

# CRYSTAL CITY INSIDER

*The monthly newsletter of the Crystal City Civic Association*



**February 2025**

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## PRESIDENT'S CORNER

**Renew!** If you have not already renewed, please do it now! Next month we will switch to 2025 memberships, so the time is now to [renew](#); details below.

**CC2DCA!** Please share your input on the county's website about the pedestrian/bicycle bridge from Crystal City to the airport. Your opinion could make a difference on such subjects as the articulated canopy, designated viewpoint areas, lighting, pedestrian priority, navigation, and landscaping.

Overall, the National Landing Bid (and me personally) would like CC2DCA's design to connect Crystal City and DCA as one contiguous, iconic facility with a striking, modern design that builds civic pride.

Your comments could help persuade the county and the National Park Service to make the bridge covered and more appealing. Visit [here](#) to learn more and weigh in.

**The Underground** JBG Smith representatives told the *Insider* that the company has no plans to shut the subterranean complex, but none to revive it either. They also said that safety is being beefed up, and the Underground's main corridors are supposed to be accessible at all times. We have heard anecdotes of locked corridors, particularly on holidays and late at night. Read the interview on Page 7. Tell us about your experiences and recommendations [here](#).

- Eric Cassel, CCCA President

## Renew your CCCA Membership for 2025

CCCA dues of \$10 are on an annual basis, Jan. 1-Dec. 31. You can renew your membership online via [PayPal](#) or by check to our Treasurer (see last page of the newsletter). The deadline for renewals to continue receiving newsletters and emails is Feb. 28, 2025. Although our sister civic associations in 22202 charge \$20 or more for annual dues, we have not increased ours since the CCCA was established in January 2014.

## INFORMATION AND EVENTS – ARLINGTON COUNTY

### Slippery sidewalks, winter warnings? This site's for you

So it's clear we're not going to escape snow for another winter. The county offers a variety of ways to keep up on the forecast and the aftermath:

- Visit [Snow Removal Status](#) for progress removing ice and slush off roads, schools, and designated county trails and property.
- Sign up for [Arlington Alert](#) to get the latest weather alerts.
- Use the [Snow Issue Form](#) to report issues regarding roads and sidewalks.
- Follow the plows on the [Snow Activity Map](#).
- Learn how you can [take care of yourselves & others in cold weather](#).

### County raises EV charging rates, provides up-to-date map

Using an interactive map, EV owners can now stay up to date on where to find a charging port in Arlington, with 31 charging ports currently available at county facilities. The county's EV Charging Rate Ordinance was updated by the County Board, effective on Jan. 1. View [the map of chargers and the Board Meeting video on the EV Rate Ordinance](#).

The County's EV Charging Ordinance was amended to:

- Replace the interim charging fee of \$0.1452 per kilowatt hour with a base fee of \$0.1746 per kilowatt hour;
- Establish a new "dwell fee" – which will only be incurred if a vehicle remains at a charging station 15 minutes after a charge has been completed. The fee is \$3 per hour and capped at \$25;
- Authorize the County Manager to update the base fee to keep pace with changes in electricity costs.

### County chair vows to keep values despite cost challenges



Arlington residents and its county government need to face an uncertain future by remaining committed to community values, Arlington's new County Board chair says. Takis Karantonis, who has sat on the Board since 2020,) was elected last month unanimously to serve as chair for the coming year. Matt de Ferranti was selected vice chair, a position that sets him up for the chairmanship in 2026.

[Read more here.](#)

## Proposal would allow Arlington to revamp County Board

Proposed statewide legislation would allow counties to make major government changes. Under a bill introduced last month by Del. Patrick Hope (D-1), Arlington voters could vote to change the number of County Board members, establish district-based seats, and alter the way the county chair is elected.

([Arlnow.com](http://Arlnow.com))

## County looks to lure fed workers facing back-to-office mandates

As federal agencies step up back-to-the-office rules, Arlington County is hanging out the help-wanted sign. "I'm expecting we're going to have a pile of really qualified applicants knocking on our door – in every department," County Manager Mark Schwartz told the county civic federation. ([ArlNow.com](http://ArlNow.com))

## County foresters pruning, shaping area trees

Street trees in Crystal City and Potomac Yard are on the county docket for trimming and shaping. Vincent Verweij, Urban Forest Manager of the Arlington County Forestry Unit, notified the CCCA that the county has begun assessing the health and maintenance needs of area trees. The unit aims to attend to all county-owned trees on a five-year cycle. The work will mainly involve pruning to improve tree structure, reduce safety risks, and attain clearance from infrastructure such as streets or buildings. It will not resort to removal unless trees are dead or dying or pose an unacceptable risk to people or property. Where appropriate, new trees will be planted as replacements.



The tree squad expects to be in the area through early March. Parking may temporarily be restricted in some areas. For an overall picture of county efforts, view the [Tree Maintenance Map](#). Residents can request specific maintenance for county-owned trees online at the [Report-a-Problem site](#). For more information, visit the [Tree Circuit Maintenance webpage](#).

## Police equipped with more cameras to track suspect vehicles

Arlington County has expanded its network of license plate recognition cameras and other video surveillance. The police have incorporated equipment manufactured by [Flock Safety](#) to assist criminal investigations and response to accidents. In the fall, 25 Flock Safety License Plate Recognition cameras and six Pan-Tilt-Zoom cameras were installed across the county. Police have been using license plate recognition technology since 2012. Flock Safety also captures vehicle characteristics such as make, body type, and color. Police receive real-time alerts when stolen vehicles, stolen license plates, and vehicles associated with wanted persons, missing persons, or felony criminal incidents pass by the cameras. Visit [here](#) for more details.

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## Average property values up 2.5% as resident receive new assessments

Eighty percent of Arlington residents saw an increase in their annual real estate property assessments, which went out last month. The remaining fifth declined or stayed the same. Overall, values increased by 2.5 percent. The county prepared this [this short video](#) to explain how assessments are calculated. Read more [here](#).

## Want to reduce your climate footprint? There's an app for that

A new app is designed to help you track your carbon footprint and learn ways to reduce it. [GetGreen Arlington](#) users earn points for activities that reduce energy consumption such as using public transit or buying local goods. The app offers links to opportunities to engage in community events and initiatives. It also offers rewards for participating in challenges and competition promoting eco-friendly action. The county and [EcoAction Arlington](#) announced the launch of the app last month. It was designed by the Emerald Technology Group. The app is available at the [App Store](#) or on [Google Play](#). Read [here](#) for more information.



