



May 6, 2024

Mark Schwartz, Arlington County Manager

Dear Mark,

We, the Presidents of the three civic associations in 22202 (Arlington Ridge, Aurora Highlands, and Crystal City), constituting the Livability22202 coalition, write to affirm our commitment to the livability priorities of 2023, specifically regarding libraries in 22202. As called for in the livability priorities, “The existing Aurora Hills library requires an update to modern functionality. A larger centrally located library is needed in addition to a smaller, separate library branch in Crystal City.” We were dismayed to learn of the decision by Arlington County and JBG Smith to abandon the commitment to deliver the planned Crystal City library at 1901 S. Bell St.

There is ample evidence of the long-standing need for a library in Crystal City, as was committed to during the 2020/2021 site plan reviews as a community benefit. 22202’s number of residential units has dramatically increased in the last four years and the population is projected to continue to grow. Livability Priorities, which call for an additional school, library, and community center, affirm this need. Something needs to be done to provide the essential public services and amenities for the growing population of 22202.

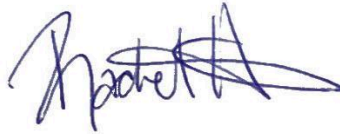
At a minimum, the County must find a new site for the Crystal City Library and provide an expansion or relocation for the Aurora Hills Library. 22202 needs both a large centrally located library and a smaller Crystal City Branch. The Aurora Hills Library was built in 1978 for a different time and a different level of population. Without renovation, it no longer can serve the needs of the largest growing community in Arlington County. A Crystal City branch does not replace the need to maintain and grow the Aurora Hills Library. We further recommend that the Aurora Highlands Civic Association have a representative in the Library Vision Coalition Project in addition to the Crystal City Civic Association.

In addition to our concerns about the needs of 22202 and the County’s failure to meet them, we believe asking JBG Smith to renege on its community benefit commitment sets a dangerous precedent. If the planning process can be so easily discarded, residents and developers cannot work together in good faith if at any time that benefit can be sold by the county and bought by the developer.

The three civic associations regularly receive communication from county staff regarding site plans, amendments, and any changes; and members of the three civic associations also attend informal community updates with JBG Smith. But, at no time did either party raise that the previously promised community benefit would not be delivered. Livability 22202 is now at a loss for how a site selection will occur with appropriate public engagement as there is no LRPC process available for a site-less entity. We look forward to hearing from you how this will occur and what remedial steps the County will be taking to bring the public services to 22202 it desperately needs.



Kateri Garcia, President  
Arlington Ridge Civic Association



Rachel Hicks, President  
Aurora Highlands Civic Association



Eric Cassel, President  
Crystal City Civic Association



CC: County Board  
Mike Dowell  
Diane Kresh  
Matt Mattauszek  
Robert Vaughan