

CRYSTAL CITY INSIDER

The monthly newsletter of the Crystal City Civic Association



February 2024

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PRESIDENT'S CORNER

JBGS is not accepting new retailers for the Underground. They are also not revealing any specific plans and suggest the buildings above the Underground may be under review. All of this is really horrible for the Underground. Meanwhile 1900 Crystal Drive retail and the Water Park appear to be the focus of JBGS.

February 1st, Alexandria is hosting a meeting about Transportation Issues with the Monumental Entertainment Proposal. This meeting will provide the basis for our response to this project. The idea of using 5,000 parking spaces in Crystal City for the project clearly has our attention!

- Eric Cassel, CCCA President

CIVIC ASSOCIATION AND LIVABILITY 22202 ISSUES

SAVE THE DATE: Next CCCA Meeting March 20

A representative from Alexandria will brief us on the Monumental plans for a Wizards/Capitals Arena for Potomac Yard. We are also inviting our Virginia District 2 Representative Adele McClure, who lives in Crystal City, to address us.

REMINDER: Cutoff date for Membership is February 28

CCCA dues of \$10 are on an annual basis, January 1-December 31. Don't forget to renew your membership [online via PayPal](#) or by check to our Treasurer (see last page). We have a grace period until **February 28, 2024**. But if you want to keep getting the Newsletter monthly, and all informative emails, and maintain the right to vote, please do renew now. Although our sister civic associations in 22202--Arlington Ridge and Aurora Highlands--charge \$20 for annual dues, we have not increased our membership dues since the CCCA was established in January 2014. We use dues primarily to pay for our server, MailChimp, and Zoom. Don't let this be your last Newsletter.

INFORMATION AND EVENTS – ARLINGTON COUNTY

Sheriff Announces Community Newsletter Reinforcing Commitment to Safety and Engagement

The Arlington County Sheriff's Office launched the [quarterly Sheriff's Office newsletter](#), aimed at fostering transparency and communication with the residents of Arlington. As we mark this new initiative, we underscore our commitment to three fundamental pillars: fostering a safe and rehabilitative environment within our detention facility, strengthening community relationships through active engagement, and prioritizing the wellness and professional growth of our esteemed staff. [Visit this page and scroll to the bottom to subscribe!](#)



Understanding the Needs of Veterans and Service Members in Arlington

Arlington County's Military and Veterans Advisory Committee (MVAC) is interested in hearing from members of the military, veterans, and their families who live and/or work in Arlington about types of programs, services, and resources that could be helpful. [Click here to participate](#) so that we can explore programs and services that may better serve our Veteran and Active Military Community.

Safe Homes, Safe Relationships Feedback Form

[Share your feedback](#) with Project PEACE on any experience you may have been using, looking for, or if you are referring people to resources for those impacted by domestic/intimate partner violence and sexual assault in Arlington County. Your feedback is confidential. Results will help enhance and improve services for everyone in the county.

Notice of Funding Availability for Expansion of Affordable, Quality Child Care

The Child Care Initiative (CCI) provides a strategic framework to address challenges in providing child care for Arlington families. In support of the Child Care Initiative, the County Board allocated \$5 million in one-time funding. Of this, \$4.5 million is the subject of this Notice of Funding Availability (NOFA), which solicits proposals for child care capital investment consistent with the County Board's direction. The remaining \$0.5 million will be the subject of future NOFA, providing smaller scale assistance to child care providers for a broader range of support. Proposals are due Monday, February 26 by 5 p.m. [Learn more.](#)

Community Read: "The Fire Next Time" | February 29 at 6:30 p.m. – Central Library

Celebrate the 100th anniversary of the birth of noted scholar and author James Baldwin. On Thursday, February 29, join Arlington Public Library for a community discussion of this pivotal work with George Mason University Distinguished Professor Keith Clark. Read [more](#).

