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1-24-17

**Jackie Henderson**

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**From:** Puskar, M. Catharine <cpuskar@thelandlawyers.com>  
**Sent:** Monday, January 23, 2017 4:46 PM  
**To:** Jackie Henderson; Allison Silberberg; Justin Wilson; Paul Smedberg; delpepper@aol.com; Timothy Lovain; 'John Taylor Chapman (j.taylor.chapman@gmail.com)'; Willie Bailey  
**Cc:** Mark Jinks; Karl Moritz; Jeffrey Farner  
**Subject:** Eisenhower East Plan Update  
**Attachments:** 1147\_001.pdf

All,

On behalf of our respective clients, please see the attached letter regarding Eisenhower East and the FY 2018 Long Range interdepartmental Planning Work Program.

Thank you,

Cathy and Ken



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January 23, 2017

*Via E-mail to jackiehenderson@alexandriava.gov*

Mayor Silberberg and Members of City Council  
City Hall  
301 King Street  
Alexandria, VA 22314

**Re: Eisenhower East Plan**

Dear Mayor Silberberg and Members of City Council:

As a follow up to our letter dated December 8<sup>th</sup>, 2016, on behalf of the landowners below, we write to reiterate our request that the City Council accelerate the Eisenhower East Plan Update to study proposed increases in density from the current staff proposed FY 2020 start date to a FY 2018 start date. As currently contemplated by staff, and reflected in its January 4, 2017 memo to the Planning Commission, the Eisenhower East Phase II Plan Update would not start until January 2020, which is actually halfway through FY 2020. If the City hopes to achieve its goals for "Eisenhower East to remain one of the City's key economic engines" and to "enhance neighborhood vitality and quality of life for Carlyle residents, employees, and visitors as well as to improve Carlyle's competitiveness in the regional office market," it should proceed with the second phase of the Eisenhower East Plan Update without delay for the following reasons:

- The proposed increases in density would increase commercial (office/hotel/retail) density within Eisenhower East to respond to demand from NSF, PTO and associated residents, employees and visitors.
- The proposed increases in density would maximize development opportunities at the Eisenhower Metro, thereby increasing the vitality of the neighborhood and ridership/revenue for Metro.
- The proposed increases in density would permit the elimination of the suburban retail strip and pad site with surface parking along Swamp Fox Road to provide an integrated mixed use building with ground floor retail and a better entrance to the Town Center.
- The proposed increases in density would permit the elimination of a suburban office building with surface parking to provide a new office and/or hotel building to be developed on Eisenhower Ave. between Elizabeth Lane and Mill Road.
- The proposed increases in density would permit the elimination of the suburban office/retail strip with surface parking along Eisenhower Avenue across from PTO and create a new mixed use retail/entertainment center to complement the

Town Center and enhance vibrancy of the area adjacent to Carlyle, which in turn, will enhance the competitiveness and vibrancy of Carlyle itself.

- The proposed increases in density would provide additional jobs, affordable housing, ridership, and tax base.
- Starting the Phase II planning process closer in time to the Phase I planning process, scheduled to be completed in September 2017, will allow data used in Phase I to be used as part of Phase II, thereby saving time and resources.
- Starting the Phase II planning process closer in time to the Phase I planning process will allow all of the landowners in Phases I and II to work together to maximize the economic development potential within the Area, including the potential establishment of a BID for the Eisenhower East/Carlyle neighborhoods.

In response to questions from Planning Commissioners at the January 5<sup>th</sup>, 2017 Planning Commission work session regarding the interdepartmental Long Range Planning Work Program, Staff used the fact that there is still unused density within Eisenhower East plan as a justification for not planning for the highest and best use within Eisenhower East. This is contrary to comprehensive planning throughout the City where updates are often made while density is still available (North Potomac Yard is a current example). Even though there is density is available on certain blocks does not mean that there is adequate density on all blocks to permit redevelopment to occur. For instance, Blocks 22, 24 and 25 represent 13.29 acres of land and, yet, are only slated for a total of 600,000 sf of density under the existing plan. Given the existing income from the suburban retail/office strip, it is not economically viable to demolish the existing improvements to develop 600,000 sf, nor is such an outcome desirable from an urban planning standpoint. However, if additional density were granted, the development would be economically viable and could occur in phases to permit existing tenants to be relocated to new buildings without disruption. In addition, just because additional density is available on certain blocks does not mean that that is the highest and best use of that block. For instance, the City should seize the opportunity to increase density in blocks 9A and 9B adjacent to the Eisenhower East Metro, Block 6 adjacent to the Town Center and Block 23 adjacent to PTO. Why wait and potentially have projects move forward that are permitted under the existing plan but do not maximize the highest and best use for the site?

Staff also stated that it anticipates the Phase II planning process to take 18 months and that it does not have the staff or resources to undertake such an effort until January 2020. However, this is not a new plan like Oakville Triangle or Eisenhower West, but an update to an existing plan. As such, the process should take no longer than one year at the most and could conceivably be done much quicker. However, like Oakville Triangle and Eisenhower West, the landowners have offered to provide funding for staff consultants if the Plan Update moves forward sooner. Related to that, the landowners have also offered to help provide funding for studies, such as an updated sanitary sewer analysis, which could assist with other City Initiatives like the Sanitary Sewer Master Plan update slated for FY 2019 or the implementation of a BID.

Finally, Staff gave assurances that, should major office tenants or a GSA Request for Proposals come forward, it would accelerate approvals to ensure the ability of Alexandria to compete with other jurisdictions. While such statements are appreciated, they represent a reactive versus proactive approach to planning. If the City wants to be regionally competitive, it needs to take advantage of the opportunity to update the Eisenhower East Plan while multiple landowners are at the table, to proactively plan the coordinated development of Eisenhower East into the vibrant 24/7 neighborhood and economic engine that all would like to see.

As such, once again, we respectfully request that the Eisenhower East Plan Update for increases in density not be delayed until January 2020, but instead, be added to the City's FY 2018 Interdepartmental Work Program.

Very truly yours,

PERSEUS REALTY (Blocks 22, 24, 25A)  
SIMPSON DEVELOPMENT (Block 23)  
RUBENSTEIN PARTNERS (Blocks 6B & 6C)



By M. Catharine Puskar attorney/agent  
Walsh, Colucci, Lubeley & Walsh, P.C.

THE HOFFMAN COMPANIES  
(Blocks 3, 9A & 9B)



By Ken Wire attorney/agent  
McGuire Woods

Cc: Mark Jinks  
Karl Mortiz  
Jeff Farner