

December 17, 2021

The following presents staff responses to comments/questions submitted by the Arlington Ridge Civic Association (ARCA) on 11.8.21 regarding the Draft Pentagon City Sector Plan. Staff responses are provided (in blue) whenever actual questions were posed or feedback was specifically requested.

Arlington Ridge Civic Association (ARCA):

1. The ARCA Board understands the value of change to the County and its citizens. And while we feel that developments like RiverHouse would serve the community better as medium density transition areas, a compromise between the existing plan and the zero up-zoning described in the 2013 Arlington Ridge Neighborhood Conservation Plan, we also understand the economic forces driving increases in density.
2. ARCA values the promise of greener and walkable elements, a new elementary school, and improved transit/walkability to a vibrant Pentagon and Crystal City— but feels these benefits should not come at the expense of public services and facilities, diversion of traffic through neighborhoods, congestion, and security concerns. If density is to be increased across Pentagon and Crystal City, there needs to be clear performance metrics and risk mitigation plans to address the heightened demand for public and private transit, among others. Without the ability to scrutinize the economic analyses indicating the area can absorb the proposed increase in density, our recommendations focus on mitigation plans if the assumptions regarding proposed density are not correct.
3. We believe it is also imperative that the plan clearly define community benefits/ infrastructure needed to support the needs of 22202, to include schools, a community center/library, parks, public and private transportation improvements, and access to medical facilities. We feel the County Board should not adopt the plan, and the associated zoning changes, until all of the provisions have been incorporated, with clearly defined outcomes if not met. We look forward to continued engagement with the county and the next version of the plan that also considers hospitals, medical facilities, and the county/ public services - police, fire, waste, storm water management, etc. - that might be required in a natural or manmade disaster.
4. Transportation:
 - a. ARCA feels strongly that Traffic Demand Management alone will not ensure that the transportation infrastructure in Pentagon City, and surrounding areas, will effectively meet the demands of an increased number of travelers. The metrics section of the plan should include key performance parameters, and a clear commitment from the County to conduct performance management of traffic - including measuring traffic increases in Pentagon City and surrounding areas before, during, and continually after development - and to periodically update the community on the performance against metrics. And if the metrics are not met, clear identification of risk-mitigation plans to protect community members from diverted traffic - to include traffic cameras, additional stop signs, speed bumps or other traffic calming devices, and/or temporary cessation of future growth. Additional consideration should be made to model the increased ridership through the Pentagon City Metro Station, and the possible need for an additional entrance. **RESPONSE:** Ongoing monitoring and management of traffic is already occurring by Arlington County and its partners. Status updates on these efforts are periodically produced to confirm trends and identify progress and potential challenges. These were [first produced in 2016](#) and [most recently in 2020](#) for the 22202 zip code. Some aspects of this data are derived from individual site plans that are subject to condition language requiring ongoing monitoring while others continue to be collected through our partners. This access to

data allows the County to capture effectiveness of approved strategies and is intended to manage transportation impacts of each development. Staff can make sure the Draft Sector Plan reiterates this practice and ongoing efforts. With respect to potential solutions, they can only be suggested once monitoring and subsequent assessment of issues confirms any underlying conditions that may need to be mitigated. This will become somewhat challenging in the immediate future as we establish “a new normal” of travel patterns. As future growth arrives, and transit ridership increases, further capacity analysis will need to be completed to assess if/when further enhancements may be needed and what their cost effectiveness may be.

- b. While not in the direct area of study, ARCA suggests the County immediately address road network bottlenecks at intersections like 23rd St/Route 1 and 23rd St/Arlington Ridge Road before density increases and changes are considered for Route 1. **RESPONSE:** Some of this work will first be considered as part of VDOT’s Richmond Highway Phase 2 analysis. Staff needs to await findings and recommendations that will be generated through that upcoming effort. Roadways which are owned by VDOT (rather than Arlington County) will require further coordination and documentation of potential problems before a formal traffic study can be initiated or potential improvements identified. Separate from that issue, both 23rd Street intersections will continue to be monitored as part of the 22202 Transportation Data collection. More immediately, however, the County currently [maintains a website where such issues can be highlighted](#) with unique links to specific requests or concerns.
- c. Lastly, due to the steep incline of the ridge, ARCA members require vehicular traffic to commute in and out of ARCA and to retail services in Pentagon and Crystal City, such as Costco. Therefore, ARCA believes some consideration must be made for parking in traffic models. **RESPONSE:** Parking (both existing and future supply) has been considered in the analysis and represents an element of a successful, comprehensive transportation network. Staff fully acknowledges sites within the study area will continue to be accessed by vehicles and therefore that mode of travel will need to be accommodated. Having said that, the Plan overwhelmingly emphasizes the other modes of travel to ensure their access, convenience, and availability can be prioritized in an effort to discourage residents, employees, and visitors from using cars in this area.