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Deer Management Virtual Info Sessions

You are invited to join the Deer Management Project team for a virtual information session. The presentations for both sessions will be the same. Feel free to submit questions in advance:

- [Thursday, February 8 at 12:00 p.m.](#)
- [Monday, February 12 at 6:30 p.m.](#)

At the info sessions you will be able to:

- Learn more about the [Deer Management Project](#)
- Hear a brief overview of the first round of community engagement
- Access new educational resources
- Ask questions and share your feedback using the chat box

New County Board chair announces Arlington's first 'visioning process' since 1986

The Arlington County Board is ringing in the New Year with a sweeping public engagement opportunity to envision what the county should look like in 2050. Libby Garvey, named Chair during the Board's annual organizational meeting January 2 announced the forthcoming initiative during her remarks. This year, she said, the county will gather "thoughts, suggestions and ideas from as many people as possible" about their vision for Arlington 20 years from now. It will be the first such initiative since 1986 when residents [came together](#) to envision what Arlington could be in the new millennium. [Read more here.](#)

Office vacancy rate is leveling out but Arlington is not yet out of woods

Arlington's office vacancy rate remains high but may be stabilizing after an initial, sharp increase due to Covid remote work policies. As of the fourth quarter of 2023, the countywide office vacancy rate stands at 24.4%, according to a new report from commercial real estate company Colliers. "The big story last year was the delivery of Amazon's HQ2 which drove absorption earlier in the year." County Board member Matt de Ferranti spelled out what this office vacancy rate means for the county budget. "We depend on our office vacancy rate, which leads to a lower tax rate than our surrounding localities in northern Northern Virginia," he said, noting that commercial real estate comprises a greater percentage of Arlington's budget than that of neighbors.

Arlington towing panel seeks more local regulatory autonomy

An Arlington government advisory panel wants the General Assembly to give Northern Virginia localities more authority to regulate those who tow vehicles that have been improperly parked on private property. The county's Trespass Towing Advisory Board on Jan. 3 voted 2-0 to recommend that the county government support efforts in Richmond this year that would remove current language prohibiting Arlington from imposing a permit process for towers that simultaneously are located in, and store vehicles in, the county. [Read more here.](#)

Residents could start moving into two nearly complete apartment towers in Crystal City next month

Two new apartment buildings in Crystal City are almost ready for residents to move in. Construction started on the two residential towers at 1900 Crystal Drive in 2021, nearly one year to the day after JBG Smith received approval to redevelop the aging office building previously there. Now, JBG Smith tells ARLnow it expects residents can start moving into the buildings — a 3-minute walk from Amazon's second headquarters — this February. The developer has already begun receiving partial certificates of occupancy for certain floors of one tower, dubbed "The Grace." JBG Smith said it expects to wrap up construction by the third quarter of 2024. [Read more here.](#)

Alexandria leaders talk trains, cars and 'Gondola 2.0' options for Potomac Yard arena transportation plans

Among all the hubbub about the Potomac Yard arena, there's been one looming question: how would people travel to and from the new facility? Transportation has been the key item of concern for both public critics of the project and many civic leaders. While Mayor Justin Wilson said the development will minimize parking to reduce the amount of people taking cars to the site, Metro General Manager Randy Clarke said the newly built Metro cannot handle the levels of arena traffic proposed in this development. At a Town Hall hosted by the Del Ray Citizens' Association (DRCA), city leaders spoke to both lingering questions and potential solutions being considered for the Potomac Yard arena's transportation problems. [Read more here.](#)

Arlington Property Values See Overall 2.5% Increase for 2024

Arlington's overall property tax base grew from 2023 following continued residential growth and new construction, while total commercial values showed a slight increase.

The total assessed value of all residential and commercial property in Arlington increased 2.5 percent in calendar year 2024, compared to 3.7 percent growth in 2023. Residential property values increased 3.2 percent while commercial property values increased 1.6 percent. New construction contributed to 1.7 percent of the 2.5 percent tax base growth.

"The increase in residential property values for this year shows the continued attractiveness of our Arlington community, even as we adapt to changing realities," said County Manager Mark Schwartz. "The investment we make in our community from real estate tax revenue helps us to fund the County's high-quality programs and public services for our residents, visitors, and businesses."

