

## Arlington County Board Member Christian Dorsey's Jan. 2, 2020 Remarks

2019 was quite the significant year in Arlington. There was, of course, Amazon, and with it the most substantial affordable housing contribution we have ever received.

Our year, though, was much more than that. Permitting entered the 21<sup>st</sup> century. We established regulatory regimes to enable the development of smart cities technologies and to bring order to shared mobility devices. We completed a monumental update to the plan that governs our public spaces and approved a plan to have ours be a carbon neutral community in 30 years. And we began the necessary work so that ours will be a community where one's status doesn't determine one's outcomes; where our urbanization doesn't disconnect us from nature, and where pedestrians and cyclists can be safe on our streets.

We vision. We plan. We execute.

In 2020, I look forward to the work to widen sidewalk, upgrade and underground utilities and begin installing transit stations on Columbia Pike; to substantially completing the Lubber Run Community Center and the Long Bridge Aquatics and Fitness Center, and to transforming several parks, including Benjamin Banneker and Jennie Dean. All these new or improved facilities will benefit many generations of Arlingtonians.

In this year, we will continue to plan the future of the Lee Highway corridor and update our Urban Forest and Natural Resources plans. And I very much look forward to adopting strategies to implement the Public Spaces Master Plan and Community Energy Plan.

Half of the year will be devoted to consideration of our annual operating budget and our Capital Improvement Plan through fiscal year 2030. I will prioritize providing sufficient resources for our public schools; funding Metro expansion to Dulles Airport and Loudoun County; keeping our infrastructure in a state of good repair; investing in making our community resilient in the face of the climate crisis; developing the capacity to deliver infrastructure and public facilities in Pentagon City and Crystal City so that residential livability doesn't take a back seat to commercial redevelopment, and leveraging the creation and preservation of homes for low-and-moderate-income earners who are woefully underserved by the housing market.

Planning and executing these and other priorities will require that we be at our best. Yet we must also take the time to vision.

There is no doubt that those of us who have been in this region for a while are witnessing a period of tremendous change, and that is certainly reflected here in Arlington. There is also no doubt, because we hear from them, that there are some who do not welcome all these changes.

I get it. Some who have enjoyed and are well-served by the way Arlington has been are concerned that the pace and shape of the changes that they see will diminish their quality of life.

But I also hear from those who have not been as well-served, who embrace change for the potential increased opportunities that growth and investment can bring.

We must resist the temptation to see these perspectives as being irreconcilably at odds with each other and look to engage with those who hold views of change that may be different from our own, and to bring the totality of viewpoints on change into dialogue with one another.

The truth is; there is no responsible policy mechanism to preserve the status quo. It is also true that the inevitability of change will not automatically produce positive outcomes for those who have endured diminished opportunities to live and thrive in Arlington.

We must come together, as a community, to plan for change and growth and to shape it so that the Arlington we've built can evolve to better serve both the long-tenured and newcomer alike.

So, in the year ahead, I want to engage with as many Arlingtonians as I can, in any forum, to consider how we encourage sufficient and appropriate housing, improve our resilience to weather events, and enhance our natural resources while having the infrastructure to move people and educate our children.

Idealistic? Perhaps, but realizable? Definitely.

That is why I prioritized advancing equity as a central framework for governance last year. By developing the capacity to recognize the barriers that marginalized and vulnerable populations face in trying to thrive, we can deliver public policy that is responsive to all and not only to those with power and influence.

I am excited about what we are doing right here in Arlington, but my aspirations in: housing, transportation connectivity, sustainability, resilience, and human development exceed our ability to achieve needed results alone. I will look to multiply our efforts through collaboration with our fellow Northern Virginia jurisdictions, our neighbors in the national capital region and with our state government.

Our remarks are important in setting our direction for the year, yet as Franklin noted, "Well-done is better than well-said." So, with that, I am ready to get to work.

Christian Dorsey, Member  
Arlington County Board

