



Report on Outreach, Language and Communication Services for Arlandria and Del Ray Master Plan Process

**January 10, 2020
Prepared by Matea Group**



Abstract

The City of Alexandria Department of Planning & Zoning solicited consultant support for Outreach, Language and Communications services to assist in the Mount Vernon Plans Update (which includes the 2005 Mount Vernon Avenue Business Plan and the 2003 Arlandria Action Plan). The goal for this project was to obtain full participation in English and Spanish of the planning process by all members of the two communities which are the foci of the Plans Update, namely, the Arlandria community and Del Ray community.

The City contracted Matea Group LLC (Matea) to provide such services for the pre-planning process during the fall season of 2019. Matea provides a strong background in public relations, civic engagement and planning as well as proven experience working with communities of diverse populations, including Spanish-speaking populations.

The Matea Group, LLC

The Matea Group, LLC (Matea) is a multidisciplinary public engagement firm with the mission of empowering communities. With an emphasis on diverse communities, Matea offers tactical communications, translations, graphic design, planning and public engagement services. Matea is HUBZone certified by the Small Business Administration and a Latina owned business headquartered in Wheaton, Maryland.

MateaGroup.com



How we did it

For the Spanish and English outreach and communication process to be meaningful and produce impactful results, it must have an effort to intentionally engage the diverse population living and working in the planning areas. To that end, the outreach team conducted a variety of activities to connect with all audiences, particularly hard to reach populations who may have never participated in a master plan process.

The team embarked on the pre-planning process from September to January 2020 by contacting community leaders in both Arlandria and Del Ray. They asked these leaders - residents, community-based organizations, businesses, institutions and government organizations – to provide:

- Their input on the type of questions we should be asking in the pre-planning questionnaire to get communities involved.
- Their input on dates, times and places for the Arlandria community conversation and the Del Ray community conversation. These two events provided the venue for each community to discuss, together, how to shape their future.
- Their input on best locations for the street outreach team to meet people where they live and work in Arlandria and Del Ray.

After getting all the input, the outreach team moved into action.

Street outreach

To achieve intentional outreach, it is critical to go where people live and work. It was determined that having an outreach table at a local event was not enough. Therefore, the team decided to take over the streets of Arlandria and Del Ray wearing bright blue shirts to make their presence known while purposely walking up to people to:

1. Have a conversation about their experience in their neighborhood,
2. Invite them to the community conversation in either Arlandria or Del Ray; and
3. Invite them to complete the pre-planning questionnaire.

To achieve this, the street outreach team, which included City of Alexandria planners, spent weekends and weekdays walking the streets of Arlandria and Del Ray visiting athletic fields, farmer markets, laundromats, markets, dog parks, coffeeshops and playgrounds.

In every visit, the outreach team held these conversations in either English or Spanish.







For example, on a Sunday afternoon, the outreach team had conversations with people in strategic locations:

- Approached people as they were walking out of a religious service.
- At playgrounds.
- Walked into local stores and restaurants to invite owners and employees to the community conversations and placed posters at their shops announcing the events.
- Talked to pedestrian and bike safety advocates who were attending a march on “World Day of Remembrance for Road Traffic Victims” in Arlandria.
- Talked to shoppers throughout Mt. Vernon Ave.
- Talked to people in bus shelters as they waited for the bus to arrive.



Another great example of outreach took place on weekdays, where a variety of activities took place, including:

- Talking to day laborers at 6am at the famous Tiger Market in Arlandria as workers waited for job offers. We brought in doughnuts and coffee to share with them while having these conversations.
- Talking to parents of elementary school kids as they gathered at school bus stops. We also shared doughnuts and coffee with them. This was done in the morning and also in the afternoon as parents were waiting for their kids to arrive.
- Talked to people as they waited for the bus on their way to work.
- Got on the bus to talk to riders.



Community Conversations:

The Community Conversation in Arlandria took place on Thursday November 21, 2019, from 6pm to 7:30pm at Cora Kelly Elementary School in Arlandria. The event offered free childcare and food.

