



Make No Small Plans

A Pilot Program for Educating Students on Urban Planning

An All Arlington Initiative to Benefit the Entire County

Arlington is a vibrant, urbanizing County with a progressive history of comprehensive planning. Currently, the County is transforming South Arlington's Columbia Pike and North Arlington's Lee Highway through substantial investment in 30-year comprehensive plans with extensive stakeholder engagement. It is increasingly clear that North-South connectivity, linking Lee Highway to Columbia Pike, Shirlington, and the booming employment center of Amazon's new HQ2 headquarters at National Landing, is as important as West-East connectivity (Fairfax to Georgetown).

The 'Arlington Way' has involved adults in planning issues for more than 50 years. But Arlington's children have not been involved nor had an opportunity to learn about land use issues that greatly impact their future. In September, Dorothy Hamm Middle School (DHMS), located on Lee Highway/Old Dominion Drive, will admit its first-ever students to the newly renovated and expanded historic Stratford School site. DHMS 7th graders (12-13 years old) will be middle-aged homeowners and business owners when today's North and South corridor plans come to fruition. If they can afford to live in Arlington, many of them probably will.

The Make No Small Plans Pilot Program, an 'All Arlington Initiative' developed by the Lee Highway Alliance (LHA) with DHMS and the County, will educate the children through the Social Studies curriculum (History, Civics, and Economics 1865 to Present). It will teach them how local government works through urban planning to meet the needs of citizens. It will help them better engage in their future civic duties. In turn, the students will provide important input to the County's Plan Lee Highway initiative, to jointly reach for a more sustainable, resilient, and equitable future.

If the pilot is as successful as LHA and DHMS project, it will be discussed with the Arlington Public School (APS) system to become part of the county-wide curriculum.

Plan Lee Highway



Arlington County – in coordination with LHA and thousands of County-wide stakeholders – is implementing Plan Lee Highway (PLH), a comprehensive study of the 4.6 miles that stretch from Falls Church to Rosslyn. The three-year study began in January of 2019, with the goal of updating the County's General Land Use Plan (GLUP) and providing tools for community revitalization. PLH involves dozens of County staff, a diverse team of professional consultants led by AECOM at their Clarendon office, and community stakeholders including 14

neighborhoods/civic associations, corridor businesses and land owners, advisory boards, and Arlington developers. As part of PLH, the County endeavors to consult with all ages and types of stakeholders, including local schools.

Purpose & Goals

Make No Small Plans will educate 40-50 7th grade students in two classes at DHMS on urban planning and its importance to their future, while exposing County planners, staff, and policymakers to the underrepresented voices of middle-school-aged residents. LHA representatives Sandi Chesrown (LHA Vice President and PLH Vice Chair) and D. Taylor Reich (PLH Community Forum Youth Representative) have been meeting over the past several months with County Board member, Katie Cristol, and DHMS principal, Ellen Y. Smith. With the involvement of two DHMS Civics Teachers, Patty Tuttle and Nicolette Tosner, who will teach the pilot program, LHA and DHMS have developed a curriculum that aligns with educational goals for learning civics, social studies, history, and geography.

All parties are agreed that the pilot has great potential to continue – both at DHMS and at schools throughout the County, including South Arlington.

Methodology

Research and experience show that students learn best when actively engaged in a ‘hands-on’ project. Project Based Learning or using critical thinking and problem solving skills in the real world in which they live will give the students place based and personal creative problem solving. Involving them in the ‘authenticity’ of PLH will enable them to understand future planning challenges and potential solutions. The project will also enhance their team building and communications skills.



In accordance with LHA’s Mission Statement and PLH’s objective to broaden civic engagement, the 7th grade students will be taught the complicated web of urban planning through the PLH process, and will provide youthful feedback on their futuristic aspirations for the corridor. The educational process will include discussions of the following planning segments:

- Economics/taxation
- law (zoning) and policy (General Land Use Plan)
- transportation (complete streets)
- housing for all ages and income levels
- resiliency and environmental issues (climate change/stormwater, building design and energy conservation, importance of tree canopy and open space, etc.)
- cultural heritage including the history of civil rights in the corridor
- public art

Students will learn via a variety of methods including bus and walking tours, professional guest speakers, PLH forums and meetings, SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, threats) analysis, architectural modeling, and presentations to the LHA Board and County Board. In addition, students will visit professional planning offices to observe and learn about careers related to planning and development, including urban planning, architecture/landscape architecture, and law.

Measures for Success & Next Steps

At the end of the pilot program in June of 2020, a group of professional teachers will develop criteria to assess the pilot's success in teaching a core civics curriculum. If their conclusion is that the program was successful, LHA will engage with APS to expand the program to both North and South Arlington schools.

Project Coordinators

Lee Highway Alliance Representatives:

- **Sandi Chesrown**, AICP/Urban Planner, LHA Vice President, and PLH Vice Chair
- **D. Taylor Reich**, PLH Youth Advocacy Representative, International Public Transportation Professional, HB-Woodlawn Alumn
- **Jim Lantelme**, LHA Board Member, Arlington Planning Commissioner & Urban Planner
- **Ginger Brown**, LHA President

Dorothy Hamm Middle School Representatives:

- Ellen Smith, Principal
- Patty Tuttle, 7th Grade Civics Teacher
- Nicolette Tosner, 7th Grade Civics Teacher

Professional Partners as Mentors, Jurors, and Participants in Site Visits:

