From: dick woodruff
To: Margaret Tulloch Rhodes
Cc: Lorin Farris; Cynthia Liccese-Torres
Subject: HALRB comments on Shirlington GLUP Study
Date: Tuesday, July 14, 2020 11:51:22 AM

EXTERNAL EMAIL: This email originated from outside Arlington County.

See the the note below which reflects the collective views of the HALRB. Thank you for your consideration.

Dear Ms. Rhodes,

The Historical Affairs and Landmark Review Board (HALRB) has been following the Special General Land Use Plan (GLUP) Study Plus and Concept Plan process for the Village at Shirlington. Although the HALRB has not met formally, this letter has been reviewed by the members and reflects our collective views.

The HALRB is supportive of the revitalization of Shirlington and, overall, we find the concept plan to be a thoughtful and thorough document. We appreciate the recognition of the historic buildings along Campbell Avenue, which ranked as "important" on the County's Historic Resources Inventory as contributors to Arlington's growth before and after World War II. These Art Deco-style storefronts retain their historic character in both scale and architectural features, and this character gives Shirlington an authenticity that is lacking in many urban communities. Although the buildings have evolved somewhat over time, the main street feel of Campbell Avenue is undeniable, and we believe this identity is important and should be preserved.

The Campbell Avenue buildings are worthy of preservation not only for their historic and architectural significance, but also for the intrinsic benefits that will be derived through their retention. Historic preservation has proven economic benefits and often provides an improved sense of place to a community. Small businesses, such as those currently located along Campbell Avenue, are particularly well-suited for historic buildings due to their smaller scale and distinctiveness. Preservation need not preclude change. Sensitive design can incorporate historic features into alterations, so that the buildings continue to enhance Shirlington's streetscape for years to come.

The HALRB recommends a strengthened commitment from the County to ensure the preservation of the historic buildings along Campbell Avenue. Ideally, the buildings in their entirety should be kept. Recognizing the need for increased density, however, we would support the proposed 20-foot setback recommended in the GLUP proposal, which would allow the buildings to be built to the approved height limit, while retaining their original scale and character. The set-back would also allow sufficient light to retain the tree canopy cover that contributes to Campbell Avenue's urban village ambiance. Setbacks to allow development while protecting historic buildings and livable communities have worked well in Penn Quarter and Foggy Bottom in DC, as well as in Clarendon here in Arlington and other places.

The discussion of Shirlington's future is particularly timely, as last month was the 60th anniversary of the Arlington lunch counter sit-ins, which resulted in the F.W. Woolworth in

Shirlington becoming the first Arlington store to announce that it would desegregate its lunch counter. We strongly recommend that amendments to the GLUP carefully consider these historic resources on Campbell Street, which are a major component to retaining and enhancing Shirlington's identity.

Finally, we urge the development of sensitive design guidance for future rehabilitations, and the engagement of Arlington County historic preservation staff in plans that affect building exteriors. Thank you for your consideration of our views on this matter.

Sincerely,

Dick Woodruff
HALRB Chairman