## Historical marker to honor Black community swept away by Pentagon

Before there was the Pentagon, there was Queen City. The black neighborhood was home to 900 residents when the federal government chose the spot to build the Pentagon and its associated road network in the early 1940s. The county's landmark review board is refining the wording of a [new historical marker](#) to commemorate the community. The marker is being considered for a site near the intersection of Columbia Pike and S. Joyce Street, where part of the neighborhood stood.

## Arlington Mini Libraries wants readers to add to its map



An Arlington resident is seeking to create a map of every curbside library in the county and asking for the community's help. Constantin Kostenko has launched the Arlington [Mini Libraries project](#), inspired by neighborhood strolls with his children in the Nottingham Elementary School area. Arlington Mini Libraries offers a [community-made map of](#) homegrown libraries, along with catalogs of their books. Contributors photograph and document locations, then scan in books using software on the website. Many are affiliated with the Little Free Library nonprofit, which maintains [its own map](#) of over 150,000 locations around the world, including a couple dozen in Arlington. Kostenko aims to supplement that map. ([ArlNow.com](#))

## Befriend your local library

Are you among the readers who checked out 1.5 million items from the county library's electronic collection? The Friends of the Arlington Public Library (FOAL) is seeking support to provide additional

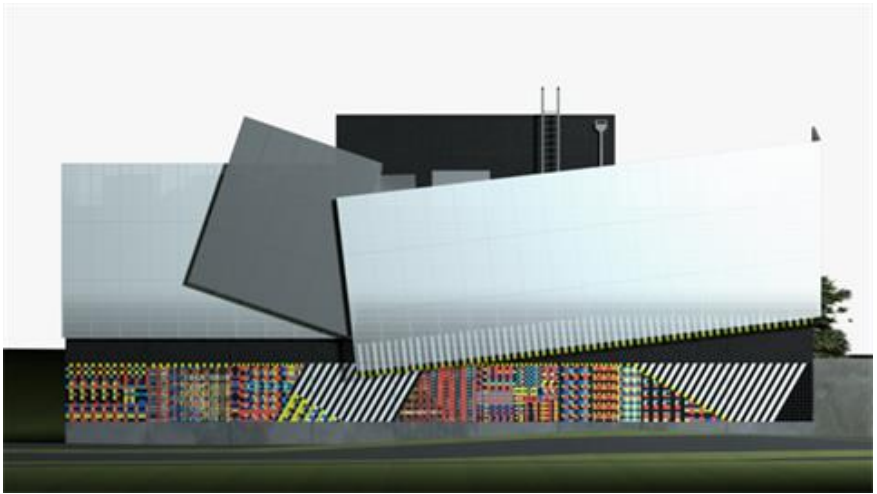
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funding for the OverDrive ecollection. In addition, FOAL promotes seasonal reading programs, The Shop (a makerspace), author talks, and children's activities. The nonprofit seeks members, volunteers, and patrons and donations for its books sales. For details, visit [here](#).

### Art project at power station probes our relationship with electricity

Arlington County's latest public art project explores our relationship to electricity. Fittingly, it is located at Dominion's Crystal City substation at 1720 S. Fern St. Italian-born Elena Manferdini crafted *inVisible* (right) out of custom-painted precast concrete, anodized aluminum, and ceramic tiles. Manferdini describes the work as visualizing "the creation and distribution of electricity – an unseen, yet essential aspect of our lives." On the lower half, the two-,



four-, and six-inch tiles refer to the substation's main function of converting voltage from high to low or vice versa. The upper half, an immense monochrome field of metal panels, represents a folded sky and invites the audience to view the actual sky. In creating *inVisible*, Manferdini hopes viewers consider the invisible and fundamental force of electricity and the process and tools used in its creation and distribution. The artist, interviewed [here](#), is also a designer, engineer, and architect.

For more on the county's four-decade-old public art collection, visit [here](#).

### Survey finds residents split over ranked-choice voting

Just over half of residents favor ranked-choice voting, according to responses to online feedback reported to the County Board last month.

This survey follows the county's first-ever use of ranked-choice voting in the general election last fall for County Board.

Some 1,100 people responded to the survey, giving ranked choice voting a score of 52 on a scale of 0-to-100. The favorable score was 59 when a similar survey was taken after the Democratic board primary in June 2023.

The County Board plans to hold a public hearing in late February before deciding whether to continue with ranked-choice voting in the board race in the general election.

The Commonwealth has not allowed ranked choice voting for school boards; constitutional, legislative, or statewide offices; or for federal elections. ([ARLnow.com](#))



## DEVELOPMENT



*An undated photo from heyday of the Underground, once filled with shops, restaurants, salons, even a theater.*

### JBG Smith says it has no plans to shut Underground

The Underground will remain open for the foreseeable future, but chances are it will serve as little more than a series of corridors providing short cuts and a respite for the cold or heat.

That is the word from two representatives of JBG Smith, which owns the maze that stretches from 12<sup>th</sup> to 22<sup>nd</sup> Street.

“We’re not pro- or anti- underground,” says Matt Ginivan, executive vice president and co-head of development. “We’ve cast our net pretty wide on alternative solutions for how people can use this space creatively, including educational institutions, including healthcare institutions.”

Ginivan and Brandon Taff, senior vice president for commercial asset management, spoke via zoom with the CCCA newsletter last month. Here are the key takeaways:

- Despite anecdotal reports of sections being closed late nights, the pair say that to their knowledge the Underground is supposed to be open 24 hours a day. Further they say, it is not the policy to close sections on Sundays or weekends. Any closures, they say, were because of temporary construction or maintenance work.
- The main corridors of the Underground that have public easements will remain open for the foreseeable future.
- Opening of the Crystal Drive entrance to the subway will not lead to the entire closure of the Underground.
- Security for the underground is monitored live 24 hours a day by camera and by foot patrols. Motorized patrol vehicles are being considered to speed response times.