5. Public Facilities

- a. ARCA members are heavy users of public facilities and services and are concerned that increased density without expanded facilities and services will lead to decreased access for all community members. Members strongly support the siting of an Elementary school in 22202 but would like similar discussion in the plan regarding the relocation of the community center/library. Furthermore, metrics for “equity” should include measurement of access to public facilities, to specifically include the disabled and elderly. **RESPONSE:** Staff will add the access for the disabled and elderly to our equity section of the Sector Plan. With respect to expanded facilities and services, the Plan already includes language encouraging opportunistic partnerships with near-term developments where uses such as a library or community center space could be introduced within the ground story of mixed-use projects. However, should those efforts prove unsuccessful (in the absence of a willing partner or due to economic feasibility), the Implementation Matrix speaks further to subsequent steps/processes that may be needed to address the future character and location of key public facilities in this area. In particular, Implementation Matrix #17 specifically addresses the necessary coordination of the Virginia Highlands Park master planning effort, associated school siting, and consideration of the library/community center.

- b. ARCA members support the development of green ribbon and also the proposed County extension between the Hume School and Virginia Highlands park. However, the plan should also include clear thresholds and objectives for open park space, exclusive of green ribbon and other pedestrian greenery. Additionally, ARCA would like discussion of environmental impacts and costs, to include flooding and run off from new development, considering of maintaining older growth trees, and impact of increased density on neighboring trails. **RESPONSE:** The Sector Plan identifies exhibits (for example, p. 105) where public parks/plazas are identified with approximate sizes that are exclusive of Green Ribbon pathways. Separate from publicly available spaces, vegetation and tree canopy minimums are also quantified for private properties on pages 57 and 59.
- c. ARCA believes public facilities and services should be prioritized sooner within the implementation matrix, in-line with the goals of the plan to encourage near-term redevelopment and drive the transformation of the district to meet pressing community needs. ARCA expects the County to begin the process to identify the resourcing path for public facilities identified in the plan, as early as the FY22 CIP. **RESPONSE:** The Implementation matrix identifies a number of short-term (1-3 year) initiatives that are recommended beyond the current planning effort. Once adopted in the Sector Plan, next year's 10-year Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) discussions will need to consider these recommendations in the context of other County priorities. Those engagements will represent the next opportunity for public feedback and a continuation of the ongoing effort to raise awareness about any unfunded needs in 22202.

The following presents a summary of responses to comments provided during the 11.18.21 Zoom call which represented the November Arlington Ridge Civic Association (ARCA) meeting. Staff responses are provided (in blue) whenever actual questions were posed or feedback was specifically requested.

PenPlace questions (agenda item 1):

- Marc Capistrant: Amazon HQ and Costco are actually part of Pentagon City boundaries. River House is not. Why is Pen place not part of the Pentagon City Study? **RESPONSE:** Boundary issues were discussed and explained at the 12/11/21 County Board hearing (link to video of that meeting can be found at the end of this document).
- Godmund S. (Ridge House): Where is amazon planning to put the concrete prep area for the next phase? **RESPONSE:** My understanding is that the applicant is still exploring options but has not yet submitted a proposal for staff review.
- Jane Siegel: Will cars be able to circulate east-west through (under?) the Penn Place site? **RESPONSE:** Circulation in the garage will be possible but will stop short of accommodating through traffic with direct routes across the site (which would create safety issues and conflict with other garage operations).
- Marc Capistrant: There was a similar play in Rosslyn and the developer did not make good on that. Look up Central Place Observation Deck. It's just a way to sell it to the public for up zoning kickbacks. **RESPONSE:** Condition language and more formal agreements will memorialize this.