Notice of Assessments will be mailed to Arlington property owners beginning Jan. 12, 2024. [Look up your 2024 property assessment](#) (available online Friday, Jan. 12, after 6 p.m.)

Real estate taxes provide almost 60 percent of total County revenues. The County's real estate tax base is split between residential (55 percent) and commercial (45 percent) property assessments.

Commercial property values increased by 1.6 percent from the previous year. Existing office property values decreased by 11 percent due to continued pressure of office vacancy rates and changing demand for office space but were partially offset by new construction. Significant investments in the Crystal City area, among others, bolstered the decreasing overall office market with new construction value added to the tax base. As a result, the overall tax base for the office market was reduced by 8.5 percent.

[Opening of Virginia Tech campus at Potomac Yard delayed to 2025](#)

Virginia Tech's Potomac Yard campus has hit a snag and won't open until spring 2025. Project delays have become a local tradition around Potomac Yard. The school said the new Virginia Tech Innovation Campus will open in 2025 rather than later this year, as was planned when the project broke ground in 2021. A release from Virginia Tech said graduate students who had been planning to attend the school this fall will instead continue attending classes at Virginia Tech's facility in Falls Church.

The deadline for fall 2024 admission is March 1. [Read more here.](#)

[Repairs at Long Bridge Aquatics & Fitness Center to Begin January 29](#)

Starting January 29, the [Long Bridge Aquatics & Fitness Center](#) (LBAFC) will operate on an adjusted schedule to address necessary repairs in the 50-meter and leisure pool areas. All repairs, including replacement of the building's sprinkler hose, as well as ceiling tiles that have been impacted by a leak in the sprinkler system are estimated to be complete by summer, 2024. The Department of Parks and Recreation has developed a plan to efficiently address these repairs while minimizing impacts to scheduled programming and day-to-day user experiences.

[Arlington to consider several ways to combat office vacancies this year, starting with looser parking restrictions](#)

Several measures designed to combat Arlington's persistently high office vacancy rate are slated for discussion next month. On the table are expanded opportunities for shared and offsite parking, as well as more lenient parking requirements for fitness centers. Officials are also set to consider whether to allow large media screens for outdoor entertainment in some business districts. The Arlington County Board is scheduled to vote next month on whether to advertise requests to amend Arlington's zoning

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ordinance to make these changes. County Manager Mark Schwartz told the Board last week he hopes that these and other ordinance changes can make it easier for Arlington businesses to get started and grow.

Arlington's office vacancy rate is currently just over 22%, the county manager said — up from 21.5% in October. Arlington Economic Development predicted in October that this number would continue to rise, as about a quarter of Arlington office space is at risk of sustained vacancies.

Regional Fair Housing Plan Finalized

Eight local jurisdictions across metropolitan Washington have finalized a Regional Fair Housing Plan, submitted their portions of the plan to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development in December, and are now looking ahead at implementing its goals and strategies. The update on the plan marks the first time in 25 years that local jurisdictions have joined together on a similar effort.

The local jurisdictions that developed the plan in coordination with COG are: City of Alexandria, VA; Arlington County, VA; the District of Columbia; Fairfax County, VA; City of Gaithersburg, MD; Loudoun County, VA; Montgomery County, MD; and Prince William County, VA.

The plan includes an analysis of impediments to fair housing choice across the region and provides strategies to increase access to safe and affordable housing, increase investment and resources in priority areas, and create more inclusive communities. The plan also highlights the finding that metropolitan Washington has become more segregated by race and income since 1990. Learn more about the [Regional Fair Housing Plan's](#) shared goals and strategies.

