

# CRYSTAL CITY INSIDER

The monthly newsletter of the Crystal City Civic Association



January 2021



***HAPPY NEW YEAR!***

## ***A MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT***

Looking forward to a better year than 2020! We're moving to bimonthly virtual meetings live streamed to Facebook, starting January 27. Let us know if you have suggestions for topics you would like to be covered. Also, we've added a timeline of development/construction issues which explains why we're all so exhausted.

[Don't forget to \*\*renew your membership here\*\* and stay involved.](#)

- Carol Fuller, CCCA President

## **CIVIC ASSOCIATION AND LIVABILITY 22202 ISSUES**

### **CCCA Membership Dues Renewal**

Dues are assessed on a calendar year for \$10 and can be renewed online on our [website](#). If you haven't renewed, please do so **by February 1, 2021**, in order to remain a voting member and continue receiving the Newsletter and emails.

### **SAVE THE DATE: January 27 CCCA Meeting**

Our first meeting of the year is scheduled for Wednesday, January 27, from 7-9 pm. We've invited Arlington County health officials to talk about their COVID vaccination plan, what they are doing to help disadvantaged during the crisis (e.g., food/evictions), and the impact COVID has had on the County budget. We may also ask JBG to give a brief update on the ongoing public engagement about their site plan for 2000/2001 Clark/Bell and upcoming construction at 1900 Crystal Drive. Stay tuned for the details.

### **SAVE THE DATE: March 17 CCCA Meeting**

The Metropolitan Washington Airports Authority (MWAA) has agreed to provide a video and PowerPoint update on all the work that is being done at National Airport and which is expected to be completed by summer 2021. Stay tuned for more details.

## Livability22202 Reports Released

Following the workshops January to March and discussions throughout the year, the working groups on Housing Affordability and Open Space issued their final reports in December.

### Housing Affordability

This report issued December 7 reviews the housing history, data, and recommendations prepared by 22202 residents to address the need for diverse and affordable housing types in the area. Given the upward pressure on rents and housing prices that have already restricted who can live in 22202, this report provides a series of detailed proposals for ensuring the neighborhood can be welcoming to a diverse population. These recommendations were developed through two workshops in early 2020 and written by a group of neighborhood residents. View the [full report](#), the [Fact Sheet](#), and the [press release](#).

### Open Space

The final report issued December 14 examines the principles for holistic planning needed to strengthen connectivity, natural ecosystems, and community-building in open space in the 22202 zip code area. It provides observations and recommendations for initiating a sustained collaboration with other stakeholders invested in the success of our community, including property developers, owners, county staff, and commission members. As stated in the [Livability22202 Action Plan, November 2019](#): “A commitment to livability means a focus on factors that promote ecological sustainability and human health and well-being.” View the [final report](#), the [Fact Sheet](#), and the [press release](#).

## CRYSTAL CITY (AND NEARBY)

### Development/Construction Timelines (TBD)

The following timelines are very tentative but will give residents an idea of what to expect and when from a variety of projects. We will go over these timelines at our next CCCA meeting as well.

- [2121 Crystal Drive](#) (Dining in the Park) site plan amendment (approved at December County Board); no construction earlier than end 2021 with summer 2022 opening if a restaurant tenant lease is signed in 2021
- [1900 Crystal Drive construction](#): waiting on construction bids; decision by January; February 2 community meeting to discuss construction plans; earliest start; 3 years construction
- [Crystal Square Central District Construction/Opening](#): Staged openings in 2021; bakery Mah Ze Dahr Bakery is likely to be first and Alamo Draft House last
- [Water Park Site Plan Amendment](#): proposed for January County Board approval
- [2000/2001 S Bell Street](#): Public Comment open now December 28-January 11; 2 SPRCs February and March; Planning/Transportation Commissions and County Board spring
- [Marriott Residence Inn, Army Navy Drive](#): demolition early 2021
- [VRE Design for New Station](#): final design 2021-2022; award and construction 2022-2024
- [Pentagon City PDSP](#): February 4 public workshop #3; March (TBD) public workshop #4
- [101 S 12<sup>th</sup> Street](#): approved by County Board December; no construction in 2021 until tenant signed; Gateway Park design when construction finished in 2-3 years
- [VDOT Multimodal Feasibility Study](#): March 2021 public workshop; May draft report and public meeting; June final report
- [Long Bridge Aquatic Center](#): target construction completion/opening summer 2021