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- Sales through the Underground have continued to decline since the 1980s, with pedestrian traffic hit hard by the departure of the US Patent and Trademark Office and Defense Department offices, and then by Covid. Further, the Underground's commercial fate has mirrored that of enclosed malls throughout the country.

In its heyday, the Underground was a mecca of shops, restaurants, banks, medical facilities, and hair and cosmetic salons. It even had its own grocery and drugs stores – and a live theater. Today, it is mostly a ghost town. The Subway restaurant survives because of a legal battle, but an art gallery and few other remaining spots will be closed by summer.

Asked if there was a plan to close the Underground permanently, Ginivan says, “I guess I’d say that it’s always going to depend on the block-by-block situation.” For example, when new retail was built on Crystal Drive, former Underground space was reoriented to face the street. A section of the Underground was demolished for the construction of the Grace and Reva at 1900 Crystal Drive, resulting as well in more public outdoor space and street-facing retail.

In anticipation of the new VRE station and CC2DCA bridge, a previously enclosed corridor connecting 2011 to 2121 Crystal Drive is being transformed to orient lobbies, retail, and transit connections toward the street.

But Ginivan does not see a viable future for retail in the Underground. “It's not a question about do we have the willingness to invest in it. It's just we can't force people to shop where they don't want to be. ... There's not enough foot traffic to have both a successful Crystal Drive and a successful underground.”

He says the company has tried to entice educational and health care organizations into the space, but they were deterred by the lack of street-level visibility and concerns about low ceiling heights, limited natural light, and wayfinding. “I’ve personally been involved in half a dozen such pursuits and ultimately the end users were not interested,” Ginivan says, declining to name potential tenants.

Ginivan suggests that the best hope for the Underground is an attraction that in itself would bring people to Crystal City. “It would take tens of thousands of people being interested in that space,” he says. “Even if it costs a little bit of money to operate,” he adds, such a scenario would pay off through “a knock-on benefit for all of our street level retail and all of our apartments.”

*Readers, what are your ideas for reviving the Underground? Have you had problems with locked public entrances at night or on weekends? What are your thoughts on making it safer? Comment [here](#).*

### **WaPo pays a last visit to Underground store owners**

A [Washington Post front page](#) story last month takes us down memory lane in a tribute to the Underground as developer JBG Smith closes down its remaining stores. “This suburban, nominally subterranean Northern Virginia shopping mall — a maze of kitschy mom-and-pop stores below office buildings and above a Metro station — had once seemed like something from the future. Weeks out from closing entirely, it had instead become a white-walled, climate-controlled purgatory,” Teo Armus reports.

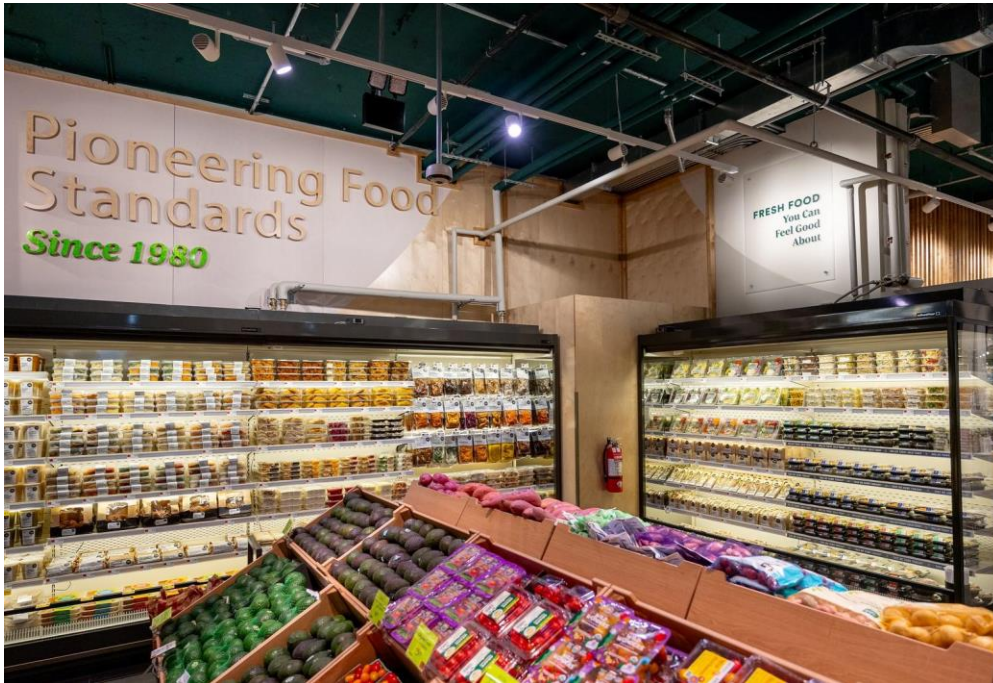
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## Scaled-down Whole Foods to move into former Amazon Fresh site

It's official: Whole Foods is coming to Crystal City, a scaled-down version that is. A new store is in development at 1550 Crystal Drive, where Amazon Fresh closed last April. Whole Foods Market Daily Shop will provide to-go meals and snacks, weekly essentials, and a quick stop for last-minute ingredients to complete a meal. The store will offer fresh, seasonal produce, meat and seafood, prepared foods like sandwiches and pre-packed meals, breads, alcohol, and supplements.



*Whole Foods released this glimpse of the new Market Daily Shops opening around the country, including on Crystal Drive.*

It will also carry local specialties and products carrying the 365 by Whole Foods Market brand. Ranging from a quarter to half the size of a regular store, the new Whole Foods subsidiaries are targeting dense, metropolitan areas.

The new store will be in the only grocer in Crystal City, about a 10-minute walk from the full-size Whole Foods at 520 12th Street S. in Pentagon City, next to Amazon's HQ2. (Whole Foods is owned by Amazon.) More details, including the opening date, have yet to be announced.

[Job listings](#) for the store suggest they're planning to open in early spring. Apparently, it was easy to substitute Whole Foods because Amazon still holds the lease on the site.

A Trader Joe's had been in the works for the other end of Crystal City at 2450 Crystal Drive. Despite Virginia alcohol and construction permit applications, the store never opened and, we're told, was scrapped by the grocery chain. ([ArlNow.com](#))

## National Landing to welcome more than 20 new businesses this year

Here is a roundup of some of the new businesses expected to come to the Crystal City area in 2025:

- [Bar Chinois](#), 1900 Crystal Drive. Its DC location offers Chinese cuisine and French-inspired cocktails.