DEVELOPMENT

State leaders remain undecided on Potomac Yard arena project

In a series of interviews, 7News spoke to state representatives around Virginia who expressed mixed feelings on the proposed Potomac Yard arena. While City leaders and Gov. Glenn Youngkin were on stage supporting the proposal at an event last month in Potomac Yard, the proposal is yet to fully convince the Virginia General Assembly. Some, like Democratic State Senator Suhas Subramanyam from Loudoun County, told 7News they see the economic benefit to the stadium, but aren't sure the benefit will fully ripple across the state. Like State Sen. Adam Ebbin, Subramanyam said more Metro funding is vital to getting support for the project. [Read More Here.](#)

Monumental goes on the PR offensive with new new pro-Potomac Yard arena website

The proposed Potomac Yard arena, a collaboration between various government leaders and Monumental Sports & Entertainment, has gotten more than a little community pushback. Now, Monumental Sports is counterattacking with a new website, called Monumental Opportunity, which claims to "provide project facts and information" and "correct misconceptions." The website has a "fact check" section that deals primarily with the financing of the project, but some of the biggest questions about the project's feasibility remain unanswered. One of the main criticisms of the project has been the transportation impact, with city leaders saying car travel will be discouraged to incentivize Metro transit, but Metro GM Randy Clarke stated the Potomac Yard Metro station can't handle arena traffic. [Read more here.](#)

Viewpoint: Why a sports arena makes perfect sense for Potomac Yard

In an op ed in the Washington Business Journal, National Landing BID President and CEO Tracy Gabriel says "...the time is right to support a new world-class sports arena entertainment district in our community. This is a once-in-a generation opportunity to shape a resilient and sustainable development that will pay dividends for decades." "If the Wizards and Capitals are bound for a new home then it ought to be in a place that makes sense: a location that's close to its fanbase, transit-rich, within the region's urban core, and well positioned to accommodate growth. Potomac Yard delivers that and was already envisioned with approved plans to be a new walkable neighborhood with streets and buildings like you would find in NoMA/Union Market or Crystal City. This catalytic opportunity will refresh the area in ways we can't imagine today."

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"We know that with large-scale development comes a larger responsibility. Undoubtedly, there are still many details to examine and questions to answer — from traffic and infrastructure to design and environmental impact. While critics argue against the development due to potential community impact, instead we can work to make this investment reflect local needs and serve as a community asset. Let's use this opportunity to deliver next generation transportation, committed Metro funding, additional affordable housing, and more regional cooperation. We can realize a new entertainment district that makes us all proud."

Glenn Youngkin signals additional funding for Metro in boost to arena legislation

Virginia Gov. Glenn Youngkin says he is open to increasing funding for Metro in the state budget over the next two years, a change in stance for the Republican that comes just as Democrats in the State Capitol on Friday submitted legislation for a new arena for the Washington Wizards and Capitals in Alexandria. Many Democrats in the General Assembly have said they would not support arena legislation until Youngkin made a commitment to increase funding for the Washington Metropolitan Transit Authority, the entity that oversees the Metro rail and bus systems.

A report produced for the Alexandria Economic Development Partnership released last month said the project is expected to create 30,000 full-time equivalent jobs and \$8 billion in permanent annual economic output. The report explicitly did not incorporate "any considerations of public benefits or proffers that may be provided as part of this project." Youngkin and supporters of the project have explained that the future tax revenue would not exist without the entertainment district. Youngkin has also promised up to \$200 million in upfront transportation funding that can be diverted from existing funds — though where that funding is coming from remains a concern to some lawmakers.

Alexandria is working with Raleigh, North Carolina-based engineering and design firm Kimley-Horn to assemble a transportation plan for the arena area. (Washington Business Journal)

Monumental Sports assures small business owners 'it has every intention' to move to Potomac Yard

As part of its ongoing efforts to collect input from the area, developer JBG Smith and Monumental Sports held a roundtable discussion with a few small business owners from the Alexandria and Arlington communities on what a new sports and entertainment district would mean for them. They asked about making sure to have more affordable housing units as a result of new development, being involved in the strong local nonprofit commitment, and promoting minority-owned businesses. Virginia lawmakers have already expressed concerns and little confidence about the lack of details on the impact on the environment, transportation and quality of life. (WUSA TV).

