

July 1, 2026

Honorable Matt de Ferranti, Chair  
Arlington County Board  
Ellen M. Bozman Government Center  
2100 Clarendon Blvd, Suite 300  
Arlington, VA 22201

RE: 1401 Wilson Boulevard

Dear Chair de Ferranti and board members,

The Climate Change, Energy and Environment Commission (C2E2) has reviewed the application for the **1401 Wilson Boulevard** project.

Based on the available information we have, we score this project's contribution to meeting Arlington County's Community Energy Plan (CEP) targets at **61 percent**, indicating the project falls somewhat short of what is necessary to meet the County's carbon neutrality and other sustainability goals. For context, a project will earn a score of 67% on the C2E2 SPRC Checklist if it "meets" each one of our criteria (although that score could also be earned by exceeding in some areas and falling short in others), indicating that the project is reasonably aligned with the County's sustainability goals. A score above the 67% threshold indicates a project that is making carbon neutrality a core design principle and helping to lead the way for other developers.

The success of Arlington's goals for carbon neutrality depends, in large measure, on the County's resolve in ensuring that all buildings are at least zero carbon-ready. In practical terms, that means the following for every new and renovated building: make it highly efficient in the use of resources; make it fully electrified; make the electricity source(s) renewable; and minimize its total carbon footprint (both embodied and operational carbon) through specification of low carbon materials, adaptive reuse wherever possible, responsible management of construction debris, and the use of highly efficient systems and operating procedures.

The Applicant's design team was very cooperative during the SPRC Review process, meeting separately with a C2E2 representative to answer questions about sustainable design strategies, and providing a multi-page summary of the sustainability strategies

## Commission Members

Cindy Lewin, Chair  
Rob Sandoli, Vice Chair  
Alex Rough  
David Friedman  
Doug Snoeyenbos  
Elizabeth Whitney  
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Malcolm Gregory  
Scott Brideau  
Trevor Montano  
Student Representative: Helen Hass

currently being considered for the project along with their current LEED v4 Scorecard. We encourage the Board and staff to expect a similar level of cooperation and open dialogue from every future applicant to the SPRC process.

**Green Building Certification and Lifecycle Carbon Reduction:** The Wilson Boulevard project is targeting *LEED Gold* certification under the LEED v4 for Multi-family Midrise track, taking advantage of the overlap in transition to LEED v5.0, which is a more rigorous certification. The LEED scorecard does not indicate the Applicant is considering additional points - though design strategies still under consideration could significantly improve their current score, specifically through energy optimization. While the Applicant is planning to divert at least 75 percent of waste from landfill to reuse or recycling, there is no indication that they are considering other steps to reduce the embodied carbon by incorporating low-carbon and environmentally sustainable materials.

**Energy and Water Efficiency:** The Applicant is committing to an Energy Star score of at least 75 and to reducing energy use by at least 20 percent over the ASHRAE baseline. Their Sustainability Strategies summary indicates consideration of other design options that could significantly improve overall energy performance. Per the LEED scorecard, there are 17 additional credits available under Annual Energy Use reduction. We urge the Applicant to pursue design options that would improve the overall energy efficiency and eliminate fossil fuel use.

Similarly, there is room for improvement regarding water efficiency. Per the LEED Scorecard, there are 5 additional credits available under Total Water Use, and/or 6 credits available under Indoor Water Use.

**Electrification of Systems:** The Applicant indicates a commitment to minimizing the project's operational carbon emissions. For the non-grocery retail spaces, all-electric air-cooled Drycooler systems will be used. Design of the grocery space will be done separately by the grocery tenant, and is assumed to be natural gas-based. The residential units and amenity spaces will use a Variable Refrigerant Flow (VRF) system, providing all-electric heating and cooling. However, residential ventilation is currently provided by constant volume rooftop units with natural gas heating, but the Applicant is evaluating a heat pump DOAS with gas back up for extreme weather conditions. We strongly encourage the Applicant to move to this more efficient technology, with electric auxiliary heat rather than gas, to ensure that the building can operate with zero carbon emissions once the electric grid has shifted to renewable energy sources.

**Electric Vehicle Charging:** The Applicant is committing to providing 5 percent of parking spaces to have EV chargers and has designed the electrical service to accommodate up

to 20 percent of spaces to be EV ready. The C2E2 strongly recommends that all projects that come to the SPRC strive for 50% of parking spots to be EV ready (even if the grid capacity is currently insufficient). This will help meet future demand for a full transition to electric vehicles and avoid the need for much more expensive retrofitting later. The Applicant should consider 'smart charging' technology to maximize the number of vehicles that can be charged while reducing demands on the electrical capacity available at site.

**Stormwater Management and Biophilia:** We commend the Applicant for its approach to stormwater management design. The building site design has decreased the total impervious area and increased total green space. As well, they have included green roofs, bioretention areas and underground detention vaults to reduce site run-off and volume and rate. Reductions in these calculations have been achieved for 1-, 2-, and 10-year storms according to preliminary calculations provided. We urge the Applicant to maintain or improve on these results as the design progresses.

Regarding landscape design and biophilic strategies, the project intends a diverse selection of streetscape canopy trees, and the use of native and adaptive plant species. Additional strategies include terraces, overlooks, planters and bioretention facilities to help navigate the 40 feet of grade change through the site along the 18th St corridor. Overall, green roofs, green planting areas and tree canopy at ground level and level 3 terrace will minimize heat island effect and reduce temperatures. Several species of plantings will follow the recommendations that promote the Board's 2017 Monarch Pledge.

The exterior ground plane and street level facades address a level of biophilic design, however; amenity spaces and residential units present an opportunity to incorporate a high degree of biophilia through finish material choices. We urge the Applicant to consider finish palettes that utilize natural materials, colors and patterning to provide building occupants and visitors with a strong connection to nature.

**Conclusion:** Overall, we found the Applicant's cooperation and engagement on sustainable strategies for the project promising. However; there are multiple areas outlined above where more can be done to improve the overall score and performance of this project. While some of these strategies are currently under consideration by the Applicant, they are not guaranteed to be included in the final version of the project. The County Board and staff should expect developers to be clear on how their project advances the County's climate and energy goals during the review and approval process, and should

continue to strengthen the project-specific site condition process to ensure that commitments made by developers are well-documented and that staff can subsequently ensure they are met.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Cindy Lewin". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Cindy" being more prominent than the last name "Lewin".

Cindy Lewin, Chair  
C2E2

cc:   Nia Bagley, Chair, Planning Commission  
      Eric Berkey, SPRC Co-Chair  
      Cicely Whitfield Johnson, SPRC Co-Chair  
      Anthony Fusarelli, CPHD Director  
      Kevin Lam, CPHD Staff  
      Mason Kushnir, County Board Clerk