From:	Carl F. Larsson
To:	Laura A. Dent
Cc:	Rob alexanrw Alexander; Keith R. Thomas
Subject:	Link Tree Canopy
Date:	Friday, June 5, 2026 10:37:22 AM

Dear Councilmember Dent,

Thank you again for meeting yesterday. Although we disagree on the necessity of the 473 S Main St rezoning, it seemed like we would both be sad to see the very tall (maybe around 70-80'?), mature tree on the southwest corner of the Lindsey site cut down to build the Link. I feel this would be even more tragic given how the tree sits on the edge of the planned building site, and thus could feasibly be preserved with a reasonable change to the footprint of the building.

I'm attaching a satellite view with a pin marking the tree, as well as a screenshot of the developer's proposed site plan with the approximate location of the tree marked in red. Please note how close this is to the building's edge, meaning it could be saved by altering the footprint of the building to accommodate space around the roots of this exceptional tree.

A single mature tree like this provides substantially more environmental benefits to the city than a replacement sapling in terms of stormwater interception near Blacks Run, carbon sequestration, immediate shade/cooling, heat island reduction, and visual screening of the large apartment building. And while this exceptional tree is the tallest on the property, the site would of course benefit even more if the developer could also preserve other trees that sit on or close to the boundaries of the property.

As a second issue, I am concerned by what I consider to be a weak replacement tree planting proffer (screenshot attached here). As you can see, it only requires one large deciduous tree every 50', and then it allows up to 50% of these trees to be substituted with smaller trees, shrubs, or ornamental grasses. It also allows for these to be clustered, which I interpret as meaning that there could potentially be long stretches of street frontage at our downtown gateway without any trees. On top of this, it is unclear what size the trees must be when planted or what target canopy ratio needs to be maintained into the future. This proffer needs to be substantially improved to mitigate the loss of the many existing mature trees currently on the site.

I appreciate your commitment to the environmental sustainability of our city, and was wondering if this is an area where you would consider holding the developer to the higher standards of sustainability that our community wants to see in new buildings projects? As a first step, would you possibly consider directing our city's arborist to investigate the questions below on measuring and mitigating the impact of the Link on our city's already dwindling tree canopy?

Since this pertains to the work of EPSAC, I am also copying Rob Alexander and Keith Thomas, and would appreciate it if Keith could please include this email in the docket for the

next EPSAC meeting.

Please let me know if there's any additional information that I can provide, and thank you again for your time and support of our city's environmental goals.

Best,

Carl Larsson
487 S Mason St.

Questions for city arborist:
1. What impact will the Link have on the tree canopy coverage of the proposed building site? What effects will this have on stormwater runoff to Blacks Run, the urban heat island effect on the neighboring Build Our Park, and other environmental impacts such as carbon sequestration?

2. What standards do other cities in Virginia have for requiring developers to preserve mature trees to the extent possible, especially in a discretionary rezoning request where there is a large, mature tree on the edge of the planned building site?

3. How do the developer's replacement tree planting proffers compare to standards required by other cities in Virginia? How could the tree planting proffer be improved to ensure better tree canopy coverage on this very important site of our gateway to downtown?