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Off-site parking and shuttles are being considered for the new arena at Potomac Yard

Officials planning the \$2 billion arena at Potomac Yard say that there will be multiple ways to park around and access the site, from accessing parking garages in nearby Crystal City and at Metro stations, with fans getting carted around in shuttles running up and down Potomac Avenue. Transportation issues were the most frequently mentioned in a roundtable discussion with local business owners and representatives. The dozen or so business leaders otherwise expressed support for the project. Monumental Sports wants the first phase of the project to be completed in 2029. (ALXNow.com)

Potomac Yard arena legislation introduced to Virginia General Assembly

Bills have been introduced in both chambers of the Virginia General Assembly for a crucial piece of the Potomac Yard arena plans. The arena requires a state-created Virginia Sports and Entertainment Authority to finance the arena's construction and nearby buildings. The Authority is responsible for financing \$1.4 billion of the overall \$2 billion construction cost. Despite bipartisan support from local, state and federal leaders at the proposal's debut last fall, some state leaders said they remain unconvinced that the arena is a good idea. (ALXNow.com)

Alexandrians debate Potomac Yard arena: catalyst or cataclysm? | ALXnow

The ongoing [public opinion war](#) over the [Potomac Yard arena](#) continued this weekend with a [public town hall](#) at the Charles Houston Recreation Center (901 Wythe Street) on Saturday and a [protest](#) against it outside. The two-hour town hall included a discussion of the economic impact of the new arena and public safety, but transportation continued to be the central piece of the Potomac Yard arena discourse. As the fight continues in Alexandria over the Potomac Yard arena, City Council members said it's part of a broader fight over securing more state funding for WMATA. State Sen. Adam Ebbin previously called Metro funding a 'prerequisite' for the arena. Both Alexandria Mayor [Justin Wilson](#) and Metro General Manager [Randy Clarke](#) acknowledged that the current Potomac Yard arena cannot handle arena traffic without significant upgrades.

JBG Smith just proposed a bigger, taller office building in Northern Virginia

JBG Smith Inc., the principal developer at National Landing in Arlington, wants to go bigger on a long-planned office tower just down the road from Amazon.com Inc.'s HQ2 despite woes in the office market. The company filed a conceptual site plan January 23 seeking to build a 312,000-square-foot building at 1800 S. Bell St. across the street from the Crystal City Metro station. The building would rise 15 stories. The building would replace the existing 206,000-square-foot, 12-story office building where Amazon first set up shop after announcing its second headquarters in Arlington in 2018. Its lease there expired at the end of 2023, with employees moving into their permanent new digs at nearby Metropolitan Park. JBG Smith has previously pitched plans to redevelop the property with a 255,000-square-foot office building. The new proposal — with 308,000 of new office over about 4,000 square feet of retail — represents a 22% increase in size.

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Public art studio, complete with velociraptor sculpture, opens at Amazon HQ2

Catherine Anchin, executive director of the Museum of Contemporary Art Arlington (MoCA), cut the ribbon for the new Innovation Studio + Store alongside several local officials at Amazon's second headquarters. The project, a collaboration between Amazon and MoCA, seeks to take a fresh approach to connecting the public with contemporary art. Tracy Sayegh Gabriel, who leads the National Landing Business Improvement District, said she believes the project will serve as "a true cultural anchor" that serves the area's needs. (ArlNow.com)

TRANSPORTATION

Virginia Railway Express approves Saturday service and fare increase

The Virginia Railway Express (VRE), which runs through Alexandria, could soon run on Saturdays. Patch reported that the proposal to add Saturday service and increase fares was approved as part of the fiscal year 2025 budget. The VRE runs from Washington D.C. down to Alexandria, splitting there on Manassas and Fredericksburg lines. That new service still requires VRE to reach an agreement with the rail companies that VRE partners with to run on the railroads. If approved, Saturday rail service and the price increase would start on July 1, with a flat \$5 fare for travel between stations from Alexandria to D.C.

