

September 8, 2026

SUBJECT: Arlington Gives Away Land to Luxury Condo Developer and Forfeits Potential Affordable Housing Units

Recently, President Trump discussed giving up part of Yosemite National Park for private use. Many who care about preserving America's natural heritage or ensuring adequate compensation for the land objected. Now we face a similar challenge in Arlington. ASF is urging fixes to a project proposed by Taicoon 1501 Langston LLC to develop 88 luxury condos at 1501 Langston Blvd., just west of Rosslyn, as one of the first important tests of the November 2023 Langston Blvd. Area Plan (LBAP) and a test of the county's entire planning process.

ASF Concerns/Asks on 1501 Langston Blvd: ASF has 3 key concerns and 7 asks with regard to 1501 Langston:

1. Major Flaws in GLUP Amendment (p. 3-6)
2. Major Flaws in Langston Blvd. Area Plan Interpretation/Application (p. 6-8)
3. Poor Outcomes (Lost Opportunities to Achieve Affordable Housing Master Plan, Equity, and Public Spaces Master Plan goals) (p. 8-9)¹

We ask the County, before it meets September,² to do the following or to postpone the meeting until such actions are ensured:

1. Clarify processes for GLUP changes, including whether and to determine that "errors" are documented and agreed by all parties and how the County is allowed to fix errors that are agreed by SPRC and community;
2. Admit that no land area in Arlington can have more than one GLUP and zoning designation at the same time³ and ensure county documents reflect that;
3. Acknowledge that the developer is responsible for the required GLUP change, and engage with Taicoon Partners ASAP on that GLUP negotiation (to include an affordable housing element.) As an optional variation on the GLUP change, retain the "public" land use designation on 8,000 ft² of a conservation easement; encourage the developer to seek a "park" use permit for that section;
4. Improve county site planning process for all projects and 1501 Langston:
 - Provide web links to all previous and current site-plan-related reports, documents and meeting minutes as well as any GLUP map and zoning revisions and site plan conditions
 - Amend site plan processes to ensure no project can proceed to review until all agree on current GLUP, zoning, and area plan status;

- Establish a way to quickly locate public County redevelopment-related notices online using basic search engine and AI searches, and publish such notices on the home page for the site plan or other development project;
5. Ask the County Manager to direct staff to brief/update all civic associations in the Langston Blvd. Plan area as well as the Arlington County Civic Federation on the development processes for the Langston corridor (including any precedents established by the proposed GLUP changes on the Air Force Association site) no later than September 15, 2026; ASF and CivFed can advise on particulars;
 6. URGENT: Immediately add 24 notices in North Highlands Civic Association by Sept. 10 (include Park Palisades and Park Georgetown areas);
 7. Provide the square footage – for each of the areas being reGLUPped at [1501 Langston Blvd/RPC #16-005-001](#). as well as the area that will retain Low O-A-H land use.

Status/Location of the Property: The Air Force and Space Association sold the property (56,949 ft², approx. 1.3 acre) in North Highlands Civic Association (NHCA) to Taicoon 1501 Langston LLC (a Delaware limited liability company) in June 2023. Taicoon is pursuing a major site plan amendment and the land has already been developed at a C-O 1.5 zoning level (albeit with incorrect land use designations.) One part of the lot has a conservation easement that was established in 2006 with the Northern Virginia Conservation Trust (NVCT); it conveys with the deed. The property has a steep incline and borders the Custis Trail and Langston Blvd (I-66 further south). It's the easternmost property in the Langston Blvd. Area Plan, abutting Rosslyn to the east.

Figure 5: Location of Conservation Easement and Custis Trail



ASF concerns

Concern #1 – Major Process Flaws: To Re-GLUP, or Not to Re-GLUP, and How?

This project was plagued by simultaneous, contradictory assertions and opinions on whether it needed a change in land use (GLUP). The Langston Blvd. Area Plan set up *hypothetical* GLUP changes; actual GLUP changes require negotiations AND review triggered by site plan submissions and Site Plan Review Committee (SPRC) efforts. Thus, SPRC is critically important for all LBAP projects. In this instance, the SPRC process failed catastrophically.

