



November 29, 2021

Subject: Limited Boundary Changes Temporary Solution, More K-12 Seats Needed in 22202

Dear Arlington County School Board,

This is a joint letter from Livability22202 (the association of the three civic associations in the 22202 zip code), following up on our letter of June 23, 2021 to APS. The members of the Livability 22202 Schools Working Group has been working hard for the last two years in pursuing the written objective in our [Livability22202 Action Plan of November 2019](#) to secure essential school services in 22202. By this letter, we write to ask for a clear process to determine sufficient seats, and specifically a siting process, for future schools in 22202.

While we support the fall 2021 limited boundary changes as a temporary solution to meet the increasing demand for schools in south Arlington, we urge you to start planning for the long term. We are pleased with the initial inclusion of a possible elementary school in the draft Pentagon City Planning Study and the co-location of the Community High School in the Pen Place site. However, we are deeply concerned with the conservative approach being pursued by the county that only considers publicly owned land and does not consider seat needs at the middle and high school level. We are also concerned that the draft plan does not explicitly outline a process for when new school seats will be considered and incorporated into the school's Capital Improvement plan. It is imperative that, with thousands of new 22202 residents expected in coming years, the School Board conduct the necessary analysis and planning for a new elementary school in 22202, seats to address the overcrowding at Gunston and seats to address the overcrowding at Wakefield.

According to APS, Gunston and Wakefield are the only Middle and High Schools where enrollment currently exceeds the permanent building capacity. Plans for increased density across the county, most notably in Crystal and Pentagon City, will lead to increased demands for all public services and create additional pressure on these facilities. For example, hundreds of new affordable units at Crystal House, which we welcome, will bring many families to our neighborhood.

The limited APS boundary changes are a critical short-term solution, but the planned increases in density over the long-term will necessitate endless APS boundary changes

as new buildings come online each year, shifting children in southern Arlington further north. APS Policy B-2.1 guides the boundary adjustment process, along with the six policy considerations. We agree that local and walkable schools encourage a crucial relationship between schools and the community, while also keeping students safe and maximizing efficiency. And that stability, alignment, and demographic diversity are critical to academic achievement. As thousands of new residents arrive to Crystal and Pentagon City, it will be impossible for boundary adjustments to meet policy guidance and considerations, resulting in an inadequate public education system that exacerbates inequity. The only long-term solution is more capacity in 22202 and neighboring zip codes.

The current and planned developments in 22202 will lead to increased demand on the educational system, but they also bring an unprecedented opportunity for the investment in public services and infrastructure. We, the Livability 22202 Schools Working Group and the leaders of Livability22202, request the School Board launch an elementary school site study for our neighborhood, that considers not only the Aurora Hills Community Center, but also Crystal House, Melwood, RiverHouse, the current Gunston/Oakridge property, and other unoccupied land in and adjacent to 22202, and that these studies be incorporated into the implementation matrix of the Pentagon City Planning Study. While the construction of a school may be some time off, we must have certainty about its location lest viable options be precluded by future development and planning

We look forward to partnering with you to ensure that all Arlington children have access to safe neighborhood schools that are planned and built in response to realistic enrollment needs.

Sincerely,



Kateri Garcia  
Arlington Ridge CA



Scott Miles, President  
Aurora Highlands CA



Eric Cassel, President  
Crystal City CA

Attachment: Members of the Livability22202 Schools Working Group

## Members of the Livability22202 Schools Working Group

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