- Boundary Channel (VDOT): award contract summer 2021; construction 2022; target construction completion fall 2023
- MWAA Project Journey: Target construction completion summer 2021
- MetPark Amazon HQ2: Target construction completion mid-2023

**RESPONSES NEEDED : NOTE THAT THE NEXT 3 ITEMS ARE CALLING FOR PUBLIC FEEDBACK BY JANUARY 11:**

**Pubic Engagement: 2000/2001 Clark/Bell Site Plan**

This is Block M, AKA Crystal Plaza Square that has been through 2 Long Range Planning Committee sessions. This is your last chance to weigh in publicly on any concerns you might have about the site plan for these 2 buildings on 20th Street: e.g., Clark/Bell extension, open space, Underground. Be sure to make your voice heard before the SPRCs in February and March. **The comment period has been extended to January 11.** See everything on the project page:

<https://projects.arlingtonva.us/projects/2001-clark-st/>

**The VDOT Route 1 Multimodal Feasibility Study**

VDOT held the first Public Engagement Meeting December 16 for the public to review existing conditions; hear about public survey responses; and ask questions and provide input. The purpose of this feasibility study is to identify enhanced multimodal connectivity and accommodations along Route 1 (between 12th Street to 23rd Streets) to meet the changing transportation needs of the Crystal City and Pentagon City communities. As this area's commercial and residential densities continue to increase, transportation plans will need to address the wide-ranging needs of pedestrians, bicyclists, transit riders, motorists, and other users while maximizing the safety, convenience, and sustainability of the system for decades to come. At this time, no construction funding has been allocated, so this study will not set design or construction dates.

The timeline includes a second public meeting in March for more analysis; presentation of a draft report to the public in May and a final report in June. Access the online comment form and view details on **providing feedback through January 11** [here](#).

**Note:** Participants in the December 16 meeting were surprised that VDOT is missing a lot of essential data and seems to see its charge is to determine if and how Route 1 can be brought down to grade. The Livability22202 working group on Route 1 is providing input. See the Study webpage [here](#).

**Here's your chance to design the new park at South Eads Street and Army Navy Drive**

Share Your Feedback on Three Draft Design Concepts that resulted from the first public engagement



for the area at South Eads Street With the guidance of the Crystal City Sector Plan and the Public Spaces Master Plan, it was decided that this new park will help meet the county's goals of increasing public space opportunities. This past fall, community comments shared information about how people currently use the space and what they envision for the future. Those comments helped shape the three draft concepts that the design team present in the video below—The

Meander, The Canal Walk, and The Central Hub. We want to know what you think. What are your favorite elements of each concept? What do you feel is missing? **Your feedback by January 11 will help inform the design of the Park Master Plan and Design Guidelines for this new public space.** [Share your feedback here.](#)

### 1900 Crystal Drive Pre-Construction Community Meeting

JBG is selecting a construction contractor in December. They looking forward to finally breaking ground in late February, 2021. To ensure that the community is well informed, they are scheduling a pre-construction public meeting **February 2** at 7 pm. The meeting will cover logistics, schedule, and any community concerns. [Register in advance for this webinar.](#) After registering, you will receive a confirmation email containing information about joining the webinar.

### Pentagon City PDSP Study

The second Public Workshop for the Pentagon City Planning Study took place December 9. The main topics were draft planning principles and performance metrics to help plan for the future of the Pentagon City area. The five planning principles are:

1. Green development
2. Inclusive and welcoming
3. Cohesive district
4. Better choices than driving
5. Places for People

The next public workshop #3 will be held February 4 to draft development scenarios. The March public workshop #4 will evaluate development scenarios. [See the project page here.](#)

### JBG Proposed Changes to Water Park

Did you miss it? JBG Smith held a virtual open house meeting on December 2<sup>nd</sup> on their plans to upgrade the Water Park. There was a lot of feedback and interest (as well as some concerns) for this new project feature. For those who were unable to make it, the presentation from the meeting is posted for reference as well as the answers to the questions JBG received during the presentation; [see the new tab titled 'Water Park' in Courbanize.](#) JBG continues to take feedback as people review the plan and think of additional opportunities or suggestions for the project. The County Board report is expected to be ready in early January for the late January County Board meeting.

### Winter Walk Lights at Virginia Highlands Park

Volunteers have been busy at Virginia Highlands Park near the Hearts (Joyce & 15<sup>th</sup> St) making it extra special for our community by installing a 100% solar powered Winter Walk of Lights! And starting this weekend, visitors can also write their gratitude or wishes on mini hearts hanging in the park. This art display can be enjoyed throughout the winter, typically starting at dusk and lasting until at least 7pm. Sunnier days, the solar lights will stay on much longer.