A. Staff ignored the developer’s early indication he needed and would pursue GLUP amendments; staff invalidated the 5-month site plan process by initially asserting existing GLUP supported the proposed development.⁴ The site plan review should be annulled⁵; failing that, the County must modify its process and require SPRC unanimity on GLUP/zoning baselines as its first order of business.

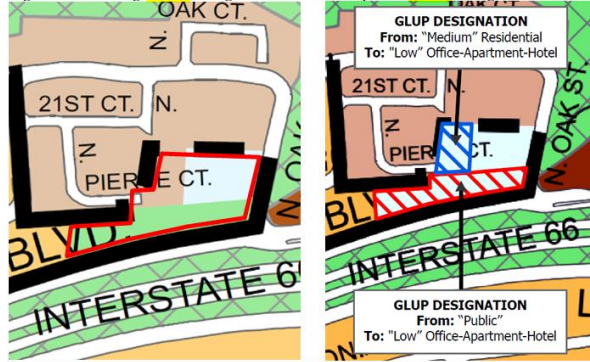
The developer (Taicoon) noted in its [November 2025 letter to Arlington County](#) that “From a comprehensive planning perspective, the Property is . . . split-planned for “Public” uses, “Low” Office-Apartment-Hotel uses, and “Medium” Residential uses.” Only two months later, [in launching the SPRC](#) process, staff introduced the parcel as being 100% GLUPped Low O-A-H. Moments later, [the developer’s attorney corrected that the site had 3 separate GLUP categories](#). None of the two dozen members of the SPRC noted the critical disconnect on the legal foundation for the entire project. In ASF’s view the applicant’s 2025 letter of justification constitutes a request for a GLUP change. The SPRC continued to ignore the developer’s version of “split-use” GLUP status until it wrapped up in May. At this point, the process became more surreal.

B. County’s Board Reports are Rife with Counterfactuals

Instead of admitting its errors, in July, county staff asserted the ***site was still GLUPped Low OAH but said 2/3 of the land ALSO HAD OTHER GLUP designations*** (namely, “public” and “medium residential”!)⁶ While ASF believes the issue’s complexity allowed it to fly under the radar⁷, staff has not corrected its posture when alerted. **Staff’s very request to the Board for a GLUP change in July was a de facto admission that its prior position was incorrect, yet contradictory GLUP status persists in County documents.**

The Board must tell the County Manager to direct staff to amend the draft September 19 report to clarify that the existing land use of RPC 16-000-5001 was inconsistent with the development proposal; if staff wants to explain historical errors it claims to have found (see discussion below), it must do so in a way that does not confuse or bypass the actual historic record of THIS site plan.

Figure 11: Existing GLUP Designations Versus Proposed GLUP Designations



And while the Board agreed to advertise a GLUP change for 2/3 of the parcel – the draft September 19 Board report claims that the GLUP needs changing (see left) and that it does not. **It is unacceptable to assert to the Board and public that any area in Arlington with a designated land use may simultaneously be double-GLUPped.**

C. County Lacks Authority to Correct GLUP on its own Motion, Even If We Accept Historic Errors (see also 1D below).

When the County Board on July 21 agreed to pursue a GLUP change, it should have directed the County Manager/staff to begin negotiating based on the developer's original letter of justification. Instead, the Board used a procedure never encountered by ASF for many site plan approvals involving inconsistencies between land use and zoning: it sought to **correct the reported errors on its own motion**. This step apparently excuses the developer from seeking – and compensating the public for -- a land use change that is essential to redevelopment and which he showed willingness to pursue on his own dime.

The County's [General Land Use Plan \(GLUP\)](#), says:

"The General Land Use Plan may be amended through two processes: 1) as part of a long-range planning process for a designated area or 2) as a result of an individual request for a specific change." P. 34.

