

## Arlington Tree Action Group (ATAG)

### Questions for County Board Candidates

June 2020

1. Preserving Arlington's dwindling natural resources, especially trees: Will this be a priority and how will you do it? What first steps would you take?

**Response of Bob Cambridge:** I have lived in Arlington over 40 years including 1982 to the present and I have been disappointed by the decline in tree canopy. I do not have immediate suggestions other than continue as you have. It is a sales or communication challenge. Many property owners probably appreciate their trees and are not aware of the damage caused by the English Ivy they are allowing to strangle their trees. More photos of trees killed by the ivy, examples unfortunately abundant, would better convey the message than would words. The pictures on your website at <https://arlingtontreeactiongroup.org/news/> concerning John Glenn's home did a good job of communicating the down side of loss of a large tree. I note that getting the word out need not be an expensive undertaking, so it can easily be a priority, even while struggling with what COVID-19 has done to our economy.

2. Requiring comprehensive environmental assessments before design of County projects: How can the County explicitly calculate the value of our "natural capital" in to projects? Will you do this and if so, how would the assessments be used in the design phase?

**Response of Bob Cambridge:** The trees have value and I assume the contractors, like all businessmen, are not indifferent to financial reality. Contractors who do appreciate how keeping trees benefits the bottom line should be encouraged to speak to other contractors. That kind of spokesperson speaks their language and has credibility. Having the Board and County staff repeat that information cannot hurt either, and it does support what the Board has heretofore stated - maintaining and expanding Arlington's tree canopy - was a priority. Those initiatives are easy to support and I would definitely do so.

3. Incorporating the preservation of natural resources into all of the County's daily functions like streets, sewers, traffic, etc.: Will you do this? And how?

**Response of Bob Cambridge:** I do not want the county government to micromanage when they are not positioned to get the information needed at a detail level sufficient to do that micromanaging right. On the other hand, staff personnel (1) do often have the opportunity to see what is happening in a particular geographic area and (2) can be there to listen to those individuals who live and work and therefore really know about that particular geographic area. Those staff personnel can be trained to look for known problems and trends that affect the environment in ways we all do not want the environment affected. They can also be trained to bring back from the individuals who really know the area

comments and ideas concerning problems not well known and options that have not received widespread recognition for addressing both known and newly discovered problems.

4. What steps can be taken to break down silos in County offices whose projects directly impact the environment?

**Response of Bob Cambridge:** The County appears to be moving to salt drips prior to a storm which is a step in the right direction. Not as much salt to kill roadside trees. The technology does not appear to address the really heavy snow we can get and so the trees continue to be burdened. I am not familiar at a detail level with other issues related to this question that have come to the attention of ATAG, but will seek to learn more. There are very few actions that cannot be done better. One just has to believe that and keep looking for improvement. The experience of many businesses proves that continued improvement can be the norm, not the exception.

5. Ideal population growth for Arlington: The County's population is currently 236,000 and growing fast. What, in your mind, is the ideal population for Arlington and how will you ensure adequate infrastructure and services, along with environmental sustainability needed to sustain every resident?

**Response of Bob Cambridge:** Ideal population density is a rather subjective term. Arlington's population is growing and that growth can easily be characterized as fast. And that growth, given all the jobs Amazon's HQ2 promises, will almost surely continue. I do not believe it is my place to tell people they cannot live near me. I can make suggestions that somewhat redirect growth in ways better for all of us, and will continue to make suggestions and seek out better suggestions from others. Growth along corridors that also provide transportation, products, services, and other business support seems to me to make sense. I have suggested that underground construction be considered, not because I see that as a panacea, but because better is always possible and once people realize that their ideas are important too we can more effectively begin to focus on a problem in ways proven to work for businesses. Following those practices, government too can be more effective and, would you believe, less expensive!

I want to thank the Arlington Tree Action Group for this opportunity to put some ideas out there. I also want to thank ATAG for their efforts to date and for their continuing effort to improve the Arlington we all work, live in, and share.

Other information and responses to other questionnaires can be found at <https://BobCambridge.com>. I will also try to respond to emails sent to [bcesq@verizon.net](mailto:bcesq@verizon.net), texts sent to (703) 472-8252, and tweets sent to [@BobCambridgeEsq](https://twitter.com/BobCambridgeEsq).