With a large Spanish speaking population, this community conversation was held in Spanish with English translation, bringing in 66 participants, plus approximately 15 children.

Ahead of this event, Univision - the largest Spanish speaking TV network in the nation and the dominant news outlet for Spanish speakers in the DC region – did a news segment urging residents to attend the Arlandria Community Conversation. Alexandria City Councilmember Canek Aguirre joined the interview with City of Alexandria Planner José Ayala and consultant Natali Fani-González.

Furthermore, El Tiempo Latino, the largest Spanish speaking newspaper in the DC region, attended the event and published an article about it.

To watch the Univision interview:

<https://noticiasya.com/washington-dc/2019/11/20/piden-apoyo-de-la-comunidad-latina-para-salvar-chirilagua-en-virginia/>

To read El Tiempo Latino's article:

<http://eltiempolatino.com/news/2019/dec/03/chirilagua-altos-precios-en-viviendas-podrian-caus/>



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PIDEN APOYO DE LA COMUNIDAD LATINA PARA SALVAR CHIRILAGUA EN VIRGINIA

(NOTICIAS YA) - La ciudad de Alexandria está pidiendo el apoyo de la comunidad latina para formar parte de los próximos cambios de infraestructura que se realizarán en la zona conocida como Chirilagua.

Pero algunos residentes y negociantes temen que tendrán que desalojar el área debido a la llegada de la empresa multimillonaria Amazon al norte de Virginia. El concejal Canek Aguirre asegura que ahora es el momento de participar en las conversaciones con el gobierno local para salvar esta comunidad que ha recibido por décadas a la comunidad inmigrante.



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LOCALES

VA: Latinos temen desplazamiento forzado por aumento de vivienda en Arlandria

■ El costo de los inmuebles se ha incrementado 17%, muy por encima de la media nacional de 5.5%

Por Tomás Guevara
ESPECIAL PARA EL TIEMPO LATINO

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"En esta área va a estar una nueva estación de metro en el Potomac Yard, viene la segunda sede de Amazon y un campus de la Universidad de Virginia Tech, eso significa que va venir mucha más gente, mucho más trabajo; pero el miedo es que haya desplazamientos por no poder pagar la renta porque está subiendo demasiado. Ese es el gran temor, pero estamos aquí para escuchar las inquietudes de los vecinos de Arlandria, para encontrar soluciones y que no se tengan que ir", comenta Natali Fani-González, asesora de Planificación de la Ciudad de Alexandria.

De hecho, los precios siguen una vertiginosa subida año tras año, según explica Elmer Zamora, un salvadoreño que ha resido en este vecindario desde hace 15 años, y que junto a sus vecinos muestra su preocupación en este encuentro porque la factura de vivienda cada vez absorbe más sus ingresos. "Aquí no le hacen arreglos a los edificios, solo dicen que a partir de tal fecha costará tanto el alquiler", comenta este residente.



CAMBIOS. Un encuentro organizado por la Oficina de Planificación de Alexandria se llevó a cabo para explicar a los residentes las implicaciones de los cambios.

organización de Inquilinos y Trabajadores Unidos en Arlandria. Evelin Urrutia, comenta a El Tiempo Latino que el miedo al desplazamiento es real, porque este vecindario sigue la misma tendencia de presión, en cuanto a vivienda asequible, que están experimentando los vecindarios aledaños a otros polos de desarrollo en toda el Área Metropolitana de Washington.

Para esta activista, quien desde la organización trabaja para coordinar esfuerzos con el gobierno de la ciudad y con la comunidad, es importante mantener sobre la línea la necesidad de que este vecindario se conserve con mejoras en el tejido social y protección

zona. "Creo que si la ciudad de Alexandria quiere hacer algo bonito por 'Chirilagua', por nuestra comunidad, es bueno que se focalice en las familias que viven en este vecindario y para nosotros como organización es importante que la comunidad participe en este proceso y haga saber a los tomadores de decisión cuáles son sus necesidades del día a día", explica Evelin Urrutia.

