

ARLINGTON RIDGE CIVIC ASSOCIATION:

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. The Arlington Ridge Civic Association (ARCA) has been a part of the Pentagon City Planning process since it began and is an active member in all Livability22202 efforts. We have welcomed engagements with County staff on the visioning of Pentagon City. While we were pleased to see some of our concerns addressed in the final draft of the Pentagon City Plan, we still have a number of concerns that we believe should be addressed before the plan is approved by the County Board.
5. As we stated previously, the ARCA Board understands the value of development to the County and its citizens. We also believe it is critical that development be paired with crucial public services and facilities, green/open space, and transportation infrastructure improvements that will equate to a high quality of life for local citizens. The plan should include clear performance metrics and risk mitigation plans should the assumptions regarding proposed density fail to address the heightened demand for public services and infrastructure.
6. ARCA solicited feedback on the Pentagon City Plan with our membership via one-on-one discussions, public meetings, and an online survey (see Appendix A). The concerns of our membership were broad, with many in opposition to any increases in density and others welcoming

the increase in affordable housing with immediate access to public transportation. Across the membership there were consistent desires for improvements in public facilities, green/open space, and transportation. The comments below reflect the common concerns and desires of the ARCA Board and our membership at large.

7. Transportation:

- a. Concerns about multi-modal transportation represented a significant number of comments received by ARCA across all engagements. Some of the consistent issues cited were present-day traffic bottlenecks and diversion through local streets, pedestrian/ bike safety on streets and at PUDO locations, and the need for multi-modal mobility for the elderly and disabled. ARCA does not believe these concerns were adequately address in the latest draft of the Plan.
- b. While Arlington County and its partners conduct ongoing monitoring and management of traffic, there is not a clearly identified requirement in the Implementation Matrix. A baseline study of traffic flow into and through Pentagon City and neighboring areas to identify bottlenecks and areas of safety concern should be conducted with strategies to resolve issues in the short-term. Periodic status updates should be produced to confirm trends and identify potential issues. Transportation monitoring should not be conducted at the individual site level, but instead as part of a more comprehensive plan that evaluates the system as a whole. Some specific areas concern for short-term assessment are:
 - Intersections of Arlington Ridge/23rd St, Army Navy Drive/26th Rd, Eads/23rd St, Joyce/15th St, and across Route 1
 - Residential streets connecting Arlington Ridge Road to Army Navy Drive
 - S Hays/12th pick-up drop off at Pentagon City Metro and Bus stations

OVERALL RESPONSE: Traffic analysis was conducted by a separate consultant team (RK&K) early in the Pentagon City Planning Study process and formed the baseline condition from which the rest of the plan evolved. Analysis is available for public review. While the Plan acknowledges a number of factors and objectives, several additional steps are noted in the implementation matrix and represent either ongoing monitoring efforts or subsequent analysis in the near-term.

- c. Coordination between Arlington County and VDOT on roadway improvements spanning the entire region should be included as a short-term action in the Implementation Matrix. Coordination is required in order to effectively identify existing areas of concern and potential improvements. These transportation concerns need to be addressed before density increases and changes are considered for Route 1. According to VDOT, 60% of Route 1 traffic is passing through the area and proposed plans to bring Route 1 to grade are shown to significantly impact local traffic. **RESPONSE:** Coordination between the two agencies has taken place and continues on a regular basis. Phase 2 of VDOT's Route 1 analysis will incorporate the recommendations found in the Sector Plan once it is adopted by the County Board. The resulting analysis will address future traffic conditions further and inform the feasibility or appropriateness of continuing to consider potential changes along Route 1.

