

September 30, 2024

Tad Lunger
Arlington Land Use Group
2300 Wilson Boulevard, Suite 700
Arlington, VA 22201

Re: **Kensington Senior Living Conceptual Site Plan**
4500 Langston Boulevard

Dear Tad:

On behalf of the Cherrydale Citizens Association, the Donaldson Run Civic Association, and the Old Dominion Citizens Association, we thank you and Michael for providing the chance to meet about Kensington's preliminary plan for this site.

We recognize, as you advised, that you expect the plan may be substantially revised. As Kensington finalizes its plan, we would like to follow up on several questions we discussed. Our primary focus, as it has been throughout the County's consideration of Plan Langston Boulevard (PLB), has been to ensure the continued attractiveness of and access to the Lee Heights Shops for our many members who have come to rely on these shops. Among other things, many of our members have long been concerned about any dramatic changes in height for buildings directly across Langston Boulevard from single-family homes in our neighborhoods. In light of these concerns, we would like to schedule a further meeting with you to discuss these issues, after we have had the chance to visit Kensington's Falls Church facility. We also would request that Kensington support our ongoing participation on the site plan review committee to be established by the County for this site.

At our meeting, you indicated that you may have had earlier discussions with residents of one or more civic associations about your proposed plans. In considering the issues set forth below, it would be helpful for us to know which residents with whom you may have spoken.

1. **Type of Elder Care Facility.** We recognize the need for additional elderly housing facilities in Arlington. At our meeting, Kensington referred to both assisted living and memory care. We understood that two floors would be devoted to memory care. Is this the plan? As with other elder care facilities, could yours also provide elderly residents in our neighborhoods an option to move to the facility before they may need either of these services? This would be important not only for their desire to downsize, but also to address demand for larger homes in our area by others. How would the monthly rates for residents at the various levels of service compare to those at Kensington's Falls Church facility and other elderly housing facilities in the area?
2. **Traffic and Parking.** As you work with VIKa to conduct the traffic study required by the County, we believe there are a variety of challenges associated with such a large facility in this limited space. In particular, we believe the study should address what may be substantial in and out traffic and parking from the three overlapping shifts of employees and arrivals of new residents, combined with family and other visitors to the 130 residents for whom you have planned. Data from experience at Kensington's Falls Church facility would be helpful in this regard.

Additionally, the configuration of this area might make overflow traffic into or out of the garage onto neighboring streets an issue that should be studied.

3. **Partial Vacation of Upton Street.** From our discussion, it was unclear to us how this proposal, in order to facilitate deliveries, would be designed to avoid disrupting traffic on Langston Boulevard, and continued access to Lee Heights, as well as rear customer access and deliveries to Lebanese Taverna. How would it address PLB's guidelines, for building placement along alleys, to "provide for two-way vehicular access, with a minimum width of 20 feet, and at least one sidewalk with a minimum width of 6 feet," or stricter building and fire code requirements? PLB p. 156.
4. **Tree Canopy.** PLB guidelines do contemplate the possibility of a structure as high as seven stories at this site, which would be higher than some other locations along Langston Boulevard. However, for structures of such height, those guidelines also recommend the provision of tree canopy of at least 35%. PLB p. 121 (SR.3). The guidelines also include 5% coverage of "additional, non-tree vegetation," and "street trees at the minimum rate of one for every 30 feet along any property line abutting public right-of-way while also meeting soil volume requirements." (SR.4, SR.5.) These are important community benefits, since Langston Boulevard is currently a largely treeless urban heat island.
 - a. How would your plan provide for these 35% tree canopy and other guidelines, consistent with the space and other benchmarks set forth in best management practices established by the International Society of Arboriculture? See, e.g., *Managing Trees During Site Development and Construction: Best Management Practices* (ISA 3d ed. 2023).
 - b. PLB anticipates the provisions of "[n]ew public spaces" from property owners and developers. PLB p. 108. How would Kensington address this goal? Would satisfying the 35% tree canopy standard require acquisition (by Kensington or by the County pursuant to eminent domain) of the adjacent property owned by Les-Bijoux LLC, either for what PLB refers to as a "privately-owned public space" or as a public park?
5. **PLB's "Context Sensitive Building Design."** An important concern of many of our residents, as noted above, is not to disrupt the attractive and accessible Lee Heights Shops area, and to buffer any change from the single-family homes outside the PLB Core Area across Langston Boulevard from the site. We note that additional height and density must be consistent with the Comprehensive Plan, which addresses this issue. They must also "[f]unctionally relat[e] to" these nearby homes, and must not be "injurious or detrimental" to them. Zoning Ordinance § 15.5.5.
 - a. PLB seeks generally to "[e]nsure buildings transition in scale and height to adjacent neighborhoods" and "[t]ransition heights to lower density development through upper story stepbacks above four stories." PLB pp. 66 (BHF.5), 160-162. For such a site across the street from low-density residential areas in our neighborhoods, PLB guidelines contemplate a "podium height . . . limited to 5 stories at the build-to lines, . . . with a stepback of no less than 10 feet to the 6th and 7th stories." PLB p. 162. The drawings in Kensington's preliminary plan do not appear to include such stepbacks, on either Langston Boulevard or Cherry Hill Road.
 - b. The preliminary plan notes that the building design "strictly adheres to" the "specific build-to-lines along Cherry Hill Road." We cannot find this information in the exhibits accompanying Kensington's preliminary plan. Can you provide further details, and also address the PLB build-to line along Langston Boulevard? PLB guidelines include specific sidewalk, tree planter, and additional buffer areas along both of these routes. PLB pp. 94, 96, 156 (at least 20 feet from right of way across from low-density residential use).

6. **The Proposed "Civic and Community Amenity Space."** We would like to understand more about the size and layout Kensington contemplates devoting for this space, the hours of proposed use, and the means of access. Based on our understanding of how this works in Falls Church, we assume that Kensington would enter into a long-term lease on specified terms and conditions with a designated Arlington community group, which would remain free to permit other uses and users of the space. Is this correct? You also refer in the preliminary plan to "workspaces" and "retail" along Cherry Hill Road. Is that separate from the amenity space?
7. **Affordable Housing.** Although we understand that the proposal will not include any affordable housing units, it refers to "help[ing] the County achieve its affordable housing goals." Does this refer to a financial contribution to the Affordable Housing Investment Fund, calculated in accordance with Zoning Ordinance § 15.5.8.C.4? If so, can you provide us with the amount of the contribution and how you calculate it?
8. **Stormwater Management.** In Area 3, PLB contemplates that sites with additional height "would be subject to Flood Resilient Guidelines under development by County staff." PLB p. 126. Which specific guidelines would apply for the project and how would they be implemented?
9. **Integration with Future Lee Heights Developments.** The preliminary plan refers to a "future final alignment plan of Cherry Hill Road," and the possible need for some "adjust[ment]." How should we address the possibility that at some point your plan may change to accommodate other such changes?

Thanks again for the chance to review your preliminary plan. We hope these questions are helpful as you continue to shape your plan, and we look forward to working closely with Kensington in addressing them and reviewing future versions of the plan.

Sincerely yours,



Jim Todd
President
Cherrydale Citizens Association



Bill Richardson
President
Donaldson Run Civic Association



Rana Jazayerli
President
Old Dominion Citizens Association

cc: Michael Rafeedie
Matt Pfeiffer
Ginger Brown