ARLINGTON VIRGINIA

PARK AND RECREATION COMMISSION
Department of Parks and Recreation

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June 1, 2026

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

RE: Park and Recreation Commission – 4420 Fairfax Drive – The Spire Site Plan Development

Dear Chair de Ferranti,

The Park and Recreation Commission (PRC) respectfully provides these comments regarding the 4420 Fairfax Drive "The Spire" Site Plan Development is expected to be scheduled for a hearing at the County Board in July 2026. A PRC representative is a member of the Site Plan Review Committee (SPRC) for this project and attended meetings dated February 23 and April 23, 2026.

Commission Members

William Way, Chair
Gary Shinners, Vice Chair
Erika Allen
Andrew Damitio
Nelson Dimpter
David Earley
Sara Hwong
Jeff Loftus
Adam Rasmussen
Melissa Riggio
Carly Rogers
Alex Sanders
Richard Viola

This project proposal is to replace a five-story office building with a 22 story multifamily building with up to 302 apartments and 4,400 ground floor retail equivalent space. The project is a seven-minute walk from Ballston Wetlands Park.

Sustainability. The applicant is not participating in the Green Building Incentive Plan but does intend to incorporate certain elements of sustainability. The proposal to include bird friendly glass up to 36 feet is laudable, but given the extreme height of the building, and the proximity to the Ballston Wetlands Park, bird friendly glass up to five stories would be an improvement. The developer also stated an interest in bird friendly dark sky lighting, which would be a big help to migrating birds considering the height of the building.

Landscape and Open Space. This project is on a heat island, so the importance of trees and open space are especially important here. The County is still well below its target of having forty percent tree canopy cover, and planting trees on private sites such as this one are an important means to attain this objective. This project's proposed tree canopy is higher than the minimum of 10% but far below the 35% goal for a property of this type. Accordingly, if more trees and landscaping can be incorporated on the site, which would be ideal, but if not, PRC strongly recommends a community benefit in the form of a contribution to the Tree Canopy Equity Program.

All the tree and plant species are planned to be native plants, with an emphasis on pollinator plants to help biodiversity as well as improve biophilia. A plan for maintaining the landscaping will be important. The trees will need this special care given how densely developed the neighborhood is expected to become. A fifteen-year maintenance plan for these street trees should be included in the final site plan. A provision to install replacement trees, if planted trees die, should be a requirement in the site plan. Care should be taken to avoid designing street parking that encourages parkers to walk on the tree roots. Special grates that protect the tree roots should be used if this cannot be avoided.

The project developer has taken considerable pains to increase the green space to the extent possible on such a constrained property by adding trellises near the pool, and rooftop landscaping.

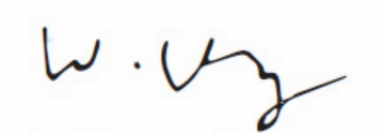
Recreation. The project proposal includes a fitness center and a swimming pool, but no dog park or playground. Given the significant increase in housing density created by the project, some contribution

toward park amenities in Arlington County parks should be considered so that the children expected to live here will have a place to play.

We appreciate the opportunity to provide our concerns to the County.

Sincerely,

William Way,



Chair – Park and Recreation Commission

cc: Members, Arlington County Board
Mark Schwartz, Arlington County Manager
Jane Rudolph, Director, Department of Parks and Recreation
Nia Bagley, Chair, Planning Commission