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Virginia Interfaith Center for Public Policy
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The Alliance for Housing Solutions is a 501(c)(3) organization.

via e-mail

February 5, 2011

The Honorable Chris Zimmerman, Chair
Arlington County Board
2100 Clarendon Blvd
Arlington, VA 22201

Dear Mr. Chairman and Members of the County Board:

Please be advised that at its December 6, 2010, the **Alliance for Housing Solutions Board of Directors** voted to endorse the **Key Boulevard Apartments redevelopment plan** being proposed by **AHC**. Accordingly, we ask for the Board's support of this project as well.

This project furthers several important goals advanced by County policy regarding affordable housing, **while not requiring County funding**. As we understand it, the Key Boulevard project will:

1. Double the number of affordable units on a short, pedestrian-friendly walk to Metro and along a major bus route;
2. Create more two- and three-bedroom apartments;
3. Be a mixed-income site in a part of the County targeted for additional units of Committed Affordable Units [CAFs];
4. Have amenities including a community center, underground garage, and accessibility; and
5. Be designed to obtain LEED Certification.

We are mindful of concerns raised by both the County and some neighbors of the Key Boulevard site. However, after careful consideration, we strongly believe the positive aspects of the proposed redevelopment outweigh those concerns.

First, upon review of the record, we find that AHC has worked diligently to address neighborhood issues. After several meetings and reviews of proposals put forth by those neighbors, AHC has lowered the height, reducing the number of units, rerouted the local traffic pattern and increased the setback. We know that concerns are still being raised by some neighbors, but AHS is satisfied that AHC has done what it can while retaining the mixed use design which will allow the important goal of not needing County funds.

Second, we understand that historical preservation concerns have been raised. It is our understanding that the Key Boulevard Apartments itself is not deemed historically significant, but is an example of the period style. Preserving the history of Arlington is important, but AHS believes must be balanced against competing needs like affordable housing. AHC has demonstrated that it will work

with historical preservation requirements where that balance makes sense, such as the preservation of larger developments like The Gates and Historic Ballston Park. The Key property is a single acre.

Third, we are sensitive to the need for a Transfer of Development Rights [TDR] to make this project happen and that this would be the first time that the County would transfer such rights across neighborhoods. Again, the many benefits of this project outweigh concerns about setting a broad TDR precedent. We believe that the County can grant a TDR for this project without doing so because of the *unique aspects* of the project:

- a. The Key project will *double* the number of affordable units on the site;
- b. The Key project is *closer* to a Metro station than the proposed sending site;
- c. The Key site will *not* require County funds; and
- d. The proposed development is consistent with the site's density rights before those rights were transferred for the development of The Atrium.

Again, we recommend the County's timely support for the Key Boulevard Apartments redevelopment. Thank you for considering our views.

Sincerely,

/s/
Bill Bozman
Chair

/s/
Jack Cornman
President

cc: Susan Bell
Ken Aughenbaugh
Housing and Planning Commissions
[all via e-mail]