Neither this booklet nor the county's regulations for GLUP change indicate that the Board may change a GLUP "on its own motion." Multiple other GLUP changes have been implemented for site plans in recent years, they all triggered section [§15.5.8 of the Arlington County Zoning Ordinance](#), (ACZO) provides a means for the developer to compensate the community for more intense land use.⁸ Some of these other GLUP changes were to correct historic mismatches between land use/zoning, such as the Motel Pentagon redevelopment (approved April 2025) where two hotels had been built many years before on top of land designated "service-industrial" land use. To build anew with apartments/townhomes, the land use had to comport with the zoning, and that change was compensated by the developer with more affordable housing. Why is that not happening now for a luxury condo project?

Instead, at 1501 Langston Blvd., staff actions resulted in the SPRC forfeiting an essential element of an affordable housing contribution. Because the developer already had permissive density from earlier site plans that delivered C-O 1.5 zoning, the GLUP change was the **ONLY AVENUE** to achieve potentially significant affordable housing community benefits.

D. County's Explanation for Possible Error is Opaque, Unsatisfactory

ASF was not able to get a clear picture on errors that staff suddenly surfaced in July 2026 (and staff never explained how they failed to discover these errors until SPRC concluded). Staff moved ahead to reveal historic errors for the very first time TO THE COUNTY BOARD in preparing for its July 18, 2026 meeting, leaving flawed SPRC results intact. At this point NHCA expressed concern about the GLUP change, but was ignored (even while moving the item from consent to public agenda for July 21).⁹ The process thus continued perpetuating the flaws of the SPRC.

When ASF learned of the irregularities thus far, we engaged staff on August 27. Both with NHCA and ASF, staff has given rote answers, delayed or withheld answers, meetings, and documents essential to public understanding. NHCA and ASF have been unable to get the March 6, 1996 Board report that was cited by staff to explain key GLUP “errors.” Why aren’t these documents available online? Why aren’t the documents linked in the Board report? Key concerns raised by ASF (at attachment) have been ignored,¹⁰ including clarification of staff assertions that GLUP errors “evolved over time” and that existing GLUP categories are “inconsistent with changes to limits of private and public property.” ***These phrases need clarification ASAP.***

In addition to the unacceptable SPRC process, other actions undermine public confidence in the County’s position and process:

- comments about the Commercial Market Resiliency Initiative in the Board report for Sept 19 (this project is not being done via the CMR-I);
- The Board’s rush to advertise the GLUP change and indications by board members that the RTA itself is “not linked to a timeline”;
- The disappearance from site plan website of the applicant’s original letter of justification (apparently after a new letter was added after September 2);

ASF argues that the public interest is best served by postponing the vote until issues we raise here are addressed.

E. Request to Advertise Does Not Comply with [Virginia Code §15.2-2204](#)

The GLUP amendment is an amendment of the Comprehensive Plan of Arlington and falls under terms of Virginia 15.2-2204 with regard to public noticing.¹¹ The staff report for September 19 says:

“Public notice was given in accordance with the Code of Virginia §15.2-2204. “Notices of the September 9, 2026, Planning Commission meeting were placed in the August 24, 2026, and August 31, 2026, issues of Local News Now. . . Notices of the September 19, 2026, County Board meeting were placed in the September 4, 2026, and September 11, 2026, issues of Local News Now. In addition to the above legal requirements: placards were placed in various locations surrounding the property indicating the subject of these site plan, GLUP amendment, and use permit applications and the time and place of the public hearing in accordance with Arl. Co. Zoning Ordinance §15.1.3.B.”

The August 31 notice does not meet the standard of “no more than 5 days before the meeting” date of the Sept. 9 Planning Commission meeting. ASF walked 10-square-blocks on Sept. 5; it found 3 orange cardboard signs (not “placards”) partially affixed with tape, of which **only one** was mostly intact, and none posted in the park Georgetown area. Most of the signs were ripped, with parts strewn on the ground (center image). The signage is currently insufficient.”¹²

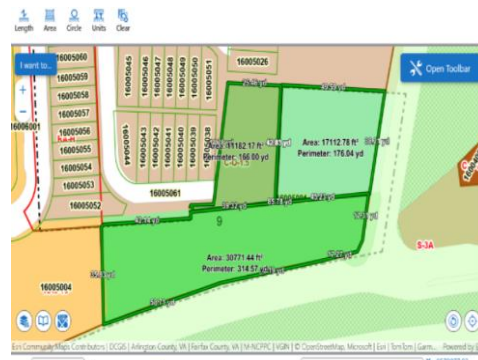
County Should Improve Signage at Park Palisades and Park Georgetown by September 10, for its September 19 meeting.