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- Bar Colline, 1900 Crystal Drive. The latest offering from the restaurant group [H2 Collective](#), which operates Café Colline, will offer shareable plates, wine, and cocktails with the feeling of dining in Paris.
- [Call Your Mother](#), 1601 Crystal Drive. Bagel shop opened last month in the Water Park.
- [Club Studio](#), 3550 S Clark St. Fitness chain offers boutique classes and luxury amenities. Activities include cycling, boxing, Pilates, and yoga.
- [Crumbl Cookies](#), 1446 S Grant St. Banana Bread or Confetti Cake cookies? Eclectic treats plus standbys like Chocolate Chip when the cookie chain opens its first Arlington location.
- [Dolan Uyghur](#), 320 23rd St. S. Central Asian cuisine
- [First National Bank](#), 1446 S. Grant St. This will be the bank's third Arlington branch.
- Flight Wine Shop, 1900 Crystal Drive. Some 300 selections; opened last month.
- [Good Vets](#), 1900 Crystal Drive. Chain's first northern Virginia location offers primary, urgent care, surgery, and virtual appointments.
- [Gwenie's Pastries](#), 550 14th St. S. DC-area sweets chain to serve Filipino and fusion-inspired deserts.
- [King Street Oyster Bar](#), 480 11<sup>th</sup> St. S. Virginia chain expands into Arlington with oysters, lobster rolls, crab cakes, fish and chips.
- [Lantern Restaurant and Bar](#), 320 23rd St. S. Restaurant to offer Chinese dishes in space that has been vacant for a decade.
- La Posada, 320 23rd St. S. The Don Pancho Mexico Grill team is opening this Tex-Mex spot.
- [Lapu Lapu](#), 550 14th St. S. Expanding from its Gaithersburg site, the eatery offer Filipino and classic American breakfast sandwiches.
- [Omacase Japanese Sushi](#), 480 11th St. S. Upscale sushi restaurant managed by team from Guy Shige Japanese BBQ and Bar. By reservation only.
- [Peachy](#), 1900 Crystal Dr/ 19th Ct. Skin care studio, opening first Virginia location, smooths away aging with Botox, retinoids, and mineral sunscreen.
- [Social Burger](#), 1450 S Eads St. Founded in Vienna, Va., chain offers burgers in many forms, salads, and fries.
- [Sparkle and Pop Nails](#), 1446 S. Grant St. Salon pampers with manicures, pedicures, and waxing.
- [Tend](#), 1421 S. Hayes St. Dental office opens third northern Virginia location this month.
- [Toastique](#) Gourmet toast and juice bar has yet to announce location.
- [Urban Boxing](#), 303 Potomac Ave. Arlington chain offers classes in boxing, kickboxing, jiu-jitsu and much more.

- [Whole Foods Market Daily Shops](#), 1550 Crystal Dr. Scaled-down version of grocery chain will fill spot left vacant by Amazon Fresh last spring. See the story above.
- [Yunnan by Potomac Noodle House](#), 1446 S. Grant St. Chain just opened in Pentagon City.

### **Pair of apartment buildings offer nearly 500 units – and boxing, too**

Two new apartment buildings have opened in Crystal City, offering a total of 491 apartments. Urban Boxing, Coffee Republic, and an as yet unnamed retail tenant are planned for the ground floor.

Hazel and Azure, located at 3030 and 3130 S. Potomac Avenue, are renting a total of 491 apartments that range from studios to three bedrooms. The 15- and 11-story towers feature such amenities as a rooftop pool, fitness and wellness spa, and co-working spaces for residents who work from home. Floor plans range from studios to three-bedroom apartments



The project was completed by ZOM Living, which describes itself as one of the nation's leading multifamily developers.

### **Back-to-office orders boosting business hopes**

With Amazon bringing back its employees to the office full time, more customers are visiting local businesses, according to the head of the National Landing Building Improvement District.

“We’ve observed a noticeable uptick in foot traffic, with businesses reporting a steady rise in patronage, particularly during peak commuting hours,” Tracy Sayegh Gabriel told ARLnow.com.

The Trump Administration’s back-to-work order could also boost local businesses, but a deep dive by ARLnow.com finds numbers difficult to come by and opinions varying from bullish to shrugs. Read more [here](#).

Gabriel said that the BID is working with Amazon to launch Met Park After Dark to promote happy hours and other after-work events to entice employees to spend the evening in the area.



## TRANSPORTATION

### County seeks comment on CC2DCA, but project at mercy of VRE

The money is in place and design work has started, but the pedestrian/cycling bridge to the airport, known as CC2DCA, remains at the mercy of the railroad. Meanwhile, Arlington County is accepting comments through Feb. 5 for the remainder of the design. View and comment on the project [here](#).

At right is one possible look for the bridge, as rendered for the National Landing BID. While current plans call only for the bridge to be covered when it passes over railroad tracks, the CCCA encourages people to specify in their comments whether they would like it to be covered in its entirety. You can also comment on aesthetics and amenities such as benches.

The bridge construction schedule depends on two rail projects: the addition of a fourth track and the relocation of the VRE station.

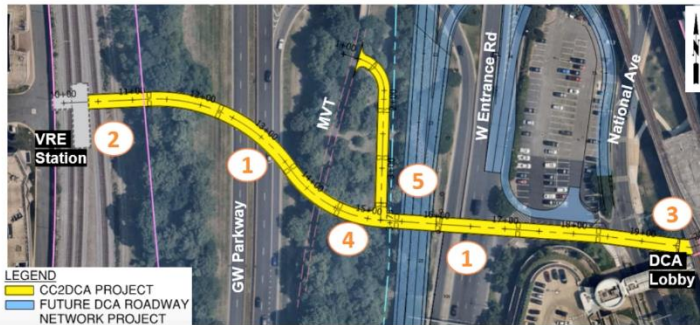
Those projects are aimed at increasing ridership by providing faster and more frequent service to Washington and beyond (including an Amtrak stop), but a ridership decline since Covid has crimped VRE financing. Despite

VRE assurances, we at the CCCA remained concerned that the railroad could fall behind. The CC2DCA bridge connects to Crystal City via the new VRE station. The bridge cannot open until the station does.

