-Large Member, Co-Chair JFAC)

Judith Wheat, Secretary (Resident Member, Rock Springs Civic Association)

Jim Lantelme, Treasurer (Resident Member, Past President Lyon Village CA & Planning Commissioner)

Peter Bota (Business Member, Owner Metro 29 Diner, Lee Highway)

Michele H. Cornwell (Business Member, BMC Property Group/Owner Lyon Village Shopping Center)

Chris Sundlof (Business Member, Arlington Community Credit Union at Glebe & Lee)

Laura London (Business Member, APAH)

Scott Matties (Business Member, Architect, & Resident Leeway Overlee Civic Association)

Ralph Johnson (Business Member, Land Owner Lee Highway Apartments in HCDs)

Michael Cantwell (Resident Member, President, Yorktown Civic Association)

Tom Kornis (Resident Member, Cherrydale Civic Association)

Edith Gravely (Resident Member, John M. Langston/Halls Hill Civic Association)

Michelle Winters (At-Large Member, Executive Director, Alliance for Housing Solutions)

Richard Price (At-Large Member, Resident Woodmont Civic Association, Transportation Advisor)

Matt Weinstein (County Board Appointee, Bean Kinney Korman)

Tom Wolfe (County Board Appointee, Lee Highway Resident)

Lucia deCordre, Executive Director & Urban Designer

(copies to the Clerk to the County Board, County Manager, County Planning Director)