Likewise, ads in “Local News Now” were very hard to find; **at a minimum, the GLUP and site plans should be easily discoverable via AI and Google searches, and in obvious locations on ARLNow and Washington Post websites or print editions. (NOT the Times)**

F. Staff Obscures Square Footage of Area that Requires GLUP Change

Staff will not provide the public the square footages of the parcels the now say need re-GLUP-ping. ASF calculated these measurements for the 56,949 ft² site¹³ (map below left.) With only 17,113 ft² properly GLUPped for the proposed condo/museum use, the site falls short of the Arlington Zoning code requirement of 20,000 ft² to redevelop. Knowing these numbers allows us to confirm that adding either of the two other sub-parcels would meet the 20,000 ft² minimum. This data is critical to calculating lot coverage, gross floor area, setback, stepback, and other development outcomes, as well as the potential affordable housing contributions (as noted in our questions to staff).



ASF calculations from Arlington ARC-GIS, Sep 2026

B. Special exception

Development allowed by special exception in the C-O-1.5 district shall comply with the following standards, except as otherwise approved by the County Board.

Type of Standard	Institutional uses including elder care uses, hospitals, and group care facilities	Office, Commercial	Multiple-family	Hotel	All other uses
Density, maximum (units/acre)	--	--	72	110	--
Lot area, minimum (sq. ft.)	20,000	20,000	20,000	20,000	20,000
Lot width, average (feet)	100	100	100	100	100
Height, maximum (feet)	--	--	--	--	35
Height, maximum (stories)	--	--	--	--	--
Site less than 20 acres	10	8	10	10	--
Site more than 20 acres	12-18	12-18	12-18	12-18	--
Floor area ratio, maximum	1.5	1.5	--	--	0.4
Site area up to 5,000 sq. ft.	--	--	--	--	0.5
Site area 10,000 to 19,999 sq. ft.	--	--	--	--	0.6
Site area 20,000 and above sq. ft.	--	--	--	--	--

The Board must instruct staff to include the square footages for each sub-parcel that needs a GLUP change in public notices and the September 19 Board report.

Concern #2 - Major LBAP Interpretation and Application Flaws

1. Cherry Picking LBAP Elements at Site Plan Review

ASF believes staff is cherry-picking LBAP elements that fit its preferred outcome, regardless of community feedback, rendering LBAP an arbitrary planning document and eroding public faith in a process that took years, and setting poor precedents for its 30–40-year implementation. Language from the draft Board report¹⁴ shows potential that the county will allow developers to abandon strict dimensional guides on density and height in favor of the vaguer elements of the Plan, which likely will perpetuate the pattern of the last decade of allowing development to crowd out other Comprehensive Plan priorities. (See also Concern #3.)

In fact, the developer is getting more density than the LBAP allows, which the developer himself acknowledges. The developer is not complying with setback and stepback guidance on all sides; they are getting “free” gross floor area square footage to build an 8th floor (while still referring to the building as a “7-story building.” Frankly, it’s even worse. In Arlington, we are inured to development that depends on a “low-density” GLUP designation to yield a 10-story building. ASF expressed these concerns repeatedly during the LBAP adoption. This is the result of site planning, but frequently ASF identifies cases where the County fails to do its part and secure adequate and transparent tranches of community benefits via the following applicable avenues:

- a) site plan;
- b) GLUP change;
- c) zoning change;
- d) other zoning modifications

This building from the front (see image below) is ten stories, but planners say it counts as 7. Somehow, floors built to even out a slope don’t count. And – if this plan is approved – the builder will not have to count the top floor with its mechanical purposes (and bathroom for its pool)! In Arlington, developers can still surprise neighbors with more height and density, even after exhaustive mapping during planning as we saw with LBAP. The existing building (essentially 6 stories) in on a level with townhomes at rear, compared to the new building ‘s true 10 stories.



