



November 8, 2021

Subject: ARCA Priorities, Pentagon City Plan Density Mitigation and Community Benefits

Dear County Staff,

The Arlington Ridge Civic Association (ARCA) previously submitted comments from members to the County staff, and is formally submitting the following comments from the ARCA Board after follow-up engagements with staff.

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. 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. 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.

Transportation:

- 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.

- 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.
- 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.

Public Facilities and Services:

- 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.
- 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.
- 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.



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