- Miriam Gennari: Will the High School have dedicated parking. Is there a plug-in infrastructure? [RESPONSE](#): Planned high school, like other proposed uses, will be required to meet minimum parking requirements on site. Plug-in infrastructure is still under review by staff.
- Charles Lord: Sorry if I missed but what is the duration of the construction activity? [RESPONSE](#): Should PenPlace be approved in spring of 2022, construction activity would likely begin later that year and last approximately 3 years with portions of the site becoming occupied in early 2026. Metropolitan Park (first two HQ2 office buildings) is expected to complete in early 2023.

Pentagon City Planning Study questions (agenda item 2):

- Marc Capistrant: 2013 Arlington Ridge Plan calls for no up zoning there was a very close look with a 195-page study voted on by the Arlington County Board. It calls for no up zoning. Def not blanket up zoning. [RESPONSE](#): Distinction between various Plans was clarified at the 12/1 Planning Commission hearing and most recently at the 12/11 County Board hearing. Please view video of those discussions. Boundary issues related to Pentagon City and the surrounding Civic Associations were also discussed at the 12/11/21 County Board hearing.
- Charles Lord: How about the west side of Lynn Street? [RESPONSE](#): Properties west of Lynn Street represent the Pentagon City Metro Station Area but not the Pentagon City Sector Plan area which represents a smaller geography originally identified in 2019.
- Alla Kamins: Amazon will already be bringing a lot of people, traffic and strain to our neighborhood, why do we need to also increase density of residential places? [RESPONSE](#): Boundary issues were discussed and explained at the 12/11/21 County Board hearing where Board members also reinforced the need to update the vision for the RiverHouse property.
- Alla Kamins: What changes to the plans occurred as the result of the dialogue with the community? [RESPONSE](#): Current version of the Draft Sector Plan includes additional height restrictions that now span the entire western boundary of the RiverHouse site. Staff also incorporated an Implementation Matrix to better identify timing for subsequent steps and processes – some of which involve public facility discussions for the area. Vegetation and tree canopy standards were also further increased to set a high standard for future projects.
- Marc Capistrant: 109 units by right can be built. This plan is just increasing the entitlement value to JBG Smith. They don't even have to build. Watch out for words like "could" forward looking statements. Basically, JBG can outsell at a big profit and not even do anything. [RESPONSE](#): That statement is inaccurate. Maximum densities permitted as “by-right” for this site, using the existing RA6-15 district, essentially represent the built condition between the three current buildings. This collectively adds up to approximately 46 units per acre across the entire site.
- Charles Lord: Community benefits? Which one...the developers? [RESPONSE](#): Difficult to interpret if this is really a question. The Sector Plan discusses expectations for each site with respect to community benefits in exchange for access to new density.

