

CLIMATE CHANGE, ENERGY AND ENVIRONMENT COMMISSION

c/o Department of Environmental Services
2100 Clarendon Blvd., Suite 705
Arlington, VA 22201

July 2, 2025

Honorable Takis P. Karantonis, Chair
Arlington County Board
2100 Clarendon Blvd., Suite 300
Arlington, VA 22201

Re: 4201 31st Street S. - Shirlington House Project Site

Dear Chair Karantonis,

The Climate Change, Energy, and Environment Commission (C2E2) has reviewed the proposed Shirlington House redevelopment project at 2100 Clarendon Blvd. We appreciate that the Applicant is participating in the Green Building Incentive Policy (GBIP) and integrating much-needed affordable multifamily housing in a highly transit-accessible area. The proposed addition of a protected bike lane, ample bicycle parking, and native biophilic landscaping—alongside a commitment to replacing ornamental nonnative trees with climate-resilient canopy species—demonstrates thoughtful design with public benefit and ecological resilience in mind.

Overall, 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, as the Applicant has not yet made key decisions on electrification. However, the LEED scorecard and the Applicant's commitment to green design and sustainability suggest that this score may understate the project's overall sustainability.

We also recognize the Applicant's intention to pursue Arlington's GBIP. However, based on our review, it remains unclear how the project will fully meet or exceed GBIP baselines, particularly in the critical domains of building electrification, energy efficiency, and electric vehicle (EV) infrastructure. To align this development with the CEP and broader carbon neutrality targets, we urge the County Board to work with the Applicant to close these gaps.

Energy Efficiency

While the Applicant has indicated that energy efficiency improvements will be made, the methods and extent remain unspecified. The Applicant should strive to exceed the minimum energy performance thresholds necessary to qualify under GBIP and to more meaningfully contribute to the County's climate goals—by ensuring robust envelope design, efficient and electric HVAC and hot water systems, and other measures for reducing overall energy use and eliminating fossil gas onsite.

Electrification of Systems

Electrifying all systems—space heating, cooling, water heating, and cooking—is fundamental to a decarbonized building stock. We understand that final decisions on electrification have not yet been made, but the base design includes gas for the ventilation system. No information is provided for hot water heating although other projects we have reviewed often opt for inefficient in-unit resistance water heaters or gas-fired centralized systems. We strongly encourage the Applicant to commit to high-efficiency all-electric heat pump systems.

Electric Vehicle Infrastructure

The proposed EV infrastructure—seven EV charging stations and 19 EV-ready spaces—is inadequate given the size and scope of the project. To avoid costly retrofits and meet the accelerating demand for EVs, we recommend that at least 50% of all parking spaces be EV-ready with conduit installed, and that the project integrate smart charging solutions to optimize available electrical capacity.

This project represents a critical opportunity for Arlington to demonstrate climate leadership and set a replicable standard for equitable, zero-carbon development. The County's credibility in implementing its CEP will depend on ensuring that every new building—especially those seeking public incentive—is at least “zero-carbon ready.” We urge the County Board to continue working with the Applicant to maximize the project's climate performance and establish this redevelopment as a model for the region.

Sincerely,



Cindy Lewin
Chair, Climate Change, Energy and Environment Commission

Attachment: C2E2 SPRC Checklist

cc: Tenley Peterson, Chair, Planning Commission
Nia Bagley, Chair, Shirlington House SPRC and Planning Commission Member
Anthony Fusarelli, CPHD Director
Peter Schulz, CPHD Staff