Por su parte José Ayala, encargado de planificación urbana del gobierno de la ciudad, cree que es una buena señal que el gobierno local haya ordenado hacer un estudio en la zona con la premisa de que la llegada de grandes empresas a Crystal City amerita presión

sobre los complejos habitacionales que colindan con ese polo de desarrollo en el vecino Arlington.

La reunión de ese jueves es la primera instancia para comenzar el acercamiento a la comunidad, luego vendría el procesamiento de la información y para 2021 el gobierno tendría un plan estratégico para Arlandria.

"Para la ciudad es sumamente importante mantener una diversificación económica de ingresos de sus residentes y que haya vivienda de bajo costo, por lo que estamos haciendo un análisis para ayudar a encontrar soluciones en este caso", agrega Ayala.

El inminente traslado de Amazon al norte de Virginia, como su segunda sede después de Seattle,



ASISTENTES. Habitantes de "Chirilagua" acudieron para escuchar la exposición de representantes del gobierno local.

ha tenido un significativo impacto en el precio de la venta de viviendas en el condado de Arlington, según un análisis de la plataforma de bienes raíces Realtor.com, que calcula que el incremento de los inmuebles se ha disparado un 17% muy por encima de la media

La misma plataforma agrega que el mercado inmobiliario en Arlington es incapaz de mantenerse al día con una demanda abrumadora de viviendas. El portal no ha medido el impacto en los alquileres, pero la tendencia del mercado indicaría que se-

The Community Conversation in Del Ray took place on Thursday December 12, 2019, from 6:30pm to 8:00pm at Mount Vernon Community School in Del Ray. The event offered free childcare and food.

This event was held in English with Spanish translation available, yet no one attending needed translation services. There were 52 participants at this event, plus approximately 3 children.



Pre-Planning Questionnaires:

We created a pre-planning questionnaire in English and Spanish that the street outreach team used as they approached people. The questionnaire was also promoted in the community conversations as well as via the City of Alexandria eNews Service and their twitter account.

- 624 people answered the questionnaire in English
- 233 people answered the questionnaire in Spanish

Answer this quick questionnaire to share your thoughts
LET'S SHAPE THE FUTURE OF OUR COMMUNITY

Your answers to the following questions will help the City understand how you view and experience your neighborhood. Your response will also help shape the topics to be addressed in the next phase of this project.

1. Which of the following place names best represents your neighborhood? **Choose all that apply.**

a. Chirilagua	d. Hume Springs	g. Other, please specify: _____
b. Arlandria	e. Lynhaven	
<u>c. Del Ray</u>	f. Warwick Village	

2. What are the **top 3 things** most important to you and your family in your neighborhood?

- Community Activities (ex. festivals, sports leagues, rec center programming)
- Housing Options and/or Affordability
- Public Transportation (ex. buses and bus shelters, bikes, sidewalks, scooters)
- d. Pedestrian Safety (ex. well-lit sidewalks, crosswalks, handicap ramps, speed limits)
- e. Restaurants and Stores (ex. markets, grocery stores)
- f. Parks and Playgrounds
- Job Opportunities
- Increasing the minimum wage
- Childcare
- Medical Care
- Churches and Religious Organizations
- Neighborhood Safety (ex. crime prevention, emergency services)

Any additional comments? _____

3. What are the **top 2 things** you **love** about your neighborhood?

Community, Walkability

4. What are the **top 2 challenges** facing your neighborhood?

Bike Lanes, Crosswalks

RESPONDA ESTA BREVE ENCUESTA PARA COMPARTIR
CREEMOS EL FUTURO DE NUESTRA COMUNIDAD

Las respuestas a las siguientes preguntas ayudarán a la Ciudad de Alexandria entender cómo usted percibe y se siente en su vecindario. Al mismo tiempo, su participación ayudará a formar los temas que se discutirán en la próxima etapa de este proyecto.

1. ¿Cuál de estos nombres de lugares representa su vecindario?
Escoja todos los que apliquen.