- Marc Capistrant: 30 years of construction what is the environmental impact of that? Just build a factory for 30 years. Was an environment impact study done on that? [RESPONSE](#): In general, new development replaces aging infrastructure and utilities, removes invasive species, increases tree canopy, and must comply with more stricter building code, fire code, and Chesapeake Bay Ordinance requirements (when compared to existing/older buildings). Draft Sector Plan also requires projects to meet LEED Gold standards for sustainability, create publicly accessible parks/plazas, increase vegetation, and deliver Committed Affordable Units on site. Staff considers these significant improvements to the environment (both social and physical).
- Charles Lord: How is packing them in going to benefit adjacent properties? [RESPONSE](#): Difficult to answer without first clearly understanding what is meant by “them” in this question.
- Alla Kamins: The Arlington Tree Canopy Fund already has more money for trees than places to plant them because of what developers have done to Arlington. It is not possible to plant a canopy tree on a rooftop or a terrace - how will you exactly measure the tree canopy coverage? [RESPONSE](#): Tree canopy is generally anticipated to be met at the grade level (within private property and surrounding public realm). Upper story terraces and rooftops would more likely deliver additional vegetation and shrubs, though small tree species can also be supported there.
- Jane Siegel: Re the additional 5 or more park/plaza acres, does this include the park area in Pen Place?? [RESPONSE](#): It does not. The exhibits depicting these areas intentionally did not label the PenPlace site since the public park on that block was first called for in 2013 (already planned).
- Alla Kamins: Hard to believe all of this was discussed and agreed to during community conversations? Please spell out if any changes were made due to public engagement. [RESPONSE](#): Staff has repeatedly discussed the overall public process that began in the summer of 2020 and also highlighted its collaboration with the Focus Group which was comprised of many stakeholder representatives. Building blocks of the Draft Sector Plan were carefully crafted, reviewed, and continued to evolve during the 16-month process which represents the totality of “public engagement” – therefore, it would be difficult to list **all** of the adjustments this document has gone through over such a long period of time. Staff’s earlier response captures some more recent changes following feedback received in October/November that is currently represented in the 3rd version of the Draft Sector Plan.
- J B: How is the drastically increased population density a benefit?? [RESPONSE](#): Locating density near a Metro Station or locations with well-established transit infrastructure is the cornerstone of Transit Oriented Development – a core component of smart growth which has shaped much of Arlington’s key corridors.
- B Doll: we are taxed on the view from the representative. what adjustment is planned for this tax calculation? [RESPONSE](#): That question should be directed to the appropriate County agency handling residential tax assessments.
- Marc Capistrant: We have to push the county board to get rid of this plan and stick to the 2013 approved plan. [RESPONSE](#): The County Board provided a response to this at their recent hearing on 12/11.
- Godmund S. (Ridge House): Has he planning committee considered a complete redevelopment of the River House property to include redeveloping the existing buildings, which have very large

units which do not fit into contemporary density for market rate units? That way we could achieve density goals without having high rise buildings even bigger than current River House. [RESPONSE](#): Informed by feedback from the current RiverHouse owner (JBG Smith), the Sector Plan assumes the existing three buildings are to remain. Many of the units in these structures represent Market Rate Affordable Units (MARKs) which are considered a valuable contribution to Pentagon City's overall housing stock.

- Lauren Cassidy: I would also like to know how the county plans to adjust tax assessments based on the decreased sight lines. does the county have a plan for this? [RESPONSE](#). See earlier response regarding contacting the appropriate County agency handling tax assessments.
- Valerie Johnson: What is the anticipated impact of the increased density on our local trails (Mt. Vernon & W&OD)? Has there been any coordination with Natl Park Svc to plan for increased use by tens of thousands more people? [RESPONSE](#): The Sector Plan discusses this as it contemplates delivering new trails within the study area and considers subsequent processes to expand connectivity within the greater 22202 area. Further guidance regarding regional trails can be found in the Public Spaces Master Plan which already considers Arlington County's growth corridors such as Richmond Highway, of which Pentagon City is a part of.
- Marc Capistrant: Construction workers drive they will be parking in our neighborhood. They already are in the AM for the Amazon site. I'm worried about now. Not 30 years in the future. [RESPONSE](#): First, it would be helpful to clarify whether they were using publicly accessible on-street parking spaces and which job site they were accessing. Site Plans are required to obtain approval of a Construction Worker Parking Plan (something that has already occurred for Metropolitan Park) which is then enforced throughout the construction period. If it can be documented such parking is occurring in areas not previously defined, we can flag that to the zoning inspector assigned to this development.
- Charles Lord: More crowds, dust, dirt stink from garbage, noise all hours of the day and night....just like Queens. [RESPONSE](#): On the one hand, as a NYC native, I must object to that comparison. But since I spent most of my time in Brooklyn, I guess I'm willing to let this one go.
- Tina G (Pentagon Ridge): Yes, I like the idea of safer crosswalks and a new elementary school - but not at the expense of looking out my window at a concrete wall. [RESPONSE](#): The Draft Sector Plan does not consider blank concrete walls as acceptable building facades. It calls for significant fenestration, tower sculpting, biophilic design elements, interesting architecture, use of different building materials, and other urban design principles.
- Kateri Garcia: Will these meetings be public? [RESPONSE](#): Presentation slides depicting our schedule reflected meetings which were all publicly accessible and included public testimony. Several additional briefings are scheduled for late January and early February on this study.
- Jessica Bloomfield: we live directly abutting river house and are very happy with the plan at a macro level. We are really excited about the enhancements to aurora highlands. Can you share what the park master plan is? what is planned? What needs to happen to make this happen? How can the civic association help this cause? [RESPONSE](#): The Draft Sector Plan's Implementation Matrix talks about future planning processes that will need to follow this study. The VHP park master planning effort is identified as a "short-term" (1-3 years) action item –

listed as #17 in the matrix. Once the Sector Plan is adopted, the recommendations will be able to inform next year's 10-year Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) process which will begin in the spring. Once the CIP is approved next summer, further clarity regarding timing and quantity of potential funding will become available.

