

CRYSTAL CITY
VISION STATEMENT, GOALS, and OBJECTIVES (DRAFT)

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 lined with restaurants, local retailers, and neighborhood services; bicycle trails; regional connectors; and National Airport. In the future, Crystal City 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, and recreational, and community amenities and defining distinct neighborhoods through high-quality architecture, open spaces, and streetscape designs. Residents, visitors, and workers, alike will all benefit from Crystal City's 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 implementation policies:

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 and while enhance enhancing street-level activity and connectivity for all users by designing smaller, tree-lined neighborhood blocks.
- Target existing ineffective-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 ~~that naturally occur~~ between buildings for their ability to provide visual relief and a calming influence.

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- Establish at least one ~~large primary~~, centrally located public space that can serve as the “heart” of Crystal City and a venue for ~~large significant~~, programmed community events.
- Integrate cultural venues with public spaces, ~~and 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 ~~Underground interior W~~walkway ~~S~~system and along streets to stir interest and to encourage an active round-the-clock street life, such as public art, streetscape furniture, wayfinding, ~~public art~~, retail and cultural venues, ~~and retail~~.

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 ~~better more even~~ balance between residential and office uses, and maintain an economically sustainable healthy hotel base.
- Further Rreduce dependency on the automobile by improving the availability of ~~locating the~~ 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 for all age groups, and strategically locate them near transit centers, public spaces, and restaurants ~~and public spaces~~ to promote those venues and help define neighborhood centers.
- Encourage a diverse mix of retail spaces 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 provide “eyes on the street” and other pedestrian corridors. ~~and by programming activities in public spaces.~~

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 ~~frame~~ 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.

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4. Enhance Multimodal Access and Connectivity

- Improve transportation and land-use connections through transit-oriented development.
- ~~Provide~~ Enhance Crystal City's transit orientation with new and better transit services and facilities designed to meet the future needs of Crystal City ~~as it develops~~, 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 ~~competitive~~ 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 Transportation Demand Management ("TDM") measures.
- ~~Provide better~~ Maintain and improve connections to the ~~Underground~~ interior ~~W~~ walkway ~~S~~ 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 from Fern Street to the west to Eads Street to the east between 18th and 23rd Streets.

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- Buildings along Fern Street, between 18th and 23rd Streets, should be ~~of a compatible in~~ scale and form and have setbacks that respond appropriately similar to the single-family homes on the west side of Fern Street.
- Provide improved pedestrian and bike connections between Crystal City and adjacent single-family neighborhood.
- Avoid opportunities for vehicular cut thru traffic into the 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 ~~public realm and/or transit~~ 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 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.