

CRYSTAL CITY PLANNING PROCESS

VISION STATEMENT, GOALS, and OBJECTIVES

Vision Statement

With its close proximity to the Potomac River overlooking the nation's monuments, Crystal City today offers an established office, hotel, residential, and retail mixed-use environment accessible via its extraordinary transportation network comprised of: rail and bus transit; streets and sidewalks; interior public walkways connecting to transit and, in targeted areas, lined with restaurants, local retailers, and neighborhood services; bicycle trails; regional connectors; and National Airport. In the future, as Crystal City grows along with the region it will be enhanced with improved surface transit service and a more functional and pedestrian-friendly urban street network lined with active retail and civic spaces. Crystal City's future physical character will include enhanced upper-story uses that provide a Class A office environment and expand the array of residential offerings in the neighborhood. Crystal City's "sense of place" will be strengthened by providing additional attractive and safe civic, cultural, retail, recreational, and community amenities and defining distinct neighborhoods through high-quality architecture, open spaces, streetscape designs, and public art. Residents, visitors, and workers, alike will all benefit from Crystal City's smart growth policies, improved land use and transportation connections, and enhanced quality of life.

Goals and Objectives

This vision for Crystal City is expressed through the following seven goals and supporting objectives which are reflected in the concept plan and policy framework:

1. Create a High Quality Public Realm that Strengthens the Sense of Place

- Coordinate the public realm so that the street system, transit system, sidewalks and interior walkway system, and a variety of public open spaces work together to establish the framework around which redevelopment shall occur.
- Improve the urban form and pedestrian experience while enhancing street-level activity and connectivity for all users by designing smaller, tree-lined neighborhood blocks.
- Target existing underutilized paved spaces for consolidation into development sites before impacting existing green spaces.
- Increase the amount of high-quality, accessible and "usable" public open space in Crystal City.
- Create a variety of accessible public spaces that are strategically phased and located throughout Crystal City. These public spaces should be appropriately sized, designed, and programmed to attract, serve and support the anticipated population of residents, workers, and visitors including their recreation, leisure, social and cultural needs.
- Acknowledge residual open spaces between buildings for their ability to provide visual relief and a calming influence.

- Establish at least one primary, centrally located public space that can serve as the “heart” of Crystal City and a venue for significant, programmed community events.
- Integrate cultural venues with public spaces, streets, and interior walkways in an effort to increase visibility and accessibility, create synergy between uses, and increase pedestrian activity levels overall.
- Provide attractions and/or amenities in the interior walkway system and along streets to stir interest and to encourage an active round-the-clock street life, such as public art, streetscape furniture, wayfinding, retail and cultural venues.

2. Provide a Mix of Uses by balancing office, residential, retail, cultural, and civic uses **among several defined neighborhood centers.**

- Define Crystal City by its neighborhoods, including the northern neighborhood, the central Metro station district, the entertainment district along Crystal Drive, and the hotel district to the south.
- Create a more even balance between residential and office uses and daytime and evening populations, and maintain an economically sustainable hotel base.
- Improve the availability of primary elements of daily living within Crystal City.
- Create a thriving “Class A” office environment.
- Provide a mix of housing options to accommodate households with differing income levels, family composition, and accessibility requirements.
- Provide varied cultural and civic facilities and uses (such as theaters, emergency service facilities, health care, day care, urgent medical care, meeting spaces, etc.) for all age groups, and strategically locate them near transit centers, public spaces, and restaurants to promote those venues and help define neighborhood centers.
- Encourage a diverse mix of retail spaces, including grocery stores, to maintain and attract local retail and neighborhood services in addition to major and national retailers.
- Create a safe environment for all by mixing uses, programming activities in public spaces and through design techniques that foster social activity, interaction, and visibility.

3. Relate Architectural and Urban Design to the Human Scale

- Create new buildings where the base of at least one or two stories relates to the street level and the top creates a meaningful connection to the sky.
- Use wide expanses of glass for the base of building retail spaces to promote street activity.
- Use building massing and elevations to create and frame the public realm and to preserve and enhance views from within the public realm.
- Create distinct and defined block edges.
- Provide a meaningful and careful transition from the core of Crystal City to the adjacent single family neighborhood.
- Establish identifiable landscape, public art, or architectural features at gateway locations between Crystal City and adjoining lower-density residential neighborhoods.

