



The Falls Church Village Preservation and Improvement Society

February 16, 2022

Mayor Tarter and Members of City Council
City of Falls Church
300 Park Avenue
Falls Church, VA 22046

Subject: Further VPIS Comments on One City Center

Dear Mayor Tarter and Members of Council:

In response to City Council's referral of the One City Center project to public comment on December 13, and following up on our [letter of November 15, 2021](#), the Board of the Village Preservation and Improvement Society (VPIS) is pleased to provide further comments on this project.

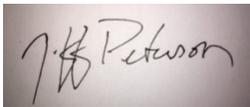
Atlantic Realty has made a number of modifications to this project, including façade enhancements for the George Mason Square street frontage, a one-floor reduction of the garage, a new garden area to replace the monument at the entrance on Broad and Washington Streets, and the provision of an assured 5% of parking for electric vehicle charging stations. We welcome these changes, but continue to urge additional improvement as indicated below:

- (1) The garage remains overpowering on South Washington Street. Further reduction of the garage through undergrounding and moving the structure further away from the street would help to reduce the impression of a towering presence along the street. Recent mixed-use projects have at least one full underground level.
- (2) A more temperate 6 or 7-story height for the overall building would assure that it fits more appropriately within the Broad & Washington and 301 West Broad environs, recognizing the heavily residential nature of the new building.
- (3) We continue to believe that this project should set a high standard for energy efficiency, low carbon release, and environmental commitment. Additional efforts to provide electric vehicle stations, and conduit to support inclusion of additional charging stations, will be important to accommodate future developments in automobile production and would significantly enhance the project.

- (4) The developer's commitment to 10% ADUs is welcome, but unfortunately sharply reduces the voluntary contributions necessary to help sustain our schools, parks, and library, all of which the residents will use. The City needs a stronger affordable housing commitment from developers going forward, not a mere matching of what has gone before, while also providing essential funding for services that will experience increased demand. Negotiations on a waiver of the restriction on residential use of the Matt's Tailor lot should assure the additional funds needed.
- (5) Atlantic Realty has proposed dedicating the small City Center park to the City, for maintenance by the City – even though this acreage appears to be counted toward the requisite greenspace provided by the project. Dedicated annual operating funds for that maintenance, if the City accepts this designation, would be essential in order to be consistent with the greenspace and tree canopy commitments. Absent that commitment, VPIS recommends that the City not accept “receipt” of the park.
- (6) We remain concerned about pedestrian and bicycle safety at the proposed roundabout. VPIS believes that the roundabout is not in sync with a pedestrian friendly, walkable City and the additional pedestrians coming from this project. At a minimum, we urge additional efforts to provide a separate bike lane and to signalize this area for those going to both the City Center and Big Chimneys parks.
- (7) The additional efforts at new windows and differentiation and articulation of the George Mason Square buildings are appreciated. The metal mesh frontage of the garage on S. Washington and the corner of the woonerf also helps to mask the underlying building but appears to be both dark and somewhat see-through. The use of lighter colors might help make the whole structure more attractive.
- (8) We are not enthused about the commitment for yet another grocery in close proximity to several others. Residential rentals should be conditioned on prior grocery, restaurant and retail openings to avoid the City revenue lapses seen in other projects.

Thank you for considering our views.

Sincerely,

A rectangular box containing a handwritten signature in black ink. The signature appears to read "Jeff Peterson" with a stylized initial "JP" at the beginning.

Jeff Peterson, VPIS President
on behalf of the VPIS Board

cc: Planning Commission