ASF asks that the county brief Langston Blvd civic associations and the CivFed on the development process for the corridor and other areas with more than 4 site plans per year, increasing awareness about height/density/flexibility of the area plan elements.

2. Precedence for Other Projects on the Corridor

ASF is concerned that the County will resort in the future to correcting “historical” GLUP or zoning errors to forfeit community benefits that should instead be accruing as part of the development project and site planning and LBAP implementation if the question of “Board’s own motion” is not resolved.

Concern #3 - Outcomes

1. Gentrification Compounded by Lost Opportunity to Advance Affordable Housing Master Plan/Equity Goals

Arlington’s [Affordable Housing Master Plan](#) calls for expanding or preserving affordable housing opportunities; the latest implementation report identifies the greatest need at levels below 80% of Area Median Income. Importantly, a GLUP change under LBAP requires the developer to contribute affordable housing: 20% of the units gained by the change in land use must be affordable to those at 80% of AMI and 10% to affordable to those at 60% of AMI.¹⁵ As noted above, the process allowed the developer to skate on the GLUP change, giving up leverage for affordables. This is particularly egregious given the emergence, beyond the borders of Rosslyn, of a “concierge” condo project that may end up in the hands of a luxury real estate brand with penthouse units from \$2-\$4 million each, and other condos selling at \$1,000 ft². HOA fees will likely far exceed the rent of an affordable CAF! Google search Sept. 7 indicates monthly HOA at Turnberry Towers \$1,200-\$1,400, [while True Ground Housing Partners on September 7, 2026 cited a sample rent for “those earning 60% of the DC area’s median income — nearly \\$70,000 a year — \[as\] \\$1,715 per month.”](#)

2. Lost Opportunity to Advance Public Space Master Plan Goal, LBAP Public Space Goal, and Ensure Land Use is Consistent with “Actual” Use

ASF welcomes the developer providing tree canopy on the property greater than required by Virginia. That said, the public land use should not be abandoned. The conservation easement with NVCT permanently precludes Low Office Apartment Hotel use, but the County is inexplicably seeking that new land use. Instead, ASF urges retaining “public land use” on the 8,000 ft² easement and the new owner should seek a “park” Use Permit. ASF strongly objects to staff’s assertion to the Board in July that “Low O-A-H” is appropriate because the easement never stipulated public access. Furthermore, as noted by the [developer’s attorney at SPRC](#), the Langston Blvd. Area Plan shows the conservation easement (map below) as part of “public land use.”



Staff also failed to remind the Board in July and in the draft September 19 Board report that 37 acres of Arlington’s parklands are owned by private owners, and that not all grant 24-hour public access. Staff and the Board are overlooking how the easement serves the “public” good by preserving natural features, shade, and trees, while giving stormwater relief very near an RPA. Finally, the developer contradicts staff’s justification of “GLUP errors” with a Sept. 2, 2026 [revised letter of justification](#) that conveys intent to negotiate public access with NVCT. Importantly, ASF notes that a “park” use and retaining 8,000 ft² as “public” land would have two other outcomes, both of which require robust public discussion; ASF would form its position once we understand the potential CAF contributions with each GLUP outcome:

- A. It could count towards its [Public Spaces Master plan goals](#) to “acquire 30 acres more public land over the next ten years.” (p. 55)
- B. If we rescind the “Board’s own motion” and require the developer to pursue the GLUP change, it could what would then be achieved in terms of an affordable housing component pursuant to Section 15.5.8.H of the ACZO.