- d. The Plan notes that the transportation network impacts of increased density in residential, commercial, and retail establishments will require an evolution in the multi-modal transportation network in order to effectively serve existing and future community members. This is addressed within the transportation section of the plan, however the recommendations in the Implementation Matrix fall short of identifying a means to achieve this evolution. Transportation modeling needs to be supplemented with analysis of all transportation modes for a full picture of what travel behavior will change and what will remain the same. Metrics for success should be developed with risk-mitigation plans and strategies for resolution - to include an additional entrance to the Pentagon City Metro Station, traffic cameras, additional stop signs, speed bumps or other traffic calming devices, and/or temporary cessation of future growth. **RESPONSE:** It is not practical from a planning or engineering standpoint for Sector Plans at this level of detail to design streets in the manner being requested. We do not support temporary cessations of future growth as they have significant negative consequences on the environment, affordability, and equity. An item in the implementation matrix to identify future capital projects seems more reasonable.
- e. ARCA continues to be concerned about the pedestrian safety, mobility degradation, and traffic congestion implications that multiple aspects of the plan will have on the area surrounding the entrance to the Pentagon City metro station. The plan acknowledges and highlights the unresolved safety and mobility concerns including the clustering of many users and multiple modes of travel directly at this location, creating conflicts and safety concerns. It also identifies the area as a High Injury Network Corridor and the Army Navy Drive and S Hayes Street intersection as a known "Bicycle Hot Spot". The plan presently proposes multiple changes that will exacerbate the problem:
- By increasing transit ridership dramatically with the added density
 - Upgrades 12th Street to an arterial and creates a transit-way, funneling more traffic and riders into a congested area
 - Routes the Green Ribbon bike and pedestrian corridor directly through the Metro Entrance area
 - Proposes a new Pentagon City Center Bus bay project that will increase pedestrian connections to the Pentagon City Metro station

OVERALL RESPONSE: These issues are proposed for further study via the follow-up Hayes Street study. It is impossible to address traffic congestion, mobility degradation, and pedestrian safety without clustering high density trips around major transit anchors, removing as many vehicle trips as possible using Transit Oriented Development (TOD), and providing as direct-as-possible access to the transit anchors for multimodal trips. We acknowledge that the Hayes/12th intersection area requires further study, but failing to act in the ways proposed will exacerbate the cited problems more than acting as proposed.

- f. The plan should outline specific mitigation measures to maintain mobility connections to the metro, alleviate pickup and drop-off congestion, and ensure the safety of increased bike and pedestrian traffic. **RESPONSE:** The plan includes many such measures already. Further measures will likely be proposed in the follow-up Hayes Street study.

8. Public Facilities

- a. ARCA members consider the Aurora Hills Library/Community Center a hub of the community and feel strongly that increased density without an expansion of the facilities and services will lead to decreased access for all community members. ARCA is pleased with the addition of a Public Facilities section (1.6) in the Pentagon City Plan and the identification of a Virginia Highlands Park (VHP) Master Plan as a short-term action in the Implementation Matrix. We believe this is vital to drive the transformation of the district to meet pressing community needs. The community need for public facilities, like libraries, community centers, and schools should be more clearly articulated within section 1.6. While the timing of a new school, based on APS enrollment projections and new density to the area, is unknown, it is clear that local libraries, community centers, and schools are a critical element of thriving communities. Furthermore, metrics for “equity,” within the Vision and Guiding Principles section, should include measurable access to public facilities **RESPONSE:** The updated Sector Plan reflects an additional metric referencing access to public facilities under the Equity planning principle. The Plan already includes language encouraging opportunistic partnerships with near-term developments where the library or community center space could be introduced within the ground story of mixed-use projects – and therefore qualifying as a community benefit that meets the Plan goals. However, should those efforts prove unsuccessful, the Implementation Matrix speaks further to subsequent steps/processes and their timing associated with addressing the need for adequate community facilities in this area.
- 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 (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 are also quantified for private properties on page 57 and 59. Revised version of the Plan also includes new language for the RiverHouse property which establishes a 60-foot zone along the western edge and a 40-foot zone along the southern end where existing tree canopy is to be preserved. Other items mentioned in this comment are already noted in other County policies such as the Public Spaces Master Plan which anticipates growth along the Richmond Highway corridor.
- c. Possible reconfigurations that would allow for the siting of a school at the existing Library/Community Center site should be included into section 1.6, similar to options identified for the Fire Department. Some possible options are:
 - The inclusion of a Library/Community Center within a development planned to occur in the next 1-3 years as a community benefit, and the conversion of the existing site to a school.

