

**Crystal City Planning Process
Community Forum No. 1
Comments from Attendees
Wednesday, May 16, 2007**

1. What is the phasing plan for the West Side Neighborhood area? Is there a 300% increase in density here? How does this work? How would the build-out be phased?
(Response: Phasing in this area will be more market-driven, since the BRAC (Base Realignment and Closure) impact is low in this area. For background, in 2005 the Base Realignment and Closure Commission recommended that Department of Defense workers vacate leased office space for security reasons. This will have a significant impact on the office and retail market in Crystal City. This action by the BRAC Commission spurred the recommendation to conduct this planning process.)

The potential increase in density west of Route 1 appears very large because many of the parcels are not built to their capacity, so redevelopment to a higher density does result in a large overall increase. Most of the new development would be residential in use. Taller buildings would be incorporated north of 12th Street. The infill buildings in the area between 15th and 22nd Streets, west of Eads Street, would be consistent with existing building heights but would step down along Fern Street where they abut single-family housing. Buildings south of 23rd along Eads would be between 3 and 6 stories, which is shorter than the current Holiday Inn Hotel.)

2. Who is paying for this (infrastructure/transit improvements)?
(Response: There are many potential ways to pay for the proposed amenities and necessary transportation improvements, such as a tax district, funds created through the taxing authority of the Northern Virginia Transportation Authority, and/or through the provision of additional height and density.)
3. Plan and model show new development north and south of proposed Traffic Circle between Rt. 1 and Eads. This higher density is threatening to us (neighborhood to west).
(Response: This area is currently designated as "High Residential" on the General Land Use Plan and would allow County Board approval for projects that are more dense and taller than what is being proposed in the Crystal City plan).
4. Why is increasing density such a great thing? Why is higher density appropriate for Crystal City?
(Response: In order to minimize additional sprawl in our region, and to protect Arlington's single-family neighborhoods, Arlington has a long-standing policy of focusing height and density in its Metro corridors, such as Crystal City. Increasing height and density in Crystal City is also necessary to spur redevelopment of outdated and uncompetitive buildings, which in part or in whole, will be vacated due to BRAC. The creation of amenities such as pedestrian oriented streets, new park and plaza spaces and performing arts spaces could be funded through the additional density provided to the development community.)
5. This presentation is better than before (at Charrette).

6. What is the procedure for the development process? How can you do something across property lines? Is this plan a pipe dream?

(Response: The plan would be comprehensive in nature to address all of the functional elements of Crystal City. New property lines may be drawn as part of the development process to implement the plan. Individual buildings would require County Board approval through the site plan process, which incorporates public participation. If consistent with the plan, the building proposal would likely be approved.)

7. Where does the 300' height limit come from?

(Response: Based on independent studies of issues relating to the airport such as flight patterns and regional radar clearances. The 300' height limit translates into buildings of approximately 27 stories for office or 30 stories for residential.)

8. How many stories in 300' height?

(Response: see #7 above)

9. What is the probability these buildings will be approved?

(Response: see #6 above)

10. Why is there a proposed office building at east terminus of 18th Street. Why replace building there?

(Response: Placement of an office building in this location would be consistent with the County policy of focusing office development close to public transit. This use provides the greatest potential for use of Metro.)

11. West of Rt. 1, south of 26th Street - Putting high density around circle close to low density neighborhood. This will increase traffic on Eads.

(Response: New development to the west of the airport circle would have vehicle access to Eads Street, perhaps increasing the vehicular traffic. The increases in traffic are being studied with the on-going analysis.)

12. Potomac Parkway should connect to Route 1. Commuters could use Potomac Parkway and Crystal Drive to bypass Rt. 1 to get to 14th street bridge.

(Response: There are multiple direct connections to Route 1 from Potomac Avenue. These are Glebe Road, 33rd Street S., and 27th Street S.)

13. What are the limits to our growth? What can our existing infrastructure support?

(Response: The final plan would incorporate adequate infrastructure to support the proposed level of development.)

14. New building at 1801 Crystal is so close to our building (1806). How will this effect access to our building to the south?

(Response: Access from Crystal Drive, south of 20th Street, would be maintained if not improved.)

15. How do we turn left into our building (1806 Crystal)?

(Response: See #14 above)

16. Putting office buildings in place of 1801 will destroy residential character of neighborhood.

(Response: Placement of an office building in this location would be consistent with the County policy of focusing office development close to public transit. This use provides the greatest potential for use of Metro.)