<u>a. Chirilagua</u>	d. Hume Springs	g. Otro nombre, favor escríbalo: _____
b. Arlandria	e. Lynhaven	
c. Del Ray	f. Warwick Village	

2. ¿Cuáles son los **3 temas más importantes** para usted y su familia en su vecindario?

- Actividades en la comunidad (por ejemplo, festivales, ligas deportivas, programa en el centro de recreación)
- Opciones de viviendas y/o viviendas a bajo costo
- Transporte público (por ejemplo, buses y paradas de autobuses, bicicletas, aceras, scooters)
- d. Seguridad peatonal (por ejemplo, aceras iluminadas, cruces peatonales, rampas de discapacitados, límites de velocidad)
- Restaurantes, tiendas y supermercados
- Parques y áreas de juego infantil
- Oportunidades de trabajo
- b. Subir el salario mínimo
- Cuidado infantil
- Cuidado médico
- Iglesias y organizaciones religiosas
- Seguridad del vecindario (por ejemplo, prevención de crímenes, servicios de emergencia)

¿Algún comentario adicional? _____

3. ¿Cuáles son las **2 cosas que más le encanta** de su vecindario?

everything is close by

4. ¿Cuáles son los **2 retos más grandes** que tiene su vecindario?

Afford & Displacement

Above are actual questionnaire responses from residents. Once the online questionnaire period ended (December 16, 2019), the team collected the data and found the following:

Large number of people identifying **Arlandria and/or Chirilagua** as their neighborhood wrote in their questionnaire:

- I love my neighborhood because everything is nearby; I walk to stores, the bus stop, the schools, and church.
- Many participants shared that they have relatives and friends living within the neighborhood.
- They identified not only as most important issues in the check list (question number two in the questionnaire) but also wrote it as comments to emphasize that they strongly care for the following issues, in order of priority:
 1. Housing affordability in their neighborhood.
 2. Need of reliable public transportation that can take people quickly to job centers, particularly in DC, throughout the day and evening.
 3. Need more pedestrian safety measures, with an emphasis on more bus shelters and well-lit sidewalks from bus stops to buildings.
 4. More jobs with higher wages.
 5. Concern about amount of trash in the area.
 6. Concern about amount of snow on sidewalks towards bus stops.
 7. Cars driving too fast.
 8. Poor condition of apartment buildings.
 9. Concern about crime and need of affordable afterschool activities for young children and teenagers.



Large number of people identifying **Del Ray** as their neighborhood wrote in their questionnaire:

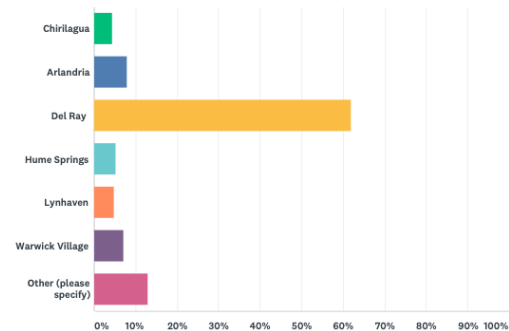
- Love the sense of community in my neighborhood, the small town scale, the walkability to coffee shops, retail and numerous events.
- They identified not only as most important issues in the check list (question number two in the questionnaire) but also wrote it as comments to emphasize that they strongly care for the following issues, in order of priority:
 1. Love the walkability to everything, particularly stores.
 2. Love the small-town feel, historic and charming.
 3. Great community events including the farmers market.
 4. Concerns about crime, need to implement more crime prevention activities.
 5. Concerns about high densities that could destroy the historic charm.
 6. Improving pedestrian safety for pedestrians and cyclists.
 7. Too much traffic congestion.
 8. Cars are speeding, need ways to slow them down.
 9. Terrible cut through traffic in neighborhoods
 10. Housing affordability
 11. Lack of parking
 12. Scooters on the sidewalk



English Questionnaire results for questions 1 and 2:

Q1 Which of the following place names best represents your neighborhood?

