

Read Ahead:
ARCA/Arlington County Planning Coordinator Engagement
on Pentagon City Planning Study Draft #2

11/2/21

1. Overview from County on PCPS (*Matt Mattauszek*)
 - a. Current status of PCPS
 - b. Impressions of responses received to date
 - c. Sections of plan less likely to change versus those with more flexibility
 - d. Next steps

2. General comments/thoughts from Arlington Ridge Civic Association (ARCA) Members (*Kateri Garcia/ARCA Board*)
 - a. ARCA conducted a special members meeting on 10/27/21 to solicit thoughts on the PCPS. 48 members attended the meeting and provided verbal and written comments, and additional members followed-up via email.
 - b. ARCA members, in general, liked the appeal of greener and walkable elements, new elementary school, and improved transit/walkability to Crystal City— but felt these benefits should not come at the expense of access to public services and facilities, diversion of traffic through neighborhoods, increased congestion, and less security. We understand the value of change and that parking lots are not an effective use of land, but want to ensure the plan protects many of the enjoyable elements of Arlington Ridge and surrounding neighborhoods, to include, ability to walk and drive around the neighborhood and amenities in Pentagon City.
 - c. Some specific concerns:
 - i. Tripling of density, to 150 units/acre, at RiverHouse runs counter to the 2013 Arlington Ridge Neighborhood Conservation Plan (NCP). Preference would be to convert high-density areas to medium-density and consider existing parking lot as school, community center, or library. Request a "visible view volume" (VVV) and "obstructed view volume" (OBV), or "sky view factor"/heat value calculations before determining the maximum height - and would prefer a clear height cap at the development 6 stories.
 - ii. The Transportation Demand Management assumption for Pentagon City does not apply to ARCA members, who require vehicular traffic to commute in and out of ARCA and often to Pentagon and Crystal city due to the steep incline of the ridge. Additionally, traffic mitigation efforts in Pentagon City could increase traffic volume and speed in nearby neighborhoods.
 - a. ARCA understands the County's decision to not include possible changes to Route 1 in the study, but believes there needs to be mention of possible needs to reevaluate Pentagon city (and other county) transportation infrastructure if this happens to protect neighborhoods from diverted traffic.
 - iii. ARCA members are heavy users of public facilities and services, and are concerned that increased density without increases to facilities and services will lead to decreased access for all community members. Members 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. ARCA believes public facilities and services should be prioritized sooner, 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.
 - iv. Accessibility, for the disabled and elderly, should be a consistent focus across the plan. The plan describes that pedestrian standards will be in compliance with ADA,

however it is not clear if this applies to all public spaces and green ribbons. ARCA members were unsure if transit between Arlington Ridge and Pentagon City would be accessible by wheel chairs or bike. The word accessible was used frequently in the document with modifiers like “publicly,” “fully,” and “universally,” but the implication for the disabled and elderly was unclear.

- v. ARCA would like the plan to consider 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. 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 local trails - Mt. Vernon, W&OD, Four Mile, other National Park Service land.
- i. Members support the green ribbon and asked for the consideration of an extension between the Hume School and Virginia Highlands park. The plan discusses the value of public space, but members did not believe the green ribbons should be treated as entirely green spaces, when much of the space will be walking paths.

3. Discussion/Questions (*all*)

- How were the metrics to determine success generated? The ones for “equity” (pg. 11) do not describe access to public facilities, which would seem like a critical metric to ensure equity. For “transportation” (pg. 15) how will the ability to successfully complete public transit, walking, and biking trips across the area and to surrounding neighborhoods be measured?
- What is the basis for the density assumptions in the PCPS? Was there an economic assessment completed, and can it be shared and included in the study. How was it effected by the COVID environment.
- Why was an exception made to include RiverHouse in the study?
- How was the 2013 study incorporated?
- Legal scope of studies? Or by-laws that guide them.
- Would it be possible to assuage some of the height fears and cap the height of river house to 6 stories in the south? And also reduce a significant portion of the property to medium-density versus high density?
- How will the transportation study and the proposed density influence the transportation in the PCPS?
- There is discussion of considering the neighboring areas and ensuring the area as a considered as whole - would it be possible to make the actions more clear? I.e. If the traffic is diverted out of pentagon city to Arlington Ridge, what would be the associated mitigation efforts? Or at least could the plan mention the need for the consideration of mitigation efforts?
- How will ARCA community members still be able to engage with PC via car, since walking up the ridge is challenging?
- Would it be possible to add a section in the study to address public infrastructure? It could discuss the assumption to only considering county land, and alternatives that include community benefits delivered by developers. For example, alternative development options on RiverHouse like a school, community center, or library (as was the case in the Vornado plan)?
- Why is there only mention of an Elementary School, and not Middle and High School?
- Will there be an emphasis on community amenities (i.e. pools), not private amenities?
- Why move road around Grace Hopper?
- How will current retail vacancies effect new relate space determinations?
- Will there be parking be below grade in new developments?