[Read more here.](#)

Come to the Performance Parking Pilot Event

The Performance Parking Pilot project team is hosting an open house on Wednesday, Feb. 7, in Crystal City to share the data that's been analyzed so far from the 4,200 sensors installed in metered parking spaces to track how curbside parking in the Rosslyn-Ballston and Route 1 corridors are used. Attendees can also learn about the tools for finding available parking when and where they need it and learn more about what comes next for this innovative parking management program.



- **Date:** Wednesday, Feb. 7, 2024
- **Time:** 7-9 p.m.
- **Location:** 251 18th Street South (next to Crystal City Metro station), lobby level.

Visit the [event page](#) for details.

Don't Miss Your Free Commute on ART

Keep your resolution for sustainable travel going with free rush hour service on ART bus, thanks to grant funding from the Northern Virginia Transportation Commission. NVTC's Commuter Choice grant helps people throughout choose transit over driving for their commutes. Rides are free on weekdays during rush hours, in peak directions. To see when your route is free, visit the schedule on the [ART page](#).

Arlington Students Can Now Get Free Metrobus Rides

Starting in January, students can now use an iRide SmarTrip card to ride Metrobus for free in Arlington. This new collaboration between the County and the Washington Metropolitan Area Transportation

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Authority (WMATA) aims to provide young people with greater access to safe, environmentally friendly transit options to go to school and other destinations.

"This expansion of service builds on existing investment by Arlington County to help young people get not only to school, but everywhere by transit," says Lynn Rivers, Transit Bureau chief for Arlington County.

In 2022, the County began subsidizing free rides for students with iRide cards, and in 2023 student ridership totaled 108,365 people between January and September, compared to 61,060 during the same period in 2022. This expansion provides connectivity to more destinations, including schools not currently served by ART routes, such as Swanson Middle School. Students will now have free access to Metrobus' greater range of service and hours.

Any student enrolled in kindergarten to 12th grade who lives in Arlington County can get a free iRide SmarTrip at any [Commuter Store](#) in Arlington or through Arlington Public Schools.

APS is excited about the expansion of the Student iRide Fare Free Program to include Metrobus service within Arlington," says Cathy Lin, Director of Facilities and Operations for Arlington Public Schools. "This opportunity expands access for our students to travel in Arlington on public transit buses."

The agreement between Arlington County and WMATA to include Metrobuses on iRide Cards was approved by the Arlington County Board in July of 2023. The Fiscal Year 2024 budget allocates \$360,000 in the County's WMATA budget to reimburse Metrobus for student rides.

For information on the iRide SmarTrip card and to see which Metrobus routes are eligible for free student rides, visit the Arlington Transit page.

County to update intersection

Arlington County contractors will begin construction on a traffic signal upgrade project at the intersection of South Arlington Ridge Road and 23rd Street South. The project will replace aging traffic signal equipment identified as part of the FY 2021 Capital Improvement Plan. New traffic signal poles will be installed at each corner, and new pedestrian equipment will accommodate all four pedestrian crossings at this intersection. Work will tentatively begin the week of January 22 and last until mid-April, weather permitting. Construction will take place on weekdays between 9 AM to 4 PM, Monday through Friday.

Runway rehabilitation at Reagan National to resume in spring

Repaving efforts for the runways at Ronald Reagan Washington National Airport will kick back up in April, with the two-year project expected to conclude by November. The 2023 work included placing 8 inches of new asphalt on the airport's main runway (designated 1-19) and a secondary runway (15-33), as well

as the intersection of 1-19 with the airport's third runway (4-22). When the project recommences in 2024, another 2 inches will be added.

The repaving project in 2023 required the airport to close to passenger traffic at midnight to accommodate the work. Any flights that were running late and could not make the curfew had to be canceled at their departure point or diverted to another local airport. That same restriction could be in effect for much of the project in 2024.

LONGER TERM ISSUES

Sale of Crystal City Marriott

An affiliate of JBG Smith Properties (NYSE: JBGS) has sold the Crystal City Marriott for nearly \$66 million, or about \$191,836 per room, as the Bethesda developer continues to prune what's left of the properties it picked up through its 2017 acquisition of Vornado Realty Trust's D.C.-area business.