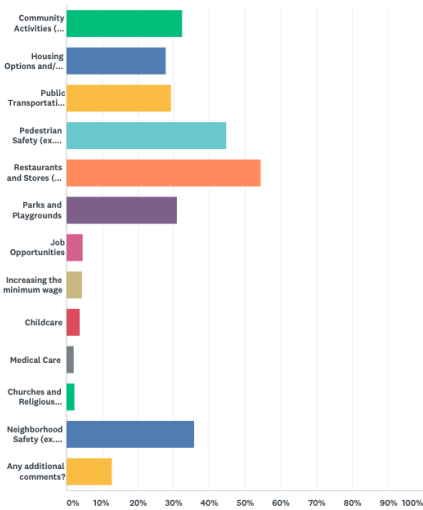
Answered: 624 Skipped: 0



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Chirilagua	4.33%	27
Arlandria	8.01%	50
Del Ray	61.86%	386
Hume Springs	5.29%	33
Lynhaven	4.81%	30
Warwick Village	7.21%	45
Other (please specify)	12.98%	81
Total Respondents: 624		

Q2 What are the top 3 things most important to you and your family in your neighborhood?

Answered: 624 Skipped: 0

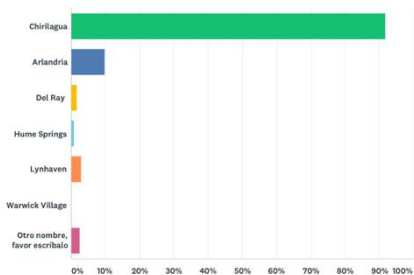


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Community Activities (ex. festivals, sports leagues, rec center programming)	32.37%	202
Housing Options and/or Affordability	27.72%	173
Public Transportation (ex. buses and bus shelters, bikes, sidewalks, scooters)	29.33%	183
Pedestrian Safety (ex. well-lit sidewalks, crosswalks, handicap ramps, speed limits)	44.87%	280
Restaurants and Stores (ex. markets, grocery stores)	54.49%	340

Spanish Questionnaire results for questions 1 and 2:

Q1 ¿Cuál de estos nombres de lugares representa su vecindario? Escoja todos los que apliquen.

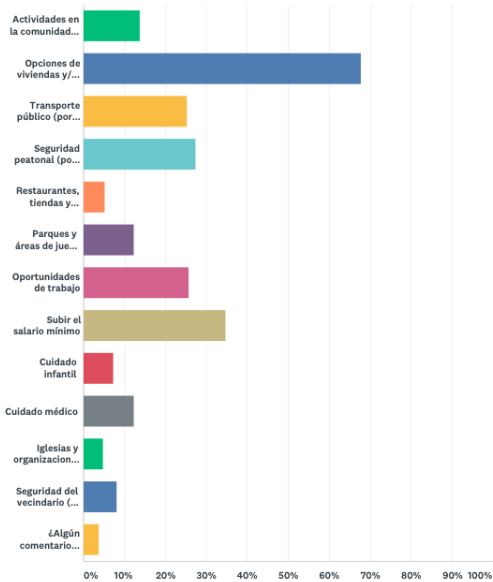
Answered: 233 Skipped: 0



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Chirilagua	91.85%	214
Arlandia	9.87%	23
Del Ray	1.72%	4
Hume Springs	0.86%	2
Lynhaven	3.00%	7
Warwick Village	0.00%	0
Otro nombre, favor escribirlo	2.58%	6

Q2 ¿Cuáles son los 3 temas más importantes para usted y su familia en su vecindario?