4. Enhance Multimodal Access and Connectivity

- Improve transportation and land-use connections within and beyond Crystal City through transit-oriented development.
- Enhance Crystal City's transit orientation with new and better transit services and facilities designed to meet the future needs of Crystal City, and to further encourage residents, workers, and visitors to select transit over personal vehicles.
- Enhance Crystal City's multimodal transportation infrastructure by designing transit facilities as integral architectural elements and improving overall transit, pedestrian, and bicycle access and connectivity.
- Provide high quality surface transit service that has travel times competitive with private automobiles, attracts riders, reduces automobile dependency, and limits roadway congestion.
- Enhance the urban quality of Crystal City by strengthening the urban street grid.
- Create a hierarchy of streets to facilitate automobile, transit, bike, and pedestrian use.
- Create vibrant, pedestrian oriented streets through the better use of sidewalks, streetscapes, and open space areas to improve space for pedestrians, bicyclists, parking, and transit.
- Transform Jefferson Davis Highway (Route 1) into an asset of the overall multimodal transportation network.
- Supply appropriate parking to support a vibrant mix of uses while discouraging unnecessary single occupancy vehicle use.
- Maximize the use of all parking resources through measures such as Transportation Demand Management ("TDM").
- Maintain and improve connections to the interior walkway system both vertically and horizontally as development occurs while maintaining its connectivity to Metrorail and creating linkages to transitway stations.
- Enhance the utility and safety of the bicycle network as part of the Crystal City transportation network.
- Provide better connections to National Airport and the surrounding regional transportation network.
- Provide comprehensive wayfinding for all users.

5. Incorporate Sustainable and Green Building Principles into all Urban and Architectural Design.

- Consider environmental sustainability and overall energy efficiency as integral parts of all aspects of building design and development.
- Design buildings and neighborhoods using the best available technologies and processes feasible to protect the local environment (stormwater quality, waste reduction, heat island reduction) and the regional environment (climate change, Chesapeake Bay protection, air quality).
- Design and build new buildings to meet county policies on sustainable development.

6. Preserve the Integrity of the Single-Family Neighborhood to the West.

- Taper buildings up in scale and height, west to east, from Fern Street to Eads Street between 18th and 23rd Streets, so that buildings along the east side of Fern Street are compatible in scale and form and have stepbacks that respond appropriately to the single-family homes on the west side of Fern Street.
- Taper buildings up in scale and height, west to east, across Eads Street between 23rd Street and Fort Scott Drive, so that buildings along the east side of Eads Street are compatible in scale and form and have stepbacks that respond appropriately to the single-family homes on the west side of Eads Street.
- Provide improved pedestrian, bike and other connections between Crystal City and adjacent single-family neighborhoods, to help reduce the barrier effect of Jefferson Davis Highway.
- Direct traffic to major arterials and multi-modal network elements, and avoid street designs that increase cut thru traffic into adjacent single-family neighborhoods.

7. Ensure Crystal City's Long-Term Economic Sustainability.

- To the extent possible, plan at the block level or in increments of multiple blocks in order to realize a balanced mix of uses accompanied by sufficient open spaces and service and cultural uses.
- Create a vision plan which ensures that new development can be economically viable.
- Provide flexibility to phase development to meet market conditions, support timely redevelopment of properties most impacted by BRAC, encourage redevelopment, and address future public improvements.
- Promote public/private partnerships for achieving community enhancements.
- Provide assistance to property owners, tenants, and small businesses during the BRAC transition and Crystal City redevelopment.
- Maintain and encourage a robust hotel environment at Crystal City.
- Recognize the importance of National Airport and the key elements of its economic viability in the long-term sustainability of the county.
- Strengthen Crystal City's competitive edge with other close-in jurisdictions and localities in the Washington, D.C. region in attracting and retaining private sector users of Class A office space.
- Acknowledge and respect Crystal City's existing populations during redevelopment activities and minimize any associated potential negative impacts to their quality of life.