- Marc Capistrant: Question, what about respect for zoning laws and the intent of the law. What considerations were taken there? Zoning law was adopted. [RESPONSE](#): Zoning laws are always followed and were utilized in the development of this Plan. Please keep in mind that the Zoning Ordinance is a living document which undergoes frequent changes to address an array of issues.
- Valerie Johnson: For River House specifically, were there any less dense / highly innovative solutions considered like the Geos community in Colorado? <https://discovergeos.com/>
[RESPONSE](#): The Draft Sector Plan does not preclude such solutions from being proposed. It merely sets minimum standards for community benefits while ensuring certain densities are not exceeded. Beyond the guidance found in the Plan, property owners would need to consider the costs effectiveness of such investments to better understand the feasibility of achieving some of the solutions found in the example you referenced. The Draft Sector Plan frequently encourages developers to pursue innovative strategies for sustainability and permits less dense building types (such as townhomes) on the southern end of the RiverHouse property.
- Rosamunda Ozgo: Questions re. River House Redevelopment:
Thank you for your presentation.
 - ⊖ 1. The community comments I have seen have overwhelmingly focused on density as a huge negative. How is it that you can state "the county does not look at density as a negative". Your presentation does not seem to take into account the community comments you say that want to incorporate. Please clarify. [RESPONSE](#). Please see my earlier comments regarding positive aspects of new development.
 - ⊖ 2. My takeaway from this presentation and similar ones in the past few months is that the County has already made up their mind about expanding development in River House. How is that fair to residents who took the time and energy to voice their opinion which, as stated above, overwhelmingly oppose the proposed plan? [RESPONSE](#): The discussion of whether or not to include the RiverHouse property in this studd took place in 2019 and was subsequently reinforced by the Planning Commission and County Board. Most recently, the County Board spoke to this issue at their 12/11 hearing.
- Miriam Gennari: Is it correct that both River House tennis courses will be gone? Our park tennis course is pretty packed, is there a plan for future tennis courts in 22202? [RESPONSE](#): Those decisions will be solely up to the owner (JBG Smith) as they consider the many ways in which they can implement the Sector Plan for this large property. The Plan intentionally provides plenty of flexibility for sites to coordinate existing amenities with future improvements as they accommodate all of their tenants. In other words, there is nothing in the Plan that specifically indicates the tennis courts need to be removed. Visuals which capture conceptual modeling in our Plan present just one way in which various sites could redevelop – simply to better illustrate potential outcomes (they are not intended to be regulatory). Staff recognizes the RiverHouse may involve multiple phases and unique construction sequencing to ensure it balances the maintenance of existing amenities with strategic additions of new site improvements.