Answered: 233 Skipped: 0



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Actividades en la comunidad (por ejemplo, festivales, ligas deportivas, programa en el centro de recreación)	13.73%	32
Opciones de viviendas y/o viviendas a bajo costo	67.81%	158
Transporte público (por ejemplo, buses y paradas de autobuses, bicicletas, aceras, scooters)	25.32%	59
Seguridad peatonal (por ejemplo, aceras iluminadas, cruces peatonales, rampas de discapacitados, límites de velocidad)	27.47%	64
Restaurantes, tiendas y supermercados	5.15%	12

What we heard

Looking at the data from the questionnaire and the notes from the two community conversations, these are the top takeaways:

- There is a strong sense of community in both Arlandria and Del Ray, separately. We constantly heard phrases: “I love Chirilagua because my friends live here and I can walk everywhere,” and “the social atmosphere in Del Ray is unique; we are proud of our small businesses.”
- Housing affordability was an issue in both communities, but it was far more critical in Arlandria. The fear of displacement in Arlandria was the main conversation during street outreach efforts and the community conversations. In fact, even community members in Del Ray expressed in numerous occasions that they thought the City needed to take special steps to ensure Arlandria residents would be able to afford to stay in their community. Some residents mentioned, “Arlandria, now Chirilagua, must be protected to avoid the displacement African Americans suffered in Del Ray years ago.”
- Pedestrian safety and public transportation were both highly important issues. In both areas, residents were concerned about cars driving too fast and the need of making Mt. Vernon Ave. safer for pedestrians.
 - In Arlandria, people asked for bus shelters throughout the area, streetlights that lead from bus shelters to apartment buildings, and a more efficient bus network that takes people from Arlandria to DC faster at all times.
 - In Del Ray, people mentioned the need of having more crosswalks and traffic lights along Mt. Vernon, as well as more parking and the enforcement of parking regulations. There was also a big push for protected bike lanes and getting scooters off sidewalks.
- Retail was important in both communities, in particular having more unique boutiques in Del Ray. In Arlandria, community

members expressed the need of supporting their local businesses and offering technical assistance so they can modernize. For example, the lack of wifi in Arlandria coffee shops was mentioned several times.

- Arlandria no more. The demographic shift in this area is clear, and with pride, this community wants to be officially called Chirilagua.
- Participants expressed the need of having more historic markers and cultural references in their communities.
- In both neighborhoods, participants urged having more affordable after school activities for children.



Recommendation, Next Steps

- Based on the strong differences of the two planning areas, each with its unique challenges, it is recommended to have two master plans: One for Del Ray and one for Arlandria to properly address the needs and aspirations of each community.
- As reflected in Arlandria, low-income workers are most impacted by the low minimum wage (which is much lower than in neighboring DC and Maryland); the lack of affordable housing makes quality of life more challenging for residents in the area with low paying jobs. Consider sharing this reality with local, state and federal legislators; it's urgent to increase the minimum wage.
- Consider looking carefully at the notes for each community conversation as well as the questionnaire to see what issues are "low hanging fruits" that the City can quickly take care of. That way, at the next community conversation, City planners can also report on short term solutions to problems that were shared during the pre-planning process. In general, to keep people engaged, people need to see and feel that they are being heard. In general, achieving small community victories during the planning process will help planners develop trust with community members.
- During the community conversations, the outreach team asked participants: what are the best ways to follow up with you? They responded:

Arlandria, the majority preferred:

1. Phone call
2. Text message
3. Email
4. Via news outlets with: El Tiempo Latino and Univision

1. Phone call
2. Text message
3. Email
4. Via news outlets with:
El Tiempo Latino and
Univision



Del Ray, the majority preferred:

1. Email
2. Text message
3. Some marked:
Facebook,
Alexandria Gazette,
Alexandria Times,
civic associations
and WAMU radio.

- There will be another set of community conversations in Arlandria and Del Ray to share the pre-planning results and obtain feedback from the community:

Follow up Community Conversation in Arlandria will take place on January 27, 2020 at 5pm at Casa Chirilagua, 4109 Mt Vernon Ave, Alexandria. This event will be in Spanish with English translation.

Follow up Community Conversation in Del Ray will take place on February 1, 2020, at 10am at the Mount Vernon Recreation Center, 2701 Commonwealth Ave, Alexandria. This event will be in English with Spanish translation.

For these events, the outreach team will contact everyone who signed up for the community conversations. Participants will be encouraged to bring neighbors to these follow up meetings.

