

November 15, 2021

James Lantelme
Chairman
Arlington County Planning Commission

James Schroll
Chairman
Long Range Planning Committee

(via e-mail)

I am writing on behalf of the Clarendon-Courthouse Civic Association (CCCA) regarding the Clarendon Sector Plan update led by the Planning Commission and Long-Range Planning Committee (LRPC).

We are in full support of the points raised by the Ashton Heights Civic Association in their letter of October 27, 2021.

To emphasize and expand on some of the points mentioned by the AHCA:

- Preservation of the proposed recreation and open space in the immediate vicinity of 10th Street between Hudson and Irving Street is critical to our community. This has been a topic of interest for the CCCA throughout the planning process. We agree that there are insufficient recreation facilities within a 5-minute walk of the Clarendon metro station. The Ashton heights letter offers numerous specifics and ideas that we agree would be good to pursue.
- The County has at least three points of leverage to obtain better recreation and open space options on this block:
 - The County itself owns a considerable portion of this block
 - Existing and proposed policies would allow exceptional bonus density for buildings constructed on the Wells Fargo site that are appropriately targeted at investment in recreation and open space.
 - The Verizon switching station is not a historic resource or pedestrian amenity, but the County nonetheless seems to be interested in maintaining high zoning value on that parcel. If the density is transferred away from the site, we may be stuck with an

undesirable building even after the technology requiring it is out of date. Therefore, the County should seek to disallow a density transfer, or condition any density transfer off of this site to obtain appropriate community benefits.

- The CCCA has voted to support maintaining most of the step backs contained in the current Sector Plan. Please see our previous letter <http://www.clarendoncourthouseva.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/CCCA-Letter-Re-Clarendon-Sector-Plan-Update-2-20210424.pdf> on this subject, dated April 24, 2021. The pedestrian scale of Clarendon has been a key component of our neighborhood's desirability as a place to live, work and play. The existing plan has allowed the construction of tens of thousands of square feet of affordable housing, market rate housing, office and retail even with step-backs.
- We have not previously discussed the replacement of the extensive paid public visitor parking on Fairfax Drive between Clarendon Circle and Kirkwood specifically. But note that the CCCA has long agreed with planning policies indicating that maintaining adequate visitor parking is essential to the vibrancy of our neighborhood. We note that the County's plan for the surface parking lot at Courthouse is to replace that parking with underground public visitor parking, and it would be consistent to adopt that policy in Western Clarendon as well. Limiting visitor parking can result in additional traffic on residential side streets; the CCCA has seen pedestrian near misses throughout Clarendon over the course of the pandemic. We support efforts to increase pedestrian accessibility and safety throughout the area.

We, the residents of the CCCA, have intentionally chosen to live in and near an "urban village" that dramatically exceeds the density of most neighborhoods in Arlington and the region. The current Sector Plan has guided the construction of many tens of thousands of square feet of new development. Indeed, the density of the CCCA already exceeds the density of most neighborhoods anywhere on the East Coast outside the New York City area. We value the diversity and vibrancy these choices provide us.

However, part of the success of Clarendon has been thoughtful planning efforts that ensure historic preservation, a minimum mix of uses, building envelope restrictions, and strict requirements for community benefit contributions. We are

grateful that these controls have resulted in transit-oriented development that has not lost pedestrian scale (as some might believe has occurred around some other Arlington station areas). We believe it is essential that the Planning Commission and County Manager thoughtfully preserve the planning elements that have made Clarendon a success.

Sincerely,

David Cheek

President, CCCA