The rendering on the next page shows the proposed route of the bridge. From the VRE station, it goes across the railroad tracks and the GW Parkway and then to the airport. It will be accessible from the Mount Vernon trail. As shown in the lower part of the diagram, the bridge gently slopes downward from the Crystal City side.

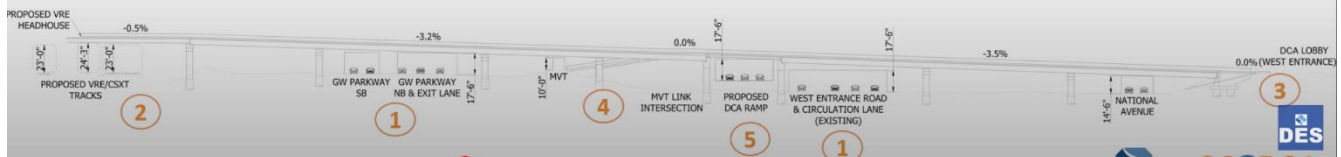


## Preferred Alignment



### Alignment Constraints

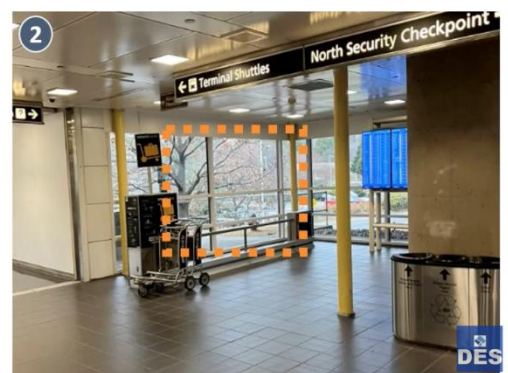
1. Minimum vertical clearance of 17'-6" for pedestrian structures, per VDOT
2. Tie-in elevation at VRE Station
3. Tie-in elevation at DCA Lobby
4. Tie-in elevation at MVT Connection
5. Clearance of Future MWAA DCA Ramp



The graphic below shows how the bridge will tie into the airport Metro station:

## DCA Property Section

### Connection to Airport - West side of DCA Lobby





## Transforming Route 1 from elevated road to an urban boulevard



*The county plans to bring Route 1 down to street level south of 12 Street.*

The Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) is considering bringing the elevated section of Route 1 between 12<sup>th</sup> Street S and 20<sup>th</sup> Street S to ground level and turning the thoroughfare into an urban boulevard. The department proposes eliminating the 15<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> street bridges, and revamping the 20<sup>th</sup> and 23<sup>rd</sup> street intersections. In addition, plans call for major changes to the Route 1 and Route 395 interchange.

Reporting on its Phase 2 findings last month, VDOT called for wider sidewalks, a six-foot-wide bicycle path, and about 100 additional trees on the one-mile-long road segment from 12<sup>th</sup> Street S to 23<sup>rd</sup> Street S. It also plans to reduce the speed limit and remove dedicated right-turn lanes “where possible.” The estimated cost: \$161 million. A proposal to extend the boulevard from 12<sup>th</sup> Street S. to the I-395 interchange is expected to cost another \$100 million. Construction on the project could start “as soon as 2028,” pending the approval of adequate funding, according to VDOT. Read the report [here](#).

This article covers why VDOT is doing the project and how local residents have and can make an impact. In March’s newsletter, I will zoom in on specific intersections and elaborate on the how the project would affect traffic. A subsequent article will cover construction details and realistic prospects for when and if the project will be completed.

### What is the rationale behind the project?

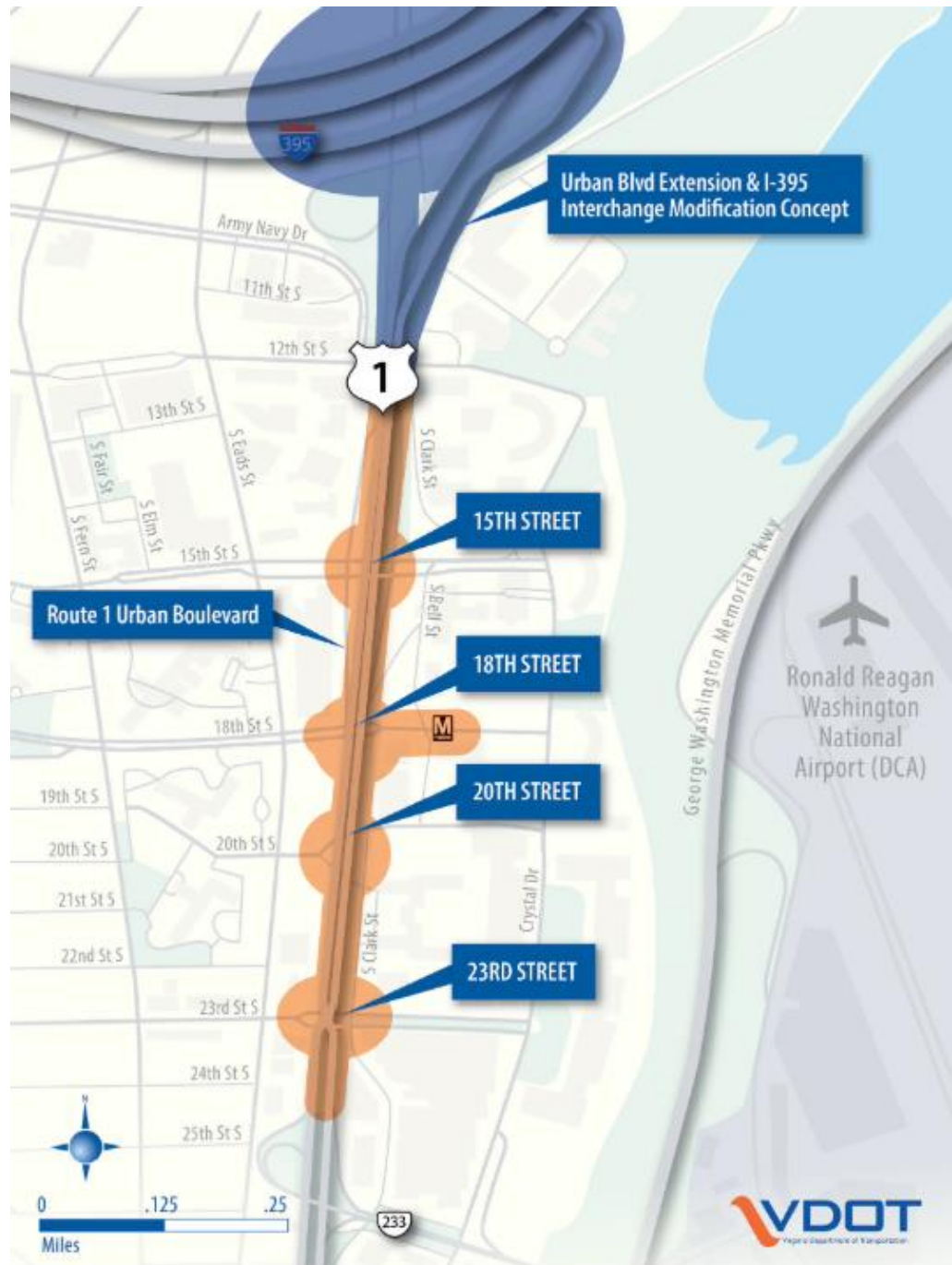
**Amazon.** In late 2018, as part of the announcement that Amazon had decided to build its second headquarters in Crystal City, the Commonwealth of Virginia identified improvements to Route 1 as one