## Amazon HQ2 Construction Update

Clark Construction has done a great video on the work they have done at the MetPark construction site. They did a 20 minute video for the BID but this is a short 3 minute watch. Kudos to Clark Construction for their community outreach. [See it on their website](#)

## Crystal City Staple Americana Hotel is Permanently Closed



After nearly 50 years in business, the Americana Hotel in Crystal City permanently closed this month. The hotel at 1400 Richmond Highway opened in 1963, and was one of the first hotels in Crystal City. As the area became a major employment hub, its retro sign remained visible to all driving past on Route 1. It was even featured in a Russell Crowe movie. A staff member tells ARLnow that the hotel closed earlier this month partly due to negative effects on the travel industry from COVID-19. [Read more here.](#)

## More JBG Smith Residential Property in National Landing

The Americana hotel in Crystal City closed in early December, and it has already changed hands to the most obvious of buyers. JBG Smith Properties (NYSE: JBGS), Crystal City's dominant landowner, announced Monday it acquired the "recently decommissioned 102-key hotel and adjacent parking lot" at 1400 Richmond Highway. The Bethesda-based developer declined to disclose what it paid for the 1.4-acre site. The site has the potential to accommodate a new apartment development of more than 500,000 square feet, per a release. JBG Smith, Amazon.com Inc.'s landlord and development partner for its second headquarters, had apparently been eyeing the property for quite some time. [Read more here.](#)



## Turn Up the Love with Us this Holiday Season!



As part of National Landing's mission to activate public spaces, the BID has unveiled "Turn Up the Love," a winterlong campaign featuring a series of engaging outdoor pop-ups. These festive installations include a larger-than-life boombox adorned with thousands of colorful ornaments, three shareable photo frames and even more surprises to be announced after the holidays. Explore the neighborhood with hot cocoa and check out our fun pop-up moments with family and friends

this winter!

- Turn Up the Love Boombox - Need some extra jingle bell rock? Take in the bright lights and sounds at our larger-than-life boombox at The Water Park - **1750 Crystal Drive.**
- Festive Photo Frames - Step into our festive photo frame moments at Centre Park in Potomac Yards - **3550 S. Clark Street.**

Stay tuned for more surprises arriving in National Landing - January 2021!

## Pentagon Row Rebrands as 'Westpost,' Adds New Beer-Centric Pizza Restaurant

Pentagon Row has changed its name. Now, it's "**Westpost at National Landing.**" The Pentagon City shopping center has rebranded as Amazon's new HQ2 rises a few blocks away. The goal, according to a press release, is to create a "fresh vision" for the retail strip, which first opened in 1999. In announcing the new branding, "Westpost" owner Federal Realty Investment Trust (FRIT) also announced a new tenant: **Nighthawk Pizza** will occupy the old Champps Restaurant space. Leading up to the "Westpost" rebranding, Pentagon Row added a trio of other restaurants helmed by notable local chefs and restaurateurs: Scott Chung's **Bun'd Up**, Chung and Kevin Tien's **Wild Tiger BBQ** pop-up, and, more recently, Antonio Ferraro's **Napoli Salumeria**. [Read more here.](#)

## Potomac Yard/VT for new Metro Station

The Metro board on December 10 unanimously approved a plan to add Virginia Tech's initials to the future Potomac Yard station and remove the University of Virginia's initials from the West Falls Church station. When completed in 2022, signs at the \$320 million Potomac Yard Metro station will read "Potomac Yard-VT," highlighting the Blacksburg-based university's planned \$1 billion computer science-focused campus nearby. It's fitting since the Alexandria campus will "shape and define" the area around the station, said university spokesperson Michael Stowe. [Read more here.](#)

## ARLINGTON COUNTY ISSUES

### Arlington County Updates on Vaccine Distribution

Vaccines are now a reality, and an important tool and in preventing the spread of COVID-19. We share your enthusiasm about the distribution of safe and effective COVID-19 vaccines in Virginia, and we appreciate your patience during this initial rollout, as quantities will be limited over the coming weeks and months. While vaccines are a major step to ending the pandemic, it will take months to vaccinate everyone who wants to be vaccinated. Everyone should continue with other strategies that are helping stop the spread of the virus – wear a face mask, physical distance, wash hands often, and limit the size of social gatherings. Currently, vaccine distribution is limited to those in priority group 1a – healthcare personnel and long-term care facility residents – as recommended by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and Virginia Department of Health (VDH), but will be expanded as supplies and resources to administer the vaccine increase.

