



April 30, 2023

Emma Martin
Associate Planner, CPHD, Arlington County

Shepard Beamon
Associate Planner, CPHD, Arlington County

Re: Site Plan Amendments for #145 at 2600 Crystal Drive (SPLA 23-00026) and #135 at 200 S. 12th Street

Dear Ms. Martin and Mr. Beamon:

We, the Presidents of the three 22202 zip code civic associations (Arlington Ridge, Aurora Highlands, Crystal City), which constitute the Livability22202 coalition, strongly oppose the proposed changes to the sign rules for Crystal City. In this memo, we will explain the costs of large visible signage, explain the history, and ask that appropriate stakeholders NOT be shut out of the process.

First, large visible signs have costs on the community. For example, The National Park Service has a long history of protecting the 'view shed' of the George Washington Parkway from lighted signage. The County should consult with the Park Service before considering this request. In addition, the residential neighbors have a big stake in the amount of light and direction of any sign and have been vocal about these concerns over many years. Lastly, additional light pollution can have unintended consequences on not only the humans, but also on animals, especially migrating birds (particularly so close to Roaches Run). As a result, the signage in Crystal City has been limited and documented in each site plan. We also object to the removal of the time constraints on the rooftop signs.

Second, the allowed signage in Crystal City has a long history. Large signs, particularly lighted ones, are especially bothersome to many stakeholders. Stakeholders have engaged in numerous negotiations through the site plan review process to limit the signage. To undo those negotiations and resulting agreements documented in site plans without any other changes is not fair. The community deeply cares about both the daylight views and the nighttime views and has sacrificed other community benefits to decrease signage. Thus the changes to the site plans are not acceptable.

Third, changing the process from County Board approval to an administrative approval robs the community of a voice. Crystal City signage is far more important

because of the height of the buildings and the history of limiting signage. One lighted sign on a 23-story building will impact not just one or two neighbors, but the entire community.

As a result, we are strongly against both amendments and do not view them as minor site plan amendments. We are also concerned that if the precedent is set with these site plans, then the rest of the properties in Crystal City will follow suit and in no time it will look like Times Square; a result that we definitely do not support.

We are aware the County Staff may not support all of the requests of the applicant. In addition, we are unsure exactly what is possible under Article 13 versus what the applicant can apply for under current rules. We eagerly await the County staff report.

Sincerely,



Kateri Garcia, President
Arlington Ridge CA



Cory Jacobbe, President
Aurora Highlands CA



Eric Cassel, President
Crystal City CA

CC: Mark Schwartz, County Manager
Arlova Vonhm, Zoning Administrator
County Board Members