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COMMENTS ON BEAUREGARD SMALL AREA PLAN

Hon. Mayor and Members of the City Council. My name is Owen Curtis, and I live at 5465 Fillmore Avenue, Alexandria, VA. I live there because it is a heavily treed, affordable, walkable neighborhood with excellent transit service, and reasonable proximity by bike and car and everything we need and want. In the early 1990s, I helped prepare the Alexandria West Small Area Plan, and at the core of that plan was the protection of the balance between the Mark Center development, and the residential neighborhoods which surround the area now pulled aside and set into the Beauregard Small Area Plan. At the heart of my concerns with the BSAP is that it has brushed aside the buffering of the previous plan, and proposes to bring higher density development, roads, and lots more traffic into our front and back yards. We will be protected no more.

The BSAP was proposed by the development interests to do right by their investors. The BSAP was hastened along by City staff looking to do right by contemporary planning guidelines and ideas. What we have here is a plan which is all about some future community, but there is nothing in this plan which is about doing right by the existing vibrant, diverse, affordable, walkable neighborhood which has kept me and my family there for nearly 40 years.

City Council today can remedy that flaw in the plan. You can remand this plan back to staff, and have them hire an independent facilitator to come in and mediate the differences between the interests of the developer and staff on the future community, and the interests of the current residents of this same community. In doing so, I would expect resolution of the number of issues which we specifically have with the plan as drafted:

- We need to rectify the imbalance between the proposed development levels and the capacity of the multimodal transportation system to realistically provide for the safe and efficient movement of people to, through, and within the area.

- We need to better understand the allegations in the plan that the development in the area can more than double, and yet ... as if by magic ... traffic will not get any worse over the next 25 or 30 years. As this plan stands, that is simply not credible.
- We need to broaden our thinking about specific transportation elements – the transitway and the ellipse in particular, so that the intent of these unproven concepts is maintained, but the decision on precisely what to implement and how to implement it is done when there is enough sound analysis to prove what the work to date has only alleged, which is that these two items will fix the transportation woes which BRAC and the proposed additional 7 MSF of development bring to our neighborhood.
- We need to focus more on the improvement of the excellent transit service which the residents already have and use, and not forsake it to build new transit service for the future employees who will work at Mark Center.
- We need to create an implementation strategy which permits the development incrementally as the City, state, and developers provide the transportation capacity to provide for the needs to the thousands of new employees and residents. If the capacity is not there, then the development is on hold until it is provided. That is how Montgomery County does it; that is the way to both build a quality new community and preserve a high quality existing one.

Tomorrow is Mother's Day. Your mothers all taught you an important lesson – always do the right thing. Today, you can honor your mothers by doing the right thing with this plan. Please remand it back to staff, hire a facilitator, and let's truly and cooperatively fix this plan and protect our neighborhood.

Thank you.