

**Park and Recreation Commission**  
2100 Clarendon Boulevard, Suite 414  
Arlington, Virginia 22201

June 7, 2021

Honorable Matt de Ferranti  
Chair, Arlington County Board  
2100 Clarendon Blvd., Suite 300  
Arlington, VA 22201

RE: Clarendon Crossing Site Plan Amendment

Dear Chair de Ferranti,

The Park and Recreation Commission has followed the proposed renovation of Clarendon Market Common since the initial plan was presented to PRC in October 2018. There were many concerns expressed by commissioners with that original design, including loss of overall park space to commercial structures, loss of trees, increased hardscape, and a lowered level of natural, biophilic space. At the April meeting this spring, a revised proposal was presented to PRC. Overall, members found this new plan to be much more in keeping with the park concept as conceived when this common space was originally approved as part of the retail complex, and generally had a more positive reaction to the new concept.

In particular, the expansion of plaza space, retention of more original trees, and the flexible use possibilities for the end portion of the loop—all achieved by eliminating the driving lanes and traffic entirely, is a beneficial change for visitors, customers and retailers alike. With the vehicular turn-around in alignment with the parking garage entrance, the plan made particular efforts to ensure visibility and physical separation of pedestrians from traffic. While this priority was seen as important by commissioners, some commented that the colors and design for these features was too much, and potentially distracting or confusing. In final plans, these features were modified to provide less visual variety and enhance visual clarity for the crosswalk areas.

Overall, retention of existing tree canopy and some enhancements of the number of trees was applauded by commissioners, as well as the design of the open green area in the center spine of the common area, which includes seating and play equipment for children. Some commissioners opined that the use of synthetic grass rather than natural turf in portions of this central area was unfortunate. However, most agreed that with the experience already gained by Regency, this choice is a practical one for year round use. Durable live lawn areas have already been proven difficult to maintain while also emphasizing the high priority of canopy trees along both sides of the area.

Finally, in the new proposal the current water feature was to be retained but modified, although the exact design for that feature had not been fully worked out at the time of the PRC presentation. With commissioner comment and additional off-line consultation, the applicant has committed to a design that is more truly natural in character, with boulders and planted areas to provide an appearance and experience that sets a biophilic tone for this entrance to the park.

PRC acknowledges that creating public spaces can provide challenges when those spaces are intended to serve multiple purposes. However, such situations can also offer opportunity for achieving multiple goals successfully when those are all represented in the design concept. The blended plan offered by Regency combines opportunity and flexibility for retail variety, public event options, active park play areas for children, and relaxing casual space for all, under an umbrella of biophilic design that helps achieve and maintain a balanced approach to these goals.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "William W. Ross". The signature is written in a cursive style with a small flourish at the end.

William Ross  
Chair – Park and Recreation Commission

cc: Members, Arlington County Board  
Mark Schwartz, Arlington County Manager  
Jane Rudolph, Director, Department of Parks and Recreation