17. Building new library in Crystal City will destroy existing library (Aurora Hills Library).

(Response: Demand for a library in Crystal City, as well as other public facilities, will be studied.)

18. How does increasing the proportion of Residential, Retail and Parking make this an effective proposal? Seems disproportionate.

(Response: A primary goal is to establish a more equal balance between daytime and nighttime populations as well as office and residential populations.)

19. How much public space is owned by the county?

(Response: None – all is privately owned.)

20. Are taller buildings appropriate in Crystal City?

(Response: In order to minimize additional sprawl in our region, and to protect Arlington's single-family neighborhoods, Arlington has a long-standing policy of focusing height and density in its Metro corridors, such as Crystal City. Increasing height and density in Crystal City is also necessary to spur redevelopment of outdated and uncompetitive buildings, which in part or in whole, will be vacated due to BRAC. The creation of amenities such as pedestrian oriented streets, new park and plaza spaces and performing arts spaces could be funded through the additional density provided to the development community.)

21. Why are buildings so high? This will increase traffic.

(Response: See #20 above).

22. Why can't we keep existing building heights?

(Response: See #20 above).

23. Why so tall? Going to 180 ft – 300 ft?

(Response: See #20 above).

24. It's so expensive to build 300' buildings and why are we doing this?

(Response: See #20 above).

25. Will the FAA really permit taller buildings in Crystal City?

(Response: The County has begun what will be a long-term dialogue with the FAA and MWAA. Nothing will be built that would negatively impact airport operations.)

26. Can't you just build more floors on top of existing buildings?

(Response: In most cases, up to 6 stories could be built on top of an existing building without needing to add significant structural support to the rest of the building. Significant structural support would most likely require demolition of a building. This may be a likely scenario for a

few buildings and the County Board recently approved a 6-story addition for the Crystal Plaza 2 building on 20th Street.)

27. On the North Tract... where is everyone going to park? What about the environmental impacts?

(Response: There will be surface parking in the near term and garage parking in the long term.)

28. The plan shows (north and east of 12th Street) play courts into “our park”, a building by “our park”. Why?

(Response: Active green space is proposed to compliment and provide a connection from Crystal City to the North Tract. Passive areas are also included in the plan for this area.)

29. Flooding is an issue at north end of Crystal City.

30. Have you contacted Metro? Are you working with Metro to discuss increase in ridership and other capacity issues? Have you discussed the new entrance with them?

(Response: Yes, we are working with WMATA. WMATA has studied the additional entrance. The additional entrance would most likely be constructed as part of building development in that location.)

31. Are we looking at emergency management and security management?

(Response: The County has sheltering and evacuation plans depending on the circumstance. The plans are not neighborhood specific and the closest shelter for Crystal City would be Gunston Middle School. Please see the County’s Office of Emergency Management web page for more information:

<http://www.arlingtonva.us/Departments/EmergencyManagement/EmergencyManagementMain.aspx>)

32. Who is doing this study? Can we have names?

(Response: Arlington County Staff is working with consultants and the Task Force to develop a vision plan.)

33. What is the process for getting these buildings built?

(Response: See #6)

34. Representatives from three condo buildings in Crystal City got together to discuss six areas of concern and eight areas of deep concern, prepared a document and circulated it. Over 300 people signed this document. We ask that the Task Force and County review this document and respond to each item. This should be a public report.

(Response: A written response will be provided to answer the concerns).

35. Uninterrupted walkway in the underground is vital to success of Crystal City. It won’t be viable if the circulation network is broken up. What can we do to keep it uninterrupted during and after development?

(Response: The underground walkway would be disrupted during parts of construction and therefore businesses and pedestrian circulation would also be disrupted. The plan would include general recommendations for managing such disruption. A plan to manage disruption at the

individual building level would be finalized during the site plan process, which includes public participation.)

36. We need green space on 12th street as an active parks.

(Response: This is included in the preliminary concept for Crystal City.)

37. The selected time for the next community forum is not good. Saturday and a July summer day? Timing seems to discourage attendance.

38. What is process to get answers to these questions?

39. Are you going to respond publicly to these comments?

40. Would it be possible to set up a public exhibition of the proposal (drawings and model) at a local public institution?