Attachment: ASF-County Staff emails Aug-Sept 2026

Endnotes

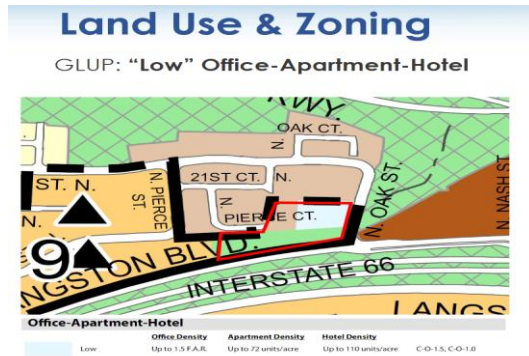
¹ Although ASF is focused here on the giveaway of land use (and the improper process it entails), ASF is also alarmed to discover the site plan would result in another “giveaway” of public land use, introducing a MAJOR impediment to transportation and evacuation outcomes for Arlington and the broader region. Namely, the developer proposes the elimination of one of 3 travel lanes along Langston Blvd, at the south of the development site. From the September 19 2026 draft board report:

“The applicant proposes to remove a travel lane along Langston Boulevard, reducing the number of travel lanes from 3 to 2, and to demolish a portion of the existing soundwall along the building frontage. The overall street width would be reduced to 28.5 feet. VDOT owns and maintains Langston Boulevard and will therefore need to approve any improvements affecting their right-of-way. As the existing soundwalls serve the nearby Interstate 66, any modifications to the sound wall will require approval from the Federal Highway Administration (FWHA).”

² This vote will include a GLUP change, a use permit for a museum about the non-profit Air and Space Force Association, and a site plan for the development of the condos at this site.

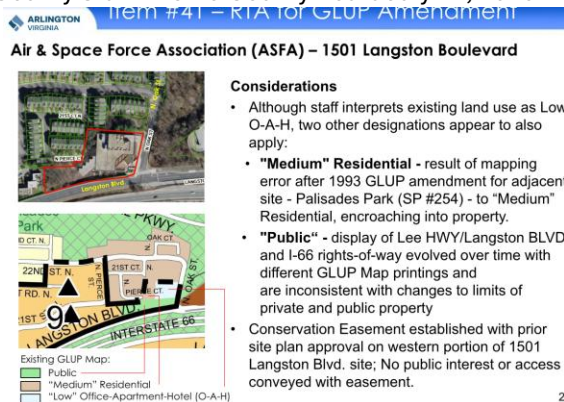
³ This does not rule out “split” GLUP, where one parcel or RPC has more than one sub-component of GLUP or zoning designation; it simply means that any single piece of land (such as the sub-parcels) cannot carry two land use or zoning categories at the same time, and each sub parcel’s land area must add up to the total area of the RPC or property being developed.

⁴ The SPRC went into more detail on land use at its [March 19, 2026 meeting](#) (slide below on p. 5 of the staff presentation.) Staff continued to assert 100% GLUP at Low O-A-H, even while showing a map that indicates the “split” land use referenced in the developer’s Nov 2025 application for site plan review.



⁵ From Arlington [County site plan webpage](#): “Site plans are regulated by [Administrative Regulation 4.1](#) of the Arlington County Zoning Ordinance. This regulation administers a special exception site plan option within certain zoning districts. Site plans that entail special exceptions to the County’s land use and zoning policies are carefully reviewed by an interdepartmental staff team and the [Site Plan Review Committee](#) (SPRC) of the [Planning Commission](#) through a process that ensures proper analysis, public engagement, and compliance with applicable policies and ordinances. Ultimately, the process allows for site-specific flexibility in development form, use, and density, beyond what is otherwise permitted by-right.

⁶ From County Staff Brief to County Board July 21, 2026



⁷ In another derogation of public engagement, the Board tried to put this item on a “consent agenda,” meaning there would not be public debate. NHCA asked it to go on the regular agenda, but their officer was unable to appear at the board meeting, so no public comment was offered.