JBGS Hotel Owner LLC sold the 343-room hotel at 1999 Richmond Highway Nov. 30 for \$65.8 million to 1999 Richmond LP, per Arlington County land records. The sale comes as JBG Smith, Amazon's landlord and development partner in Arlington County, has been seeking to shore up its balance sheet after posting a \$58 million net loss in the third quarter. A JBG Smith spokesperson confirmed the sale.

"The sale of the Crystal City Marriott, JBG Smith's final remaining hotel asset, signifies another step in our capital recycling plan," the company said in a statement. "We continue to advance our shift to a majority multifamily company by way of strategic non-core asset sales."

JBG Smith hinted in its most recent earnings statement that it anticipated hanging onto the property for longer. A footnote included in its third-quarter report noted the company receives 50% of the hotel's cash flows under a management agreement slated to expire in July 2025, after which it expected to receive 100% of the property's cash flows. The hotel generated about \$3.8 million in annualized net operating income for the third quarter.

The Marriott-branded hotel was one of a handful of hospitality properties JBG Smith acquired from Vornado as part of the 2017 spin-merge, which also included the former Hilton Crystal City at Washington Reagan National Airport. That hotel has since been rebranded as the Hilton Arlington National Landing, a moniker reflective of the larger geographic area that includes Amazon.com's second headquarters.

The developer is one of Arlington's largest commercial property owners, and it's also in line to be the beneficiary of one of Northern Virginia's biggest economic development wins of 2023 — provided the deal with Monumental Sports & Entertainment for a new sports-anchored project just to the south of Crystal City in Potomac Yard goes through.

The Crystal City Marriott's buyer appears to be an affiliate of Dauntless Capital Partners, which shares the same business address as 1999 Richmond at 2700 Post Oak Blvd., in Houston. Another Dauntless affiliate bought the Hilton Garden Inn Downtown Bethesda in the spring for \$36.6 million. It also picked up a pair of Marriott-branded hotels in the District in late 2021 for a combined \$152 million.

FUN STUFF TO SEE OR DO

Arlington Historical Society

Thursday, February 8, 2024, 7 pm, Black Decoders at Arlington Hall

In Arlington Hall, a secret African American unit mostly women and unknown to most white workers tackled commercial codes, keeping tables on which companies were doing business with Hitler or Mitsubishi. National Security Agency historian Dr. David Hatch will tell us the invisible history of African-American codebreakers during World War II. (Virtual on Zoom ONLY)

Lecture page: <https://arlingtonhistoricalsociety.org/events/black-code-breakers-in-world-war-ii-at-arlington-hall/>

To register (by February 7):

<https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSf5jMtmXttOWNKqdwZWFfneBlCnVrpvyKHP2D4HrRLXZ3XGXg/viewform>

PREREGISTER FOR ZOOM ACCESS. You can ONLY attend this event on Zoom. Please use [<https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSf5jMtmXttOWNKqdwZWFfneBlCnVrpvyKHP2D4HrRLXZ3XGXg/viewform?usp=sf_link>](https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSf5jMtmXttOWNKqdwZWFfneBlCnVrpvyKHP2D4HrRLXZ3XGXg/viewform?usp=sf_link) this link to register by Wednesday February 7, 2024.

Please register by Wednesday, February 7: Zoom access information will be sent to you on the morning of the event on Thursday, February 8. This event is NOT offered in-person.