- [More information about VDH's COVID-19 Vaccination Response Plan](#)
- [CDC: When Vaccine is Limited, Who Gets Vaccinated First?](#)
- The first shipments of Moderna's COVID-19 vaccine have arrived in Virginia; Both the Moderna and Pfizer vaccines are being distributed to 96 sites across Virginia
- [8 Things to Know about the U.S. COVID-19 Vaccination Program:](#)

### County Board to Elect New Chair, Vice Chair Jan. 4

The Arlington County Board will elect its 2021 Chair and Vice-Chair during its **Monday, January 4** virtual Organizational Meeting, and Board Members will lay out their priorities for 2021. The new Chair will succeed 2020 Chair Libby Garvey and will serve for one year. The Board also will adopt its 2021 meeting procedures at the Organizational Meeting, which will begin at 6 p.m. The Organizational Meeting and the Civic Federation Meeting will be live-streamed on the [County Board website](#) and in HD on [Arlington TV's YouTube channel](#). The meeting also will be broadcast on

Comcast Xfinity 25 or 1085 (HD), and Verizon FiOS 39 and 40. The first Regular Board Meeting of the year will be held on Saturday, January 23. [Read more here.](#)

### Be a Part of the FY 2022 Budget Talks

County Manager Mark Schwartz recently kicked off the FY 2022 budget engagement season and is asking for your feedback on next year's budget. Will you participate and share this engagement opportunity with your friends, family, and network? As always, it's our goal to hear from as many voices in the County. This is especially important in this challenging fiscal year. As Arlington faces an estimated budget deficit up to \$56M, help us understand what you believe are necessary expenses and what the County can afford.

- [Share your feedback.](#)
- WATCH: [Community Forum on the FY 2022 Budget](#)
- [A message](#) from the County Manager on the FY 2022 Budget

To learn more and follow updates on the FY 2022 Budget process, go to [budget.arlingtonva.us](http://budget.arlingtonva.us).

### Want a Mail Ballot in 2021? You Need to Apply Again



If you want to automatically receive a mail ballot for all elections you are eligible to vote in during 2021, you must submit a new application. You can return the application you received by emailing it as an attachment to [absentee@arlingtonva.us](mailto:absentee@arlingtonva.us), mailing it, or delivering in person to our mailbox or office at 2100 Clarendon Blvd, Ste 320, Arlington, VA 22201. Beginning January 1, 2021, you can apply online using the Department of Elections [Citizen Portal](#). The year 2021 will not be available until then.

If you do not want to vote by mail in 2021, no action is needed. You can discard the application. Voters who did not receive this mailing are eligible to complete an annual mail ballot application as well. [More information.](#)

### Should VRE and MARC Be United?



Creating a unified brand and fare policy for the Washington region's commuter rail systems could help reduce travel times and improve economic development opportunities over the next few decades, according to a new report released December 10. The Greater Washington Partnership, with support from leaders of Amtrak, state departments of transportation, and existing commuter rail systems, released its "Capital Region Rail Vision" report Thursday, outlining its plan to seamlessly interconnect Maryland, Virginia, and the District of Columbia. In the near future, residents in Alexandria and Arlington County can expect improvements to the Alexandria and Crystal City stations, including Crystal City station expanding its capacity to accommodate more MARC trains – anticipating the new Amazon headquarters

being built in Arlington. McAndrew said these improvements would be made by 2023 at the earliest, and by 2030 additional tracks will connect Alexandria and Long Bridge when it's finished with construction. [Read more here.](#)

### **Draft Policy for Renaming County Parks, Facilities, Streets**

Arlington County wants your feedback on a draft policy for renaming parks, facilities, and streets, which the County Board will consider during its January Board meeting, which will also include a Public Hearing. The objective is to create ONE policy and associated criteria used for naming and renaming County parks, facilities, and streets. [View the draft policy.](#)

### **Arlington Awarded Top Rating for LGBTQ Protections**

Arlington scored 100 points out of 100 on the Human Rights Campaign's 9th annual Municipal Equality Index (MEI) for its high standards of inclusiveness and protections for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer communities. While Arlington has been a top-ranked community in the past, this year it was recognized for adding gender identity/expression protections to its Human Rights ordinance and providing all-gender bathrooms in County-owned offices and facilities. [Read more here.](#)

### **Arlington County to Study Changing Its Logo**

On [July 27, 2020](#), Arlington County NAACP asked the County to have courageous conversations on race and tackle the inequities that exist. After several months of active civic engagement by members of the NAACP and others, the Arlington County Board [approved](#) a six-month community process to select a single new logo for County Government by the Board's June 2021 Regular Meeting. The Board also [adopted](#) the County Manager's recommendations for the process at its Tuesday, December 15 Recessed Meeting. [Read more here.](#) Apply to be on the [logo renaming committee](#) here.