- County Board Member – Katie Cristol
- Arlington Planning & Housing Staff – Natasha Alfonso-Ahmed, Project Manager of PLH
- Architect/LHA Board – Pamela Gillen, ESOARC
- Architect/LHA Supporter – Michael Foster, MTFA
- Civic Association Representatives – Paul Holland
- Yorktown High School Student – Jim Sharkey
- Challenging Racism – Mary Hynes, Consultant (former County Board member)
- Alliance for Housing Solutions/LHA Board – Michelle Winters, Executive Director
- Zoning Attorney – Tad Lunger, McGuire Woods
- Virginia Tech, National Capital Region, Urban & Regional Planning – Elizabeth Morton, Ph.D., Professor and Arlington County Planning Commissioner; Susan Piedmont-Palladino, Architect/Director of VA Tech Washington-Alexandria Architecture Center/Urban Design Program & Curator, National Building Museum; VA Tech Graduate Students

Project Description & Timeline

Phase One Activities – Fall 2019

September – October

At the beginning of the school year, startup meetings will be held at DHMS and at LHA's office to discuss the pilot project concept. Students will learn throughout the following three months about urban planning and the importance of understanding baseline conditions in the corridor. With the help of LHA coordinators and land use lawyers, they will explore legal issues including the difference between zoning and the County's General Land Use Plan. PLH will be explained by County Project Manager, Natasha Alfonso-Ahmed.

The 7th grade students will then begin a baseline SWOT analysis of the Lee Highway Corridor. They will complete a bus tour of the corridor using photography. They will also discuss the role of public art in urban planning via Barcelona artist, David de la Mano, who will paint a mural in late

September at the corner of Lee Highway and Glebe Road in conjunction with LHA, the County, and the Embassy of Spain.

Ginger Brown, President of LHA and Public Policy Specialist, will explain the 'Arlington Way' and the role of civic associations and other non-profit groups to influence local planning decisions. Paul Holland, AICP/Urban Planner at LEIDOS, Chair of PLH and former Parks Commission representative, will discuss the importance of open space along Lee Highway. Paul will also discuss environmental issues impacting corridor decisions including resiliency, climate change, and the importance of stormwater management.

The students will attend PLH's October Public Forum to hear AECOM explain the purpose and results of the Baseline Study of the Lee Corridor. The students will learn about many planning segments including transportation issues along Lee Highway such as mass transportation and walkability (pedestrian safety and 'complete streets').

November - December

Deliverable 1: SWOT Analysis of Baseline Conditions

Phase Two Activities – Spring 2020

January - March

Students will explore issues of social justice including affordable housing and the importance of avoiding gentrification and maintaining local businesses. Mary Hynes, former County Board Member and Consultant to Challenging Racism, will speak about issues of housing equity. The African American cultural heritage of the Lee Corridor will be explored.

Students will do a walking tour of the John M. Langston neighborhood, including the re-design of Fire Station 8 in Halls Hill and Calloway Church's historic cemetery. Students will engage with the African American Museum on Columbia Pike (Scott Taylor).



April

Students will visit the architectural studios of Michael Foster/MTFA and/or Pamela Gillen/ESOARC. Working with Virginia Tech Graduate Students and Professors, students as members of teams will work with software to develop reports and with materials to create cardboard architectural models and illustrative boards with maps and photos. They will present their work to professional juries for feedback. They will also participate in LHA's April Earth Day 50 Year Anniversary Summit to present their findings regarding climate change and resiliency policy on Lee Highway.

May - June

Deliverable 2: Public Presentations

Students will finalize their work as a sustainable pilot project and present to the LHA Board and the County Board. Presentations will probably be held at DHMS. Their work will be displayed in LHA's office throughout the summer. LHA and DHMS will monitor the program's successes and failures, i.e., how to improve to better inform as students move through the life-long process of community involvement and planning. They will also discuss the program with schools throughout the County, for transference and implementation elsewhere in 2020-2021.

Budget

LHA estimates \$3,700 in funding is needed to cover transportation costs associated with field trips, materials for the students' final presentations, and payment for guest lecturers and meetings outside of DHMS. Salaries for teachers and County planners are covered by Arlington County and LHA's professional volunteers are covered by LHA.

QTY	Item	Per Unit	Total
<u>Transportation</u>			
1	Bus tour of Lee Highway w/ multiple stops (\$60/hr)	\$180	\$180
3	Field trips – Students will either walk or take ART/METRO		\$120
	1. County Planning or Architect's Office		
	2. Corridor/Walking Tour		
(Juries and presentations will mostly occur at the school)			
Subtotal			\$300
<u>Project Materials (maps, models, reports, software, etc.)</u>			
	24" x 36" Maps of Lee Highway on foam core boards		\$300
	Architectural modeling supplies (card stock, foam, streetscape trees, people, bikes, etc.)		\$300
	Glue, Clay, Other		\$150
	3D Software (e.g. Streetmix, Let's Build a City, Other)		\$75
Subtotal			\$825
<u>LHA Staffing/Guest Lecturers & Office Space</u>			
20 hrs	Work with DHMS teachers to prepare curriculum/activities	\$25	\$500
12 hrs	Plan and organize field trips	\$25	\$300
9 hrs	Visit classrooms during ongoing lessons to assist/monitor (monthly over 9 months/1 hour per month)	\$25	\$225
6 hrs	Organize jurors and support two student juries	\$25	\$150
6 hrs	Organize and support presentations to LHA/County Board	\$25	\$150
6 hrs	LHA Communications Specialist/Social Media	\$25	\$150
10 hrs	Work with DHMS and APS teachers and staff to prepare for expansion of the program into other schools	\$25	\$250
6 hrs	Work with LHA on program monitoring/reporting	\$25	\$150
	LHA office space for meetings/activities		\$200
	Guest lecturers		\$500
Subtotal			\$2,575
TOTAL			\$3,700