



NRCA, P.O. Box 3242, Alexandria, VA 22302

January 4, 2022

Planning Commission
c/o Department of Planning & Zoning
P.O. Box 178
Alexandria, VA 22314
PlanComm@alexandriava.govx

Re: January 4, 2022 Docket Items # 6 & #7—Zoning Text Amendment #2021-00009; City Charter § 9.06 Case #2021-00006; Coordinated Development District Concept Plan #2021-00005; Development Special Use Permit #2021-10024; Transportation Management Plan Special Use Permit #2021-00063; Vacation #2021-00001; 221 West Glebe Road; 3606, 3610, 3612 and 3700 Mount Vernon Avenue - AHDC Glebe/Mt. Vernon

Dear Chairman Macek and Planning Commission Members:

North Ridge Citizens' Association ("NRCA") opposes the massive scale of redevelopment of the Arlandria-Chirilagua section that the above-referenced docket items would allow.

First, as summarized in our letters to the Planning Commission and City Council opposing the Small Area Plan (*copies enclosed*), the substantial increase in the number and density of people that would be added to Arlandria would have detrimental effects that would be unnecessary, significant, and irreversible. Among those would be:

- a) Increased crowding of already overcrowded Alexandria schools;
- b) Increased traffic and congestion as well as cut-through traffic in surrounding neighborhoods including but not limited to North Ridge;
- c) Loss of already inadequate parking to serve residents, shoppers, churchgoers, and restaurant- and venue-goers, and those in nearby areas; and
- d) Radical alteration of the streetscape with building heights that would dwarf existing structures and eradicate the characteristic Art Deco style.

Second, Title 15.2, Article 7, of the Code of Virginia *requires* that all land-use plans of cities in the Commonwealth "protect citizens against one or more of the following: overcrowding of land, undue density of population in relation to the community facilities *existing or available*, obstruction of light and air, danger and congestion in travel and transportation ..." (Code of Virginia, The Comprehensive Plan, § 15.2-2283 (emphasis added)). The project(s) being considered appear to violate every one of these protections, in that:

- 1) They will promote and exacerbate density in the densest jurisdiction in Northern Virginia;
- 2) There is not existing or available infrastructure sufficient to support the overcrowding the proposed structures would produce;

- 3) Proposed structural heights and building masses would obstruct light and restrict airflow; and
- 4) Congestion and reduced parking will impede travel and exacerbate the problem of spillover parking that has for decades plagued homeowners and law enforcement in the West Glebe/Old Dominion area.

Third, the Small Area Plan that purportedly would allow for these projects is invalid. Numerous substantive comments submitted to the record by citizens and citizen groups in opposition to all or portions of the Plan were essentially ignored by the City. As a result, the proposed actions in the above-referenced docket items are also invalid.

Fourth, the dramatic increase in density in this area is being proposed as a means to increase affordable housing. At the same time, the City is claiming to preserve the character of the Arlandria-Chirilagua neighborhood. Both cannot be achieved. The mega-project submitted by AHDC needs to be substantially scaled back to fit within the context of the Arlandria-Chirilagua community. Otherwise, it is likely to destroy, or at least overwhelm, the neighborhood.

Fifth, as summarized in our letters and testimony at the Council Public Hearing on December 18, 2021 (*copy enclosed*), the City appears to contemplate potential co-location of businesses, housing, and other uses unrelated to core educational needs on a school site. The City is on notice that such uses would violate Commonwealth law and create unnecessary risks to students, staff, residents, and public safety personnel, and that expenditure of any public funds in furtherance of such would be illegal. The City, ACPS, and the School Board need to state whether they are considering going down that illegal path.

Thank you for this opportunity to comment.

Sincerely,



John Fehrenbach, President

cc: Alexandria City School Board
Clerk of the School Board
ACPS Superintendent Gregory C. Hutchings, Jr.

Enclosures