of five transportation projects it would partially or fully fund. As a commitment to Amazon, the commonwealth vowed to improve safety, accessibility, and the pedestrian experience along Route 1.

**New building and open space.** Bringing Route 1 to grade level would eliminate ramps and free up about 5 acres of space. Arlington County and developers JBG Smith and Dweck would divvy up the new land. New construction – street-level retail and restaurants, high-rise offices and residences – could generate \$100 million annually in property taxes. Meanwhile, the county could build wider sidewalks, bikeways, and green strips.

**Reconnecting Crystal City.** An elevated road disrupts neighborhood connections, emphasizing auto traffic over community character. Indeed, when the bridges were first built, neighboring civic associations successfully sued to stop the road from becoming an interstate.

**De-emphasizing cars.** Multi-modal roads are in and auto-centric roads are out. Arlington County wants to open the roads up to pedestrians, bikes, and other modes of travel.



*Rendering from Phase 2 study for revamping Route 1.*

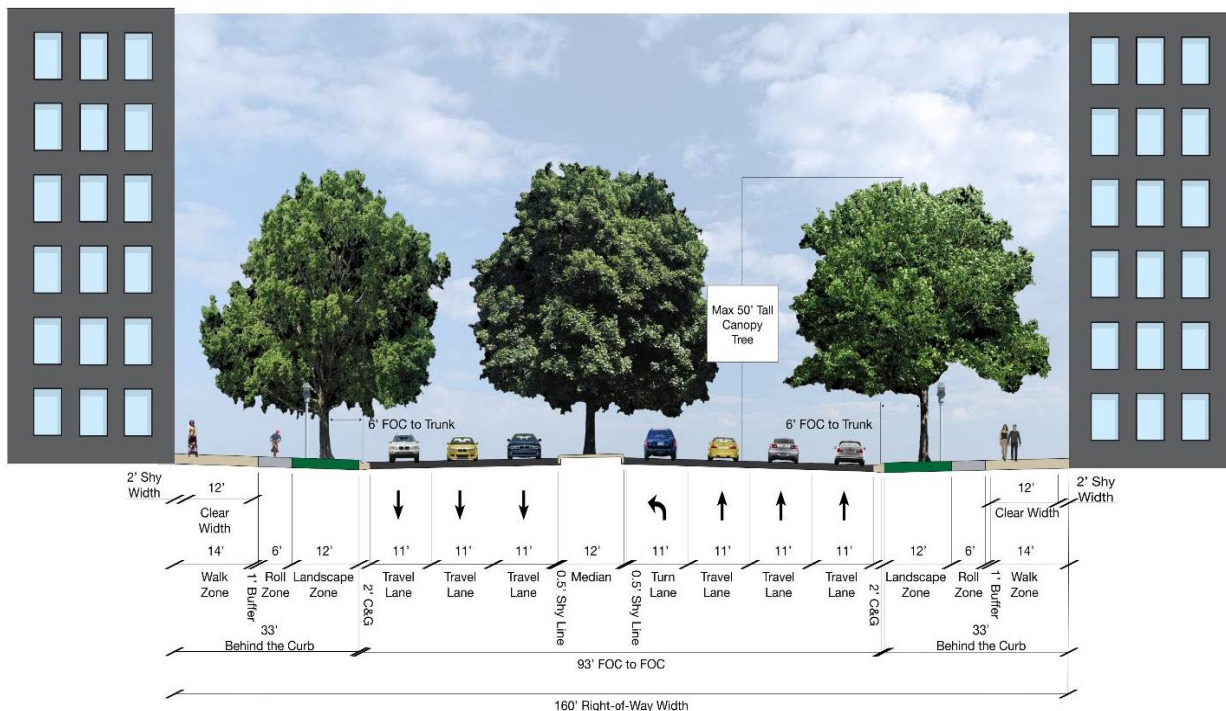
**Discouraging pass-through traffic.** In its current form, Route 1 attracts both local drivers and those heading south. The Route 1 proposal narrows travel lanes and otherwise shifts “driver expectations from a free-flowing highway to a slower-speed urban boulevard,” the [executive summary](#) says.

### How has the community responded?

For the past several years, representatives of the Arlington Ridge, Aurora Highlands, and Crystal City civic associations have attended nearly 100 meetings on the Route 1 project and submitted countless memos and comments to the VDOT. We have achieved three major changes in the project:

- Increased space between buildings on either side of the road on a five-block stretch. The result: wider sidewalks, more landscaped areas.
- A Barnes Dance intersection at 18th Street, which allows pedestrians to cross diagonally.
- Reduced the speed limit to 25 mph, from 35 mph.

