



April 18, 2023

Christian Dorsey, Chair, Arlington County Board
Devanshi P. Patel, Chair, Arlington Planning Commission
Chris Slatt, Chair, Arlington Transportation Commission

Re: Crystal Towers/Marriott Mid-Block Crosswalk

Dear Chair Dorsey, Chair Patel, and Chair Slatt:

We write to you as the Presidents of the Aurora Highlands, Crystal City, and Arlington Ridge Civic Associations, which make up the Livability 22202 coalition, regarding the proposed Site Plan development project at 1600 South Eads Street, known as Crystal Towers 3 and owned by Dweck Properties. In particular, we write to urge you to include a mid-block pedestrian crossing at Eads Street as part of this project.

This infill development proposes a new residential tower built between the two existing Crystal Towers buildings on South Eads Street, between 15th and 18th Streets. The building will be located across the street from the Crystal Gateway Marriott, which has the only entrance to the Crystal City Underground west of Route 1. Residents of our neighborhoods use this entrance to access the Underground every day, particularly to travel to the Crystal City Metro station, which is a short walk away once you enter. It is a vital and appreciated pedestrian route.

Currently, there is no mid-block crossing at this location, yet residents consistently cross in between official crosswalks anyway. The entrance to the Marriott is approximately 280 feet north of 18th Street and 575 feet south of 15th Street, leaving a significant distance for residents of Crystal Towers and blocks further west who have to double back to use an official intersection crossing. This great distance is due to the two superblocks that make up this part of the neighborhood: Crystal Towers and the Marriott/Marlowe Apartments. Adding a mid-block crossing would be aligned with the Crystal City Sector Plan's goal to, "increase pedestrian connectivity and permeability through some of Crystal City's largest superblocks."

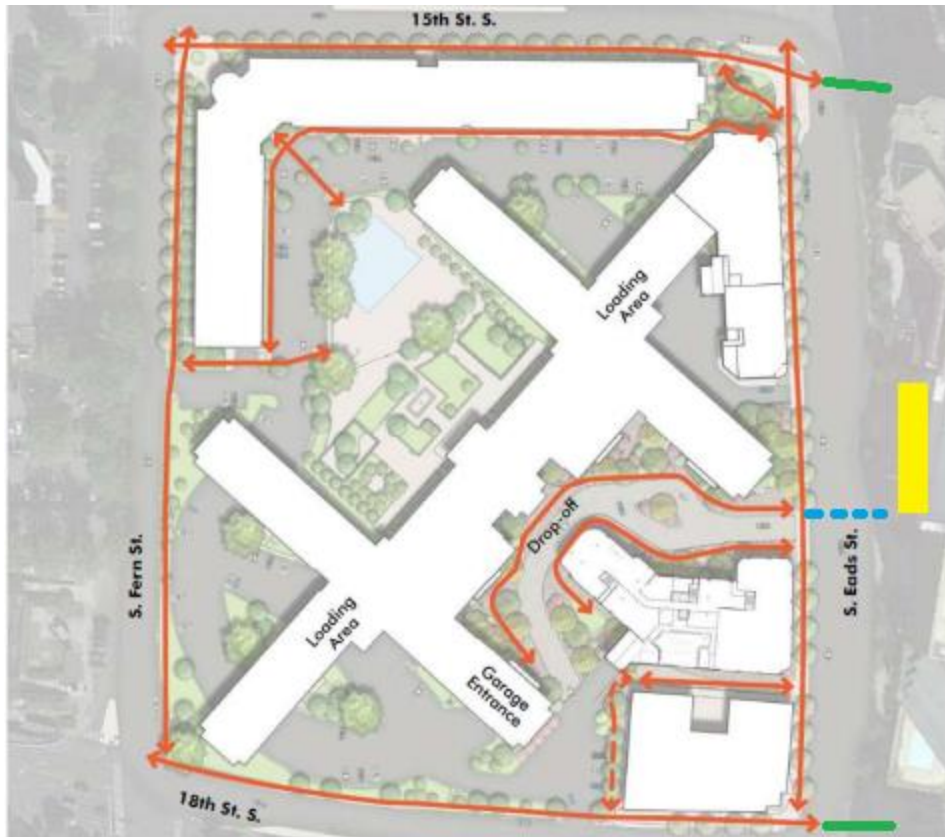


Image: Future site condition pedestrian circulation for Crystal Towers 3, adapted from Dweck SPRC presentation. Existing sidewalks are noted in green, Marriott Entrance noted in yellow and a possible crosswalk is indicated in a blue dashed line.

We expect the rate of pedestrians crossing mid-block to increase significantly in the future, both because of the additional 209 units proposed to be added under this site plan and because of the proposal to bring Route 1 down to grade at 15th at 18th Streets, causing pedestrians to seek safer and lower stress access to the Crystal City Metro. With significant new retail included in the proposed development, Crystal City residents will also be seeking to cross west to Crystal Towers and areas beyond, such as Metropolitan Park and Pentagon City.

Adding a mid-block crossing across Eads Street would be consistent in design and purpose with the existing pedestrian and bike crossing located between 15th and 18th Streets on Crystal Drive. That crossing is approximately 210 feet from the closest intersection at 18th Street and similarly serves to connect important pedestrian access points. In fact, the two crossings would sync together, connecting the Mount Vernon Trail's Crystal City connector through the Underground and then, with this new crossing, into the heart of Aurora Highlands and Pentagon City.

Arlington's Vision Zero Action Plan calls for the mitigation of vehicle speeds and the prioritization of human health above all else in the County's plans and policies. During the second SPRC meeting on April 3, County staff flagged that a preliminary analysis did not

support a mid-block crossing on Eads Street, but this approach ignores the inevitability of human behavior to travel the shortest paths with the fewest street crossings. People do and will continue to cross at this point on Eads Street regardless of whether there is a crossing installed. It is the County's responsibility to ensure they can do so safely.

Sincerely,



Kateri Garcia, President
Arlington Ridge CA



Cory Jacobbe, President
Aurora Highlands CA



Eric Cassel, President
Crystal City CA