⁸ Per Section 15.5.8.H of Arlington’s Zoning Code: “Proposals for change of GLUP designation Site plan applications that include an application to change the GLUP designation of the site may be subject to an affordable housing requirement in addition to the above ADU requirement. *Such affordable housing requirements shall be addressed separately in the process of the County Board’s consideration of the approval of the site plan.*” (Italics ASF’s)

⁹ Excerpt from Aaron Roberts, NHCA Development Chair email to Arlington County Board of July 4, 2026. “Altering the primary land-use map at this location directly affects the baseline parameters of the pending site plan. Moving this item to the Regular Agenda will provide a necessary public forum to discuss how the

map amendment aligns with broader county policies, zoning rules, and neighborhood protections. There is a legitimate public interest in reviewing the underlying documentary record to understand how the GLUP and other foundational policy documents may have become misaligned over time and what it means for the County Board's review of other forthcoming development proposals for this specific site."

¹⁰ As noted in ASF's questions to staff, it seems that 17,994 ft² of the property for this RPC was subject to a taking by the Commonwealth of Virginia for construction of I-66, starting in the 70's, and possibly returned to the Air Force Assn in 1983. Staff has not provided any documents to substantiate what actually occurred. ASF is inferring from the property archive, but cannot conclude without more info from the county. However ASF calculated the public land use on the parcel measures 37,111 ft²., if our interpretation is even accurate.

Notes	BUILDING PERMITS					RECAPITULATION
	No.	Date	Kind	Amount	% of Comp.	Appraised Value
1971 - Pt. Parc. A (12,870#) to Comm. of Va. for Rt. 66 w/bldg. D.B. 1769/65		1947	- Tanks installed			LAND
8/29/79 - Pt. (1,106#) to Comm. of Va. for Rt. 66	8467	5/1/54	- Extend outdoor tire rack			
D.B. 1998/1683	9029	9/2/52	- C.B. Addn.			BLDGS.
11/3/82 - Chancery 22217, Cancel C#20690	34542	3/1/60	- Add. Porch		75%	
DB2075/95	15830	3/15/60	- Addn. S. Enc.			TOTAL
11/4/82 - Amend. C#20690 DB2075/174						
11/8/82 - Chancery 22216 Final Order						
DB2075/446, taking 1106# & 9056#, & 17,994 temp. constr. easmt.						
5/10/83 - DB2092/1222 (1,412#) conveyed from Comm. of Va. to Air Force Assn., - Recorded 5/17/83						

¹¹ Section A of that law states that "The local planning commission shall not recommend nor the governing body adopt any plan, ordinance or amendment thereof until notice of intention to do so has been published twice in some newspaper published or having general circulation in the locality, with the first notice appearing no more than 28 days before and the second notice appearing no less than five days before the date of the meeting referenced in the notice."

¹² Section B of Virginia 15.2-2204B also applies here, so far, the draft staff report doesn't indicate notice to adjacent homeowners or apartment managers: "When a proposed amendment of the zoning ordinance involves a change in the zoning map classification of 25 or fewer parcels of land, then, in addition to the advertising as required by subsection A, the advertisement shall include the street address or tax map parcel number of the parcels subject to the action. Written notice shall be given by the local planning commission, or its representative, at least five days before the hearing to the owner or owners, their agent or the occupant, of each parcel involved; to the owners, their agent or the occupant, of all abutting property and property immediately across the street or road from the property affected, including those parcels that lie in other localities of the Commonwealth; . . ."

¹³ **30,771 ft² allows "public" land use** (of which approximately 8,000 ft² is protected from development by a conservation easement first granted by the Air Force Association to the Northern Virginia Conservation Trust. This public land use runs from the SE to the SW boundary of the lot, roughly parallel to the bike path. Within this area, the conservation easement extends up to the boundary of the current building.
17,113 ft² (NE corner of the lot) allows "Low-Office-Apartment-Hotel (OAH)" land use;
11,182 ft² (NW corner of the lot) allows "medium residential" land use. NOTE: These figures add up to a land area greater than that claimed in SPRC documents for the site, highlighting another major flaw in the process.

¹⁴ "The proposed **building generally conforms with the guidance of the Langston Boulevard Area Plan, which provides design guidance for building mass and articulation.** The Plan emphasizes that new buildings should create a human, pedestrian scale and should be well-proportioned to their surrounding environment, **which takes priority over direct conformance with Plan guidance,** and which the proposed design achieves." (bolding and italics ASF's).