Initially, the county planned 148 feet between buildings on the west and north sides of Route 1. We persuaded it to enlarge the corridor to 160 feet from 18<sup>th</sup> and 23<sup>rd</sup> streets, as depicted below:

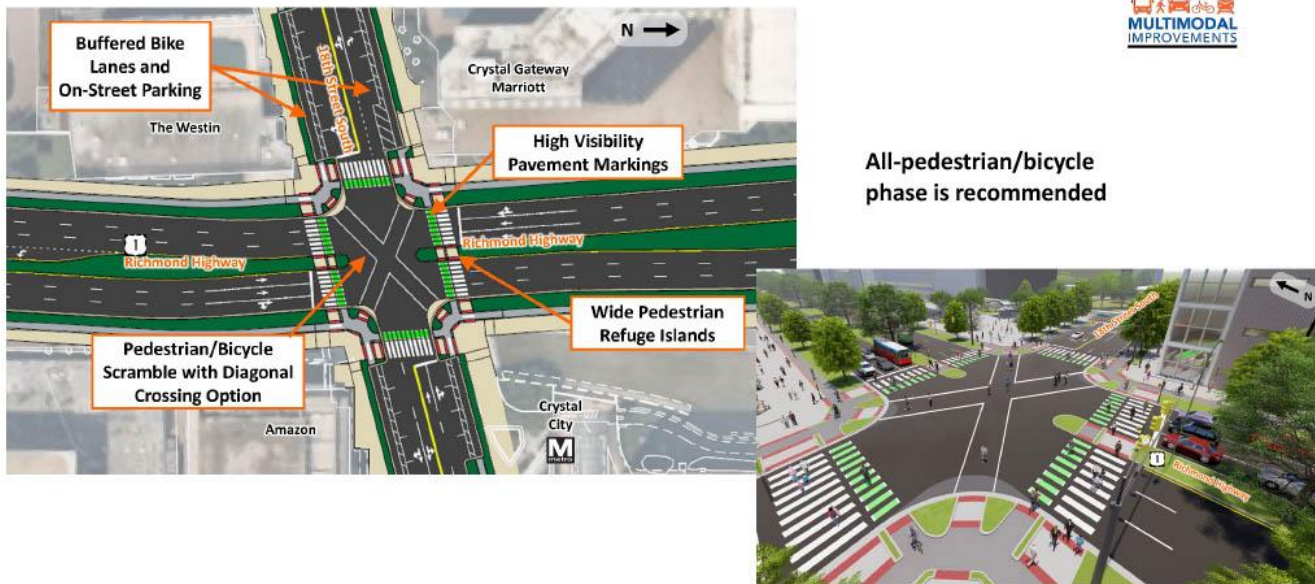


The wider corridor from 18<sup>th</sup> to 23<sup>rd</sup> streets increases the sidewalk width to 12 feet, up from 8 feet; and the landscape zones to 12 feet, up from 7 feet.



The rendering below shows the “Barnes Dance” intersection planned for 18<sup>th</sup> street. It gets its name from Henry Barnes, who served as street commissioner for a number of cities in the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century. (If you’re a transportation buff, read about him [here](#).) The intersection format had gone out of fashion until about a decade ago. Here is how it works: first the north/south traffic flows; next the east/west; and all cars stop so pedestrians and cyclists can cross the street in any direction.

## Route 1 and 18<sup>th</sup> Street Intersection



*Barnes Dance intersection at 18<sup>th</sup> Street: Motorists stop for pedestrians, allowing for diagonal crossing.*



## **Contracting team named to start Long Bridge project**

The Virginia Passenger Rail Authority has contracted with Long Bridge Rail Partners — a joint venture among three general contractors — to complete design work and start building the “South Package” of the [Long Bridge Project](#). This portion of the \$2.3 billion undertaking officially broke ground in October and is due to be completed by 2030. It includes:

- A two-track rail crossing over the GW Parkway and the Potomac River. The new bridge will augment an existing two-track bridge, greatly improving freight and passenger rail service between Washington and Virginia.
- A 16-foot wide bicycle and pedestrian crossing over the parkway and the Potomac. The bridge will have connections at the Long Bridge Aquatic Center, the Mount Vernon Trail, and Ohio Drive SW.
- New retaining walls and associated embankments along the George Washington Parkway as well as a new fender system within the Potomac River Navigational Channel.

The contracting team consists of Trumbull Corp., Fay, S&B Construction, and Wagman Heavy Civil, Inc. Completion is expected by 2030.



## PARKS & RECREATION

### Attention campers: It's time to enroll for summer

Arlington Parks & Recreation has released its 2025 Summer Camp Catalog, featuring nine weeks of camping from June 23 to August 22. Activities include sports, recreation, creative arts, classic and electronic gaming, and nature exploration. Registration for county residents will be staggered:

**Partner Camps** Feb. 12 at noon.

**Parks & Recreation Camps** Feb. 19 at noon.

**Early Registration** Feb 3 at noon for those qualifying for fee reductions.

Registration for out-of-county residents begins Feb. 26.

For more information on programs, enrollment, and counseling opportunities, visit [here](#).



### Boat launch slated to open in June at Four Mile Run park

It's not Arlington, but it is very close to us. We pass Four Mile Run Park as we drive down Glebe Road, Arlington Ridge Road, or Mt. Vernon Avenue. A canoe and kayak launch will make Four Mile Run and the Potomac River accessible to paddlers of all abilities. The Four Mile Run Conservatory Foundation has been contracted to build it between March and June this year. For details, visit [here](#).

## DOINGS IN CRYSTAL CITY (AND NEARBY)

### Cyclists to compete in Crystal City's garage racing championship

It may not be the Tour de France, but Crystal City's own Garage Racing National Championships offers its own range of cycling challenges. The underground spectacle features a gauntlet of tight turns and pillars for competitors of all skill levels. Not to mention quirky costumes and carts, plus an "anything goes" spirit.

**The place:** 201 12th Street S., G4 Parking Level

**The date:** Feb. 22

**The schedule:** 10 a.m., racer check-in; 10:30 a.m., doors open for spectators; 11 a.m. - 7 p.m., races underway.

Spectators can watch for free and enjoy drinks at a pop-up bar and local eats. Participants pay depending on category and must [sign up](#) by Feb. 21. For details, visit [here](#).



