

# MEMORANDUM

TO: Toby Millman, Senior Vice President, Vornado

FROM: Robert J. Duffy, AICP, Planning Director      DATE: July 31, 2014

**SUBJECT: Conceptual Proposal for River House property**

cc: Kedrick N. Whitmore, Esq., Venable LLP  
Robert E. Brosnan, Director, CPHD  
Gabriela Acurio, Assistant County Manager, CMO

On June 26, 2014 representatives from Vornado - Charles E. Smith met with Planning Division staff to discuss a conceptual proposal for the River House property in Pentagon City. Following that meeting, County staff from several agencies met to discuss the proposed concept. Via this memorandum, staff is providing for your consideration a preliminary response to the proposed development concept.

## Proposed Concept

Based on information provided at the June 26 meeting, we understand the proposed concept to include the following principal elements:

- Proposed Development:
  - Four new infill buildings comprising 934 new dwelling units (at market rates), with approx. 29k sf new retail opposite Pentagon Row plaza
  - A new building comprising approximately 150 committed affordable dwelling units
  - Three existing residential towers remain
  
- Proposed GLUP designation: "Low" Office-Apartment-Hotel
- Proposed Zoning: "C-O-1.5"

## Existing Conditions

The following is a brief outline of existing conditions.

- Site Area: 36.62 acres
- Existing Development: 1,670 dwelling units (by right)
- Existing GLUP designation: "Medium" Residential
- Existing Zoning: "RA6-15"

## Preliminary Report Evaluating the Proposed Concept

The following report details the main points from the interagency staff discussion on the proposed concept. In summary, the key points at this time include:

- The planned density depicted on the GLUP for the "Medium" Residential designation is expressed as a range, and the upper limits of that range should not be presumed as appropriate for all sites with such designation;
- Formal submission of a development proposal consistent with this concept would require a special General Land Use Plan Study, which would need to be worked into the current queue of FY2015 planning efforts;
- Any such special study would need to evaluate the proposal for the River House site in the context of the significant development potential already approved by the County Board for the Pentagon City area; and
- *The property is currently developed with 102 dwelling units less than the maximum permitted as of right density under "RA6-15".*
- By right alternatives for the site remain and can always be explored.

### **Planned Densities per the General Land Use Plan**

The River House property is currently designated "Medium" Residential on the General Land Use Plan (GLUP). Per the GLUP Map legend, the range of planned densities for this designation is 37-72 dwelling units per acre. As also noted on the GLUP map, the higher end of the density range for a given GLUP designation may not necessarily represent the appropriate density for a certain location. The property is currently built at a density of approximately 45 dwelling units per acre, well within the density range noted on the GLUP.

### **Current Planning/Development Activity in Pentagon City**

The River House property is not within the Pentagon City Coordinated Development District (CDD) as noted in the GLUP.

Any consideration to future changes to the River House site would need to be evaluated in the context of development that is already planned, approved, or under construction in the balance of the Pentagon City Metro Station Area. A summary of currently approved but not yet completed development in Pentagon City is presented below.

**Summary of Approved, Not Yet Completed Development in Pentagon City**

	<b>Office</b>	<b>Dwelling Units</b>	<b>Hotel Rooms</b>	<b>Retail</b>
Metropolitan Park	-	2,513	-	80,581
Pentagon Centre	776,982	600	250	327,070
Pen Place	1,809,000	-	300	50,000
Fashion Center Mall	-	-	-	51,000
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>2,585,982</b>	<b>3,113</b>	<b>550</b>	<b>508,651</b>

Source: *Development Tracking Report (4<sup>th</sup> Quarter 2013)*, CPHD

Over 3,000 dwelling units have been approved, but not yet constructed in Pentagon City. The GLUP and associated Pentagon City Phased Development Site Plans (PDSP) are focused on planned development to advance growth in the center of Pentagon City CDD. This is also demonstrated in part by the recently completed County capital improvement of the Hayes Street multimodal streetscape project and planned design and construction of the Columbia Pike and Route 1 Corridor streetcar (both of which will serve the Pentagon City CDD). County staff is continuing to focus significant efforts on the successful implementation of other important projects within the Pentagon City CDD.

**By Right Alternatives**

Given the by right status of existing development on the property, the River House site does have approximately 102 dwelling units of residual density that has not yet been constructed. This remaining density could be pursued by the property owner under the by right provisions of the Zoning Ordinance.

**Potential General Land Use Plan (GLUP) Amendment and Related Special Study**

If an application is filed for development consistent with this proposed concept, a GLUP amendment (in conjunction with a rezoning) would be required to accommodate the envisioned intensity and mix of land uses. There currently is no well-established mechanism to permit 72 dwelling units per acre and the proposed amount of retail density on sites designated "Medium" Residential. If requested, such a GLUP amendment would be unanticipated by previous planning efforts, therefore the County would need to conduct a Special GLUP Study, which would be reviewed through the Long Range Planning Committee (LRPC) of the Planning Commission. Such a study would be initiated by the Planning Division as our FY2015 and FY2016 work program permit. However, given the significant development potential that has already been approved for sites within the Pentagon City Metro Station Area CDD, there does not appear to be a significantly compelling reason to pursue a GLUP change for this site at this time.

Thank you again for the opportunity to meet to discuss the proposed concept. Please contact me if you would like to discuss the above preliminary staff report.