### **Police Implement Body Worn Camera Program**

Effective Wednesday, December 16, 2020, Arlington County Police Officers assigned to the Operations Division will begin wearing body worn cameras and recording all dispatched calls for service, enforcement contacts and investigative contacts. The deployment of cameras includes officers assigned to Patrol, Special Operations, Community Outreach, K-9 and the Emergency Response Team (commonly referred to as SWAT). This technology compliments the existing in-car camera system and interview room cameras used to document digital and audio video recordings of law enforcement activity and interactions. [Read more here.](#)

### **Fare collection and front door boarding resumes on ART buses starting January 3**

All Arlington Transit (ART) buses will resume front door boarding and fare collection on Sunday, Jan. 3, 2021. Riders will board buses through the front door and pay their fare at the fare box using a SmarTrip card, exact change or the new SmarTrip app. The ART bus fare for a one-way trip is \$2. Fare collection was suspended in March 2020 and riders were asked to board buses through the rear doors to protect the health and safety of bus operators and riders from Covid-19. Plexiglass barriers have since been installed in the driver area of all ART buses to provide a shield between bus operators and passengers as they board. All passengers are required to wear a face mask while riding ART buses. For more information, visit [the ART website.](#)



### For Fun: Do You Know Arlington History?

Although 2020 has not been the year we expected, it has been one to celebrate the 100th anniversary of the naming of Arlington. As we come to the end of this year, the Arlington Historical Society offers you a short quiz to see how well you know Arlington's history of the last 100 years. Answers to the quiz can be found [here](#).

1. What neighborhood was the site of Arlington's first public library?
2. In what decade did the construction of the Metro begin and in what year did the first Metro stops open in Arlington?
3. Where did the last dairy farm operate in Arlington and when did it close? Later generations remember this location as a great hill for sledding.
4. What African American community was bulldozed in 1941 to make way for the Pentagon?
5. What school in Arlington has the distinction of being the first school in Virginia to desegregate?
6. What was the name of the famous football game played each Thanksgiving between Washington-Lee High School in Arlington and George Washington High School in Alexandria?
7. What street in Arlington has been called "the world's zip code" for the diversity of people from around the world who live there?
8. What department store in Arlington had imported monkeys from Brazil at its opening?
9. Arlington was the site of foundational work by the Advanced Research Projects Agency for what important technology that is now an integral part of our lives?
10. What is the connection of the USS Arlington to the legacy of 9-11?

### OTHER ISSUES

#### Metrobus riders return to boarding through front door, paying fares on Sunday, January 3

Metrobus will resume fare collection and front-door boarding beginning Sunday, January 3, as part of Metro's pandemic recovery plan that aims to preserve service and transit jobs. The current rear-door boarding policy was implemented in March under Metro's comprehensive plan to protect frontline employees at a time when less was known about the coronavirus and its means of transmission. Because the farebox and SmartTrip equipment is located at the front of the bus, the Metro Board authorized the temporary suspension of fare collection. For additional information [view full news release](#).

#### Project Journey Updates

So much is going on there that it's hard to keep up. Join us at the CCCA meeting March 17 for a full update. "The 230,000-square-foot concourse on the north side of Reagan National Airport looks ready for passengers. The exterior walls are up. The roof is on. The terrazzo floor is almost in. And 11 of the 14 new jet bridges are being installed... The concourse is slated to open in July, but plans are in the works to do a 'soft opening' ahead of that date. An announcement is expected early next year." (Washington Post)

### Phone Down. It's the Law

Beginning July 1st, 2020, it will be illegal to hold a handheld personal communications device (e.g., a smart phone) while driving a moving motor vehicle on the highways in Virginia. The new law will not be effective until January 1st, 2021, to allow for educating the public about its provisions. [See more details here.](#)

## CRYSTAL CITY CIVIC ASSOCIATION BOARD

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