

**ENVIRONMENT AND ENERGY CONSERVATION COMMISSION**  
c/o Department of Environmental Services  
2100 Clarendon Blvd., Suite 705  
Arlington, VA 22201

September 24, 2018

The Honorable Katie Cristol, Chair  
Arlington County Board  
2100 Clarendon Blvd.  
Arlington, VA 22201

Re: Career Center Working Group Final Report

Dear Chair Cristol:

The Environment and Energy Conservation Commission (E2C2) appreciated the opportunity to participate in the Career Center Working Group (CCWG) and contribute to the final CCWG report. We are generally supportive of the CCWG report and its recommendations, though there is still much work to be done, which will be continued through the Public Facilities Review Committee/Building Level Planning Committee (PFRC/BLPC) process.

Specific to the recommendations of the CCWG report itself, we would like to draw your attention to the following topics:

- **Sustainability Commitment:** On p. 46, the report states that “Every effort needs to be made to implement green infrastructure and consider the viability of introducing on-site renewable energy generation (e.g., solar panels).” We will be carefully following the efforts to make this commitment part of the project design, which will be important for improving storm water management and achieving the goals of our Community Energy Plan (CEP). The recent increase in the Residential Utility Tax (RUT) could provide a funding stream for future energy efficiency and renewable energy programs, if some of the funding diverted to APS for non-energy related spending could be restored for its original purpose of supporting achievement of CEP goals per the County Board’s 2017 Climate Action Resolution.
- **Unprogrammed Green Space:** Given the urban environment and the current limited access to unprogrammed green space along the Columbia Pike corridor near the site, it will be critical for future designs to increase the available unprogrammed green space on site, which will benefit the growing on-site student population and the broader community.
- **Creative Transportation Options:** Transportation, particularly parking, was a contentious topic during multiple CCWG meetings. While Arlington County has made great strides in promoting alternatives to single-occupancy/household vehicles (e.g., carpooling, transit, walking, bicycling), which improves local air quality and reduces greenhouse gas emissions, there was substantial skepticism among CCWG members about whether these efforts would be successful in encouraging alternative modes of getting to and from the Career Center site. We are concerned that weak financial incentives and continued prioritization of vehicle parking will result in the faltering of transportation demand management (TDM) programs and

creative solutions. For example, during the first week of this school year, APS ended funding for its TDM incentives for staff who walk or bike to work, and yet continues to provide free parking to all staff. We encourage the County Board to work with the School Board to identify ways to bolster TDM strategies, which will also require investments to the transportation network and programs throughout the county.

Below are a couple process-related items that we also wanted to highlight:

- **Frustration Over Overlapping CIP Process:** Because our CCWG schedule overlapped with the Arlington Public Schools (APS) Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) process in Spring 2018, the CCWG was in the midst of developing possible short-term and long-term design and phasing scenarios when the School Board presented design scenarios and associated budgets. This overlap seemed to undermine the CCWG's efforts because the group was suddenly presented with many constraints that had not been previously shared. In the future, it would be helpful to have more information upfront about potential timing and cost constraints to allow for a more collaborative and effective process.
- **Future Participation on Both the PFRC and BLPC:** Based on the CCWG discussions and prior PFRC/BLPC experiences, certain building-related design elements related to sustainability, particularly energy efficiency and renewable energy, will likely be addressed by the BLPC, not the PFRC. Traditionally, E2C2 has had representation on the PFRC only. In the event that the future meetings are joint or sustainability-specific topics are discussed during the BLPC meetings, we would appreciate the invitation to participate and provide our feedback to the BLPC as well. Also, given community interest in greater casual use space as identified during the POPS (A Plan for Our Places and Spaces) process, we will be seeking opportunities to include such spaces in the PFRC and BLPC process.

We appreciate the opportunity to participate in the CCWG and we look forward to our continued participation in the future planning efforts for the Career Center site.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'MM', with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Michael Mesmer, Chair  
Environment and Energy Conservation Commission

cc: Arlington County School Board