- J B: By how many people will our neighborhood grow under your plan? In absolute and relative terms? RESPONSE: The Sector Plan presents a forecasted growth model that assumes a certain level of residential use to represent future redevelopment. Per the model, long-term, full build out of the study area could introduce just over 6,000 units over the coming decades.
- C R: Isn't it correct that the River House property is already at its current zoned capacity? RESPONSE: Yes. As noted in an earlier response, the historical zoning maximums generally match the total density between the existing three RiverHouse buildings.
- Rosamunda Ozgo: What is the current vacancy rate in each River House building (River House I,II,III)? RESPONSE: I do not have that figure but understand it to be low. That is a question more appropriate for the owner who would have accurate and current vacancy data.
- Fred Zimmerman: What is the county specifically going to do to mitigate the increased traffic caused by all this new density? RESPONSE: The transportation section of the Plan discusses this in great detail. I encourage everyone to read its emphasis on multi-modal improvements that make driving unnecessary for those choosing to reside in future new buildings. Site Plan projects will be restricted to limit their single occupancy vehicle mode share to represent only 25% of their overall trips. There are also several planned improvements to the bike network and further analysis for improving Hayes Street which already accommodates many different modes of travel today. The area will also benefit from ongoing work to expand the Transitway bus system, providing faster, reliable, and more convenient connections to Crystal City, and ultimately Columbia Pike. The addition of a second elevator to the Pentagon City Metro station at 12th Street will also help distribute some of the transit ridership at that intersection.
- Alla Kamins: Where can we see future county board meetings schedule? RESPONSE: Here is their main website: http://arlington.granicus.com/ViewPublisher.php?view_id=2
- Jim Webster: It's at <https://www.arlingtonva.us/Government/County-Board>
- Marc Capistrant: How can we submit comments online to these public meeting if we can't attend every meeting. That would be great to know. RESPONSE: Most Commission and County Board hearings allow you to complete everything online (even in advance of the meeting). You can submit comments, sign up to speak, or simply watch online, through Microsoft Teams, or on Public Access TV.
- Jim Webster: Inasmuch as the pandemic limited citizen attendance and involvement in public meetings. should not the County Board extend the process another year and provide in-person meetings for public comment? RESPONSE: On the contrary, attendance at most public meetings for this study has actually been higher than when similar meetings were conducted in person (pre-pandemic). Through dozens of meetings held by staff and our consultants, attendance generally averaged between 85-100 people. Larger kick-off events involved well over 120 in attendance. Civic Association newsletters, communication from the National Landing BID, and County's own electronic messaging further reinforced awareness throughout this entire process.
- Rosamunda Ozgo: Mr Mattauszek, with all due respect, as a real estate agent licensed in NVA for 30+ years, your comment that the views do not impact the property value is simply not true at all. If the high rises you mention are erected and if they block views, property values will be negatively affected, not just the property value of the units whose views are directly blocked

but as a snowball effect the property values for all units in those buildings and neighboring buildings. That is how the real estate market works nationwide, not just in 22202. Please pass that along the Board. It would be a misnomer for the County to approve this plan believing it will raise the property values because there will be more amenities in the neighborhood.

RESPONSE: The County Board was able to weigh in on the inclusion of RiverHouse in our plan and their role in accommodating future growth in this area as part of the 12/11 hearing.

- C R: As one commenter noted, given that the pandemic has limited and continues to limit citizen attendance and involvement in public meetings, would it be possible for the County Board to extend the process another year to allow for more community engagement? RESPONSE: See my earlier message regarding public engagement during the pandemic. Staff stands behind what will be an 18-month process when the County Board considers this in February. The planning effort set the stage for meaningful consensus building which involved thoughtful deliberations of a diverse Focus Group representing a wide array of interests. Recommendations in this Plan also reflect recent work completed by Livability 22202 and recent guidance from the County Board and the Planning Commission. I realize change associated with the RiverHouse property is a sensitive topic and has implications for many given the pure scale of that property. However, with all due respect, simply disagreeing with some outcomes of the study does not automatically mean the process was flawed or intentionally abbreviated to meet any preconceived outcomes.
- David Rogers: Kateri please understand the Representative, Ridge House, Pentagon Ridge and homes on Arlington Ridge Rd. have always been against any change of the zoning on the Ridge House property. That is our boundary and redline. We need your help in communicating this to the Arlington County board and Matt please!!! We do not have any problems with any of the other proposals within “National Landing”. Thank you for your time!:) RESPONSE: Staff and the County Board heard this feedback loud and clear and have provided their thoughts as part of the recent 12/11 hearing when the Request to Advertise recommendation was considered.

Since these were noted several times in our responses above, the following is intended to provide some quick references to material associated with the Draft Sector Plan:

- Video from December 11, 2021 County Board hearing:
http://arlington.granicus.com/MediaPlayer.php?view_id=2&clip_id=4002
- Draft Pentagon City Sector Plan (version 3):
<https://www.arlingtonva.us/files/sharedassets/public/projects/documents/pentagon-city-planning-study/pc-plan-draft-3-nov23-2021.pdf>
- Comments and feedback on the current draft may be submitted by December 31, 2021 via email to mmattauszek@arlingtonva.us