

ENVIRONMENT AND ENERGY CONSERVATION COMMISSION  
c/o Department of Environmental Services  
2100 Clarendon Blvd., Suite 705  
Arlington, VA 22201  
August 24, 2015

The Honorable Mary Hughes Hynes, Chairwoman  
Arlington County Board  
2100 Clarendon Blvd., Suite 300  
Arlington, VA 22201

Re: Envision Courthouse Square

Dear Chairwoman Hynes,

The Environment and Energy Conservation Commission (E2C2) has been informed that the Board will consider the adoption of the draft Courthouse Sector Plan Addendum at the September 19, 2015 County Board public hearing. The Envision Courthouse Square process is to update the vision outlined in the 1993 Courthouse Sector Plan Addendum, which identified a state-of-the-art government center and signature public space as critical to the area's development. E2C2 participated in the Envision Courthouse Square planning processes, reviewed the associated documentation, and has the following comments.

**E2C2 supports the following:**

- **Maximizing Natural Space/Tree Cover:**
  - o Maximize open space, and work to retain most of the open space as an area of natural vegetation with no hardscaping.
  - o Ensure adequate tree-cover on the site, and ensure that County staff conducts a soil depth analysis for all potential hardscape and greenscape areas so that canopy trees can take root and grow to maturity.
- **Sustainable Energy Use:**
  - o Courthouse Square presents a unique opportunity for the County Board to promote implementation of district energy (DE) systems in Arlington, given the high proportion of government-owned buildings in the area, and to demonstrate its support for Community Energy Plan (CEP) goals. E2C2 encourages the Board to collaborate with private building owners to further study DE implementation options in Courthouse, and to consider the site a potential model for other DE implementations in Arlington.
  - o E2C2 recognizes the fiscal constraints under which the County continues to operate. Because of these fiscal constraints, E2C2 recommends that the County pursue a strategy that is associated with positive net present values, reductions in energy use intensity, and reductions greenhouse gas emissions, and that this same strategy contribute towards CEP goals.
  - o Instruct County Manager to pursue the recommended energy conservation measures (ECM) for existing buildings in the project area, including lighting improvements and the

replacement of major heating, ventilation, and air conditioning (HVAC) equipment with more efficient systems.

- **Sustainable Building Use, Location, Reuse, and Design:**

- o Continue to encourage and incent high-performance green building in the Courthouse area through the AIRE program.
- o E2C2 recommends the County Board adopt stormwater master plan suggested in the Courthouse Addendum.

- **Low-Carbon Circulation and Parking:**

- o E2C2 supports all aspects of the suggested circulation plan. E2C2 would recommend that the Board pursue increasing the number of electric vehicle charging stations in the proposed parking garage.
- o Finally, E2C2 strongly recommends that further parking studies include the at-grade entrance to the proposed underground parking garage on N. Courthouse Road between 14<sup>th</sup> Street and 13<sup>th</sup> Street as highest priority. This proposed at-grade entrance would maximize the proposed open space of square and improve the proposed square's air quality by removing the parking garage entrance from the square itself. Because the grade between 14<sup>th</sup> Street and 13<sup>th</sup> Street is at the same level as the proposed parking garage's first floor, significant benefits can be achieved through decreasing ramp construction costs while at the same time having less vehicular traffic disruption at Courthouse Square. Also, this proposed entrance is closer to Route 50 than the other proposed entrances allowing for easier and quicker access to regional and major highway networks and thoroughfares.

We appreciate this opportunity to comment on the Courthouse Sector Plan Addendum: Courthouse Square Draft July 10, 2015. We look forward to working with you and County staff to help ensure the Courthouse Sector Plan Addendum achieves the suggested environmental outcomes.

Sincerely,



Scott Dicke

Chair, E2C2