This event is one of the monthly series of free public programs sponsored by the Arlington Historical Society. For more information, please email: info@arlingtonhistoricalsociety.org

The Freshman has closed in Crystal City

Crystal City hangout The Freshman has permanently closed its doors. The all-day cafe/bar/restaurant just announced on social media that it has closed, just under three years after opening in the spring of 2021, in the midst of the pandemic. Owner and namesake Nick Freshman, in announcing the closing today, noted the lengthy delay in opening caused by Covid-19. [Read more here.](#)

Crumbl Cookies sets sights on early 2025 for new Pentagon City store debut

Crumbl Cookies has its sights set on opening another location in Pentagon City, but the scent of freshly baked cookies might not fill the air for another year. The new Pentagon City cookie outpost will be located on the ground floor of the 11-story, 253-unit Milton building at 1446 S. Grant Street — the second apartment tower in the multi-phase Pentagon Centre shopping center redevelopment. Currently, a “Coming Soon” sign adorns the storefront window. [Read more here.](#)

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Join Encore Learning this Spring and Expand your World!

Encore Learning has a fantastic spring lineup of 35 courses including 27 new courses. Select from 16 in-person courses, 15 virtual courses, as well as 4 hybrid courses available for both in-person and virtual participation simultaneously. The Global Hot Spots class features five former US Ambassadors. There are courses in history, literature, art, science, and so much more. Keeping our brains active and engaged is so important and the social connections made are so rewarding. See the Calendar here: <https://encorelearning.net/.../12/pdf-of-calendar-view.pdf>

See the list of courses here: <https://encorelearning.asapconnected.com/#CourseIndex>

Be sure you have the following dates on your calendar:

Thursday, February 1 at 9:30 AM EST – Join our Spring Course Preview via Zoom where you can learn more about our Spring courses and hear directly from their instructors: <https://encorelearning.asapconnected.com/#CourseID=293318>

Monday, February 5 at 10:00 AM EST – Registration opens. Monday, March 4 – Spring classes begin.

A new bar and restaurant is set to fill a long-vacant space in Crystal City

A new restaurant is set to fill a decade-long vacancy in Crystal City. Lantern Restaurant & Bar, owned by Shen Zhao and Bing Liu, is moving into a storefront at the base of an apartment building at 320 23rd Street S., last occupied by Matsutake Hibachi Steak and Sushi until its closure in 2014. The property, next to a Virginia ABC store and across from a Hilton hotel, appears to have sat vacant since. Window dressings on the property say Lantern Restaurant & Bar is “coming soon.” Neither the owners nor the leasing agents for the space responded to requests for comment before deadline. [Read more here.](#)

Warby Parker store to open in Pentagon City mall

A new location of the popular eyewear purveyor Warby Parker is coming to Pentagon City mall at the main entrance of Fashion Centre at Pentagon City, on the first floor of S. Hayes Street. The New York City-based company — which started as an online-only retailer, known for its prescription eyewear, contacts and sunglasses — says on its website that it expects to open this year. The mall’s [website](#) notes the store is “coming soon.”

Black Codebreakers in WWII

The Arlington Historical Society is excited to invite you and your members to attend our February event on Feb 8 at 7 pm: Black Codebreakers in WWII. This is a VIRTUAL event on ZOOM only. Details on how to register are at the AHS website: <https://arlingtonhistoricalsociety.org/events/black-code-breakers-in-world-war-ii-at-arlington-hall/>

During World War 11, a unit of African American women secretly worked as code breakers in Arlington as part of America's massive intelligence operation, which employed roughly 10,000 women code breakers. Their command center was Arlington Hall Station, a former women's junior college that became a key wartime cryptography center. The existence of African-American code breakers was hidden until historians at the National Security Agency (NSA) uncovered the details in secret files. They worked to break commercial codes and identified companies making deals with our wartime enemies. Help celebrate Black history month by learning about the accomplishments of these men and women.

ABOUT CCCA

The Crystal City Civic Association (CCCA) was formed on January 28, 2014. We are a non-partisan, not-for-profit organization with the express purpose of advancing the common interests of the residents of the Crystal City neighborhood in Arlington County, Virginia. CCCA gives a voice to our residents. CCCA officers represent community members at county meetings, function as liaisons to state and local lawmakers, coordinate with the Crystal City BID on important issues and projects and ensures the needs of residents are met.

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Join on our website:

<http://www.crystalcitycivic.org/>

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Send a check for \$10 to:

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