

ENVIRONMENT AND ENERGY CONSERVATION COMMISSION
c/o Department of Environmental Services
2100 Clarendon Blvd., Suite 705
Arlington, VA 22201

June 1, 2012
The Honorable Mary Hynes, Chair
Arlington County Board
2100 Clarendon Blvd., Suite 300
Arlington, VA 22201

Subject: Arlington County Green Building Density Incentive Policy for Site Plans

Dear Madame Chair:

The purpose of this letter is to comment on potential revisions in the floor area ratio (FAR) bonus density award levels and requirements under the County's Green Building Density Incentive Policy for Site Plans. The Environment and Energy Conservation Commission (E2C2) supports Arlington County Department of Environmental Services' (DES) proposal to strengthen the award program and tie it more closely to the County's long-term goals for sustainability and greater energy efficiency.

Existing FAR bonus density awards for a project are linked to attainment of Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) certification¹ and vary by level of certification (i.e. Certified, Silver, Gold, and Platinum). To be certified a project must satisfy all LEED rating system prerequisites and qualify for points in LEED environmental categories.² Existing FAR bonus density awards do not require the attainment of points toward certification in any particular LEED environmental category. E2C2 understands that only some past program participants pursued points in the LEED category titled "Energy and Atmosphere", and that, as a result, there was no guarantee that the award program would lead to a decrease in annual building energy use compared to a smaller building without the bonus density reward. E2C2 supports staff's efforts to ensure that every project leads to energy savings compared to those without the incentive.

E2C2 appreciates the complexity involved in revising award criteria to provide market incentives at the margin, promote a sustainable form of development in Arlington County, and make efficient use of limited County resources as part of a voluntary program. E2C2 generally supports the adoption of revised FAR bonus density award levels that vary according to LEED level of certification and the elimination of any bonus density for buildings below the silver LEED standard. These changes reflect the fact that the building industry is gradually becoming more energy efficient, and basic LEED certification no longer merits bonus density.

Further, E2C2 supports the following additional program requirements proposed by DES:

- E2C2 supports adoption of revised FAR bonus density award levels linked to a project's attainment of points in the Energy and Atmosphere environmental category. Establishing this link is important to Arlington County in that it would induce a reduction in overall energy use compared to plans without the FAR award, thereby

¹ Level of certification under the New Construction and Major Renovations program

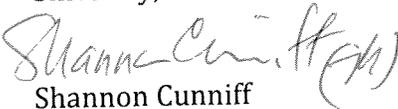
² The LEED environmental categories include Sustainable Sites, Water Efficiency, Energy and Atmosphere, Materials and Resources, Indoor Environmental Quality, Innovation in Design, and Regional Priority.

contributing to "Goals for Arlington's Sustainable Energy Future" as described in the Arlington County Community Energy and Sustainability Task Force Report.

- E2C2 strongly supports the proposal to require that builders who receive green building bonus density report their energy utility data for ten years. Such data would facilitate the comparison of predicted energy usage based on engineering models to actual building performance and help fill a gap in our current knowledge base.
- E2C2 supports the concept of a small additional FAR bonus for post-occupancy achievement of an Energy Star label of certification under the LEED for Existing Buildings program.

E2C2 thanks the Board for the opportunity to comment on potential revisions in the County's Green Building Density Incentive Policy for Site Plans.

Sincerely,



Shannon Cunniff
Chair, E2C2