- If efforts to include a Library/Community Center as a community benefit in the next 1-3 years prove unsuccessful, the county would consider the siting of a Library/ Community Center and school in the VHP master planning effort, either at different locations or co-located within the same facility. The language should not presuppose a solution for the location of facilities, as this would fall under the purview of the master plan action.

OVERALL RESPONSE. Revised section 1.6 and the implementation matrix (item #17) speak clearly to this issue. The Sector Plan acknowledges the need for these facilities to be expanded but stops short of confirming exactly where they will belong as that can only occur through a separate process. The current language was carefully reviewed by APS and DPR staff and represents an acceptable compromise to how our upcoming steps may inform long-term conditions (knowing that APS does not immediately need the elementary school to open).

- The language of the action plan in the Implementation Matrix should not presuppose solutions, and should instead impose the requirement to determine the feasibility of locations for the Elementary School and Library/Community center within the larger VHP master planning effort. Additionally, the possible movement of Joyce street to expand VHP should also be addressed within the master plan, in order to determine if it is an effective use of resources or if they would be better used to acquire additional open space or for other improvements within VHP. **RESPONSE:** While the exact location/configuration of future public facilities will be subject to the master planning effort, the expansion of the VHP onto the RiverHouse property represents one of the more critical recommendations in the Sector Plan. A contiguous expansion of an existing park of this size represents an incredibly rare opportunity necessary to ensure this park can continue to accommodate the many needs of a growing population and help resolve a number of competing priorities. Expanding contiguous park areas is recommended in the Public Spaces Master Plan and would provide much needed flexibility and design opportunities for the future master planning effort. Staff has not seen any evidence to suggest the recommendation to expand VHP by realigning S. Joyce Street represents an “ineffective use of resources”
- When the Plan is adopted, ARCA will actively engage in next year’s 10-year Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) discussions as these recommendations are considered in the context of other County priorities.

9. Green/Open Space:

- ARCA members overwhelmingly support the need for green/open spaces, and feel as though the final draft remains vague with regard to this community priority. Many of ARCA’s members occupy condominiums and access to green/open space is indispensable for their quality of life. With the expected increases in density, the Plan should aim for a minimum of 8 acres of new community open space in order to maintain existing open space access per capita. **RESPONSE:** If the anticipated area achieved through the green ribbon segments is combined with the anticipated public parks/plazas, that referenced goal is exceeded in the Sector Plan. Public access and improved/activated spaces qualify as new community open spaces (when compared to existing private ownership and plain lawn conditions which may be present in a few locations).

- b. The RiverHouse property currently exceeds the 20% Arlington Urban Forest Plan standard, and members believe that increasing the percentage of tree canopy required for future development on the site would allow for the creation of a “green belt” buffer zone between the existing neighborhoods and new development. Additionally, the preservation of existing mature tree canopy should be encouraged, where possible, in the body and implementation matrix. **RESPONSE:** Updated Sector Plan will reflect the common desire to preserve the existing tree canopy along the western and southern edges of the RiverHouse property. This was always envisioned but additional language on our exhibits can ensure this desire is more explicit and will inform the limits of any new development on this property (which generally utilizes existing surface parking lots or pathways). This is noted by a 60-foot zone along the western edge and a 40-foot zone along the southern edge of the site (to be preserved).
- c. ARCA continues to support the bike and pedestrian mobility opportunities provided by the green ribbon, but does not believe they should be considered green/open space. Lastly, biophilic design should not replace the need for green space or open space. **RESPONSE:** Some of this may fall under the umbrella of semantics as we frequently recognize the need to clearly define what the County’s definition of a public space may be (as opposed to park land or other categories). The green ribbon network certainly contributes to public spaces but would not be considered a public park.