



AURORA HIGHLANDS CIVIC ASSOCIATION

January 24, 2022

Arlington County Board
2100 Clarendon Boulevard
Arlington, VA 22201

Dear Members of the Arlington County Board,

The Pentagon City Sector Plan was a topic of intense interest at our recent meeting of the Aurora Highlands Civic Association. Of particular concern among many residents, and a majority of the attendees at the meeting, is the anticipated redevelopment of the River House property. This preliminary plan — for much denser housing than in the previous proposal shared with the community by Vornado in 2016 — has engendered much apprehension about the inadequate green space and the lack of planning for community facilities that would be necessary with the addition of so many residents.

As far back as 2017 JBG-Smith had reached out to both the Arlington Ridge and Aurora Highlands Civic Associations to discuss retooling the Vornado plans. For the last several years, however, there was silence on RiverHouse until drastically different preliminary plans were unveiled during the Pentagon City planning update. It was clear from the questions being asked at our January 12 meeting that the County's engagement efforts have failed to reach many neighbors, and that the potential impact on RiverHouse is only just beginning to be understood.

To date, AHCA's concerns have been communicated through comments on each draft, focused especially on elements that we continue to find lacking in the plan, especially around transportation, open space, and community facilities. We also acknowledge that the draft has improved over time in some areas we have asked for, such as incorporating lower heights at the southern end of River House, school counts and an implementation matrix. Nonetheless, given the anticipated increase in density and the imminent completion of the Plan, attendees at our January 12 meeting voted to raise directly with County Board four components that must be explicit in the Plan:

- 1. A minimum of 8 acres of new green space be provided, 75% of which must be on the RiverHouse site so that new green space goes where density goes. Green space on the RiverHouse excludes green space that is counted in the Green Ribbon and the buffer zone described in #3 below.*
- 2. No changes to Joyce Street. Any re-aligning would be an unfair expense to local taxpayers and a poor use of developers' funds.*

3. Provide a separate Small Area Site Plan for RiverHouse. This should allow community agreement on the height of new buildings and create a green space buffer zone around the perimeter to maintain existing trees.

4. Commit to community facilities: A large, full featured community center, a regional library, school capacity, and daycare facilities.

We look forward to continued – and, we hope, expanded – engagement on the Pentagon City Sector Plan as it evolves.

Sincerely,

Cory Giacobbe
President, Aurora Highlands Civic Association