

June 8, 2023

Honorable Christian Dorsey  
Chair, Arlington County Board  
2100 Clarendon Blvd., Suite 300  
Arlington, VA 22201

RE: Parks and Recreation Commission Comments on the APS Career Center Project Use Permit

Dear Chair Dorsey,

On May 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2023, the Parks and Recreation Commission (PRC) heard a presentation from CPHD and APS Staff on the APS Career Center Project Use Permit. The commission provides the following comments to the board:

The project is centered in the Arlington Heights neighborhood, which is right in the middle of an already ecologically underserved area of our community. It is imperative that this project's goals include preserving and growing tree canopy in an already tree cleared neighborhood.

In the proposed plan, the south side of the project includes a large parking garage to accommodate the new public traffic that will visit the campus. The PRC encourages county staff to leverage the rooftop of that structure for a rooftop park that would add to the oxygenating plants on the site. The Lubber Run's rooftop garden is an excellent example of how we can creatively maximize public open green space and should be considered as a blueprint for this new development. We understand that currently, the top of the garage is an open-air parking floor and would like staff to modify that design to take full advantage of the projects potential to contribute positively to the public open green space in this area.

While the new and rebuilt schools on this property represent an educational improvement for the County and for Arlington Public Schools, we are concerned about the loss of park and field space, particularly in the context of the Public Space Master Plan which calls for the county-wide addition of 30 acres of parkland by 2029.

Because of this, we recommend that the Use Permit be modified so that the large footprint of the proposed parking garage is used as public parkland and is operated by the Parks and Recreation Department. Although the actual use does not need to be specified at this time, the rooftop should be designed and constructed in such a manner that it can physically support soil, turf, shrubbery and human use. (Later, such potential uses as pickleball, basketball, tennis, miniature soccer or simply walking paths or water-absorbing "green rooftop" can be analyzed and put before the public.)

An example of a recent successful and well-utilized rooftop park can be found on top of the Lubber Run Community Center. Looking to the future, we feel that it is imperative that the County consider a rooftop park on top of every new county-constructed building. Failing this, it will be difficult to reach the 30-acre addition called for within six years. Finally, the PRC would like to encourage increased participation by Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR) staff in APS project planning since facilities will continue to be shared among departments.

#### **Commission Members**

Shruti Kuppa  
Jill Barker  
Sarah Baryluk  
Nelson Dimpter  
Sergio Enriquez  
Dean Foster  
Colt Gregory  
Peter Harnik  
Gretchen Hickey  
Neal Hunter  
Mark Lincoln  
Adam Rasmussen  
Melissa Riggio  
Alex Sanders

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The PRC appreciates the board's attention to this issue and our contribution to the discussion around increasing the effectiveness of this project by considering the above comments. We look forward to participating in the SPRC through the Planning Commission once this project makes it to that part of the planning process as well.

Sincerely,

Shruti Kuppa



Chair – Park and Recreation Commission

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