### Think you can't garden in a high rise building?



In the first of a planned series of quarterly programs, Master Gardeners of Northern Virginia will be offering virtual classes in urban agriculture. Joe Larsen will cover "Hydroponics for Beginners" on Feb. 7; and Extension Master Gardener Benton Murphy will introduce "Harvest at Home: Mastering Vegetable Gardening in Containers" on March 14. Click on the event titles [here](#) to RSVP and receive the link to participate. Video recordings of the sessions will be posted [here](#). The Master Gardener [website](#) features dozens of recorded presentations, organized by gardening topics.

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### Plant boutique featured in Netflix show soon to open here

Fans of Netflix's "Love is Blind" have already had a preview of a plant boutique soon to open on the ground floor of The Grace apartments.

PLNTR's new location at 269 19<sup>th</sup> Court S will feature house plants, tools, planters, dried flowers, home goods, and a kombucha bar. The store also designs, installs, and maintains plantings (live and artificial) for offices and homes.

Its Dupont Circle location hosted the couple from Netflix reality show in a craft workshop. ([ArlNow.com](https://www.arlnow.com))

### Drybar opens new blowout hair salon in Crystal City

A new hair salon specializing in blow-dry styles has opened on the ground floor of the Grace and Reva apartments at 269 19th Court S. [Drybar](https://www.drybar.com) offers nine different hairstyles with cocktail-inspired names like the "Mai Tai," the personal favorite of franchisee Brittany Brom. The salon is open seven days a week. ([ArlNow.com](https://www.arlnow.com))

### Wondering where to walk or cycle? Download a map

The county is offering detailed brochures for pedestrians and walkers: the BikeArlington [Bicycle Comfort Level Map](https://www.bikearlington.com) and WalkArlington's [Walkabout Maps](https://www.walkarlington.com), which features 22 self-guided walks around the County.

### For more activities, visit ...

- [Events at National Landing](#)
- [Arlington Parks and Recreation](#)
- [Arlington arts events](#)
- [Arlington Convention and Visitors Services](#)

## DINING IN CRYSTAL CITY (AND NEARBY)

### Nationally recognized Chinese noodle restaurant opens

The Chinese noodle restaurant [Yunnan by Potomac](#) opened last month at 721 15th Street S. The restaurant, which has relocated from Old Town Alexandria, features cuisine from the Yunnan region of southwest China. Among its specialties is mixian, described as “a slippery, light and almost fluffy rice noodle,” served with broths, flavorful sauces, and braised meats. Chef and owner Shao Bruce won national acclaim in 2022, when the Alexandria location was ranked No. 42 on Yelp’s Top 100 US Restaurant list. The restaurant features a weekend brunch menu and classes in making dumplings and cocktails.

### Call Your Mother offers bounty of bagels at Water Park

Call Your Mother deli opened a kiosk last month at the Water Park on 1601 Crystal Drive. The DC-born chain offers 13 kinds of bagel sandwiches on eight kinds of bagels, including everything, cheddar, pretzel and za’atar. Accompany your favorite with a variety of coffees and teas.

### Water Bar shifts into ski season

The Water Bar is taking on a ski-lodge feel through the end of March. Located at Water Park, 1601 Crystal Drive, the venue is decked out in après-ski themed decorations and offering seasonal treats such as baked brie, Waygu birria empanadas, milk chocolate fondue, and s’mores to go. ([ArlNow.com](#))



### More s’mores plus ice skating in Water Park

Four propane fire pits are open in Water Park for s’mores making at Crush Pizza and Wine. Ice skating is also available through Feb. 21 at the park’s 19-by-19 foot popup rink. Skating ends at 8 p.m. each day. Thirty minutes of skating costs \$35 per person, and reservations must be booked in person.

### Heart-shaped pizzas, other specials on tap for Valentine’s

Water Park is celebrating the week of Valentine’s day with heart-shaped pizzas, a Galentine’s Day movie night, and a holiday-themed cocktail class. ARLnow’s Katie Taranto has assembled a list of Valentine specials in Crystal City and beyond. Read about them [here](#) and [here](#).

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## Fast-casual spots to feature pastries, samosas, gelato, and more

French-Asian pastries, samosas, gelato and more are [coming soon](#) to the Fashion Centre at Pentagon City. The mall at 1100 S. Hayes Street recently announced a slate of four incoming restaurants, with offerings ranging from masala fries to fast-casual chicken and bowls. The eateries are [Tous les Jours](#), [Amorino Gelato al Naturale](#), [Pollo Campero](#), and [Kati Roll Wala](#).



## Beer garden to open by summer on Restaurant Row

Scapegoat Beer Garden plans to open in late spring or early summer at 556 22nd Street S. on Restaurant Row, according to owner Kendrick Wu. The restaurant, which obtained County Board approval last month, will serve Asian comfort foods and bar snacks to go along with the beer. Scapegoat has nearly 80 indoor seats and plans to use two outdoor patios that could accommodate some 200 more guests.

## Mah-Ze-Dahr bakery closes on Crystal Drive

The restaurant and bakery Mah-Ze-Dahr has closed after three and a half years in Crystal City. The café was the chain's last location in the Washington area. Its 1550 Crystal Drive site is next to the now closed Amazon Fresh store, which is due to be replaced by a scaled-down version of Whole Foods sometime this year. No news from property owner JBG Smith on potential successors to the bakery.

## New Year, New Perks for National Landing patrons

Did you know your everyday activities at National Landing could earn you cash rewards? [Open Rewards](#) is your key to unlocking exclusive perks by shopping local. From coffee shops to boutiques, your purchases earn points that translate into cash benefits.

## Nearly 100 venues offering deals for Alexandria Restaurant Week

Save up your appetites for [Alexandria Restaurant Week, Jan. 31 to Feb. 9](#). Nearly 100 restaurants will offer multi-course dinner menus for \$30-to-\$50 per person. Visit Alexandria, which launched the event in 2009, has posted a [digital menu](#) from participating restaurants.



## The Crystal Palate

*This is another in a series of restaurant reviews in our area. Let us know if there's a restaurant you would like us to visit. Submit ideas [here](#).*



### **Modena**

1199 H St. NW, Washington, (202) 216-9550.

My latest find among the area's many Italian restaurants is Modena. You can go a la carte or take the Pranzo Esecutivo (prix fixe) two-course lunch for \$30, which looked like a good deal. But we opted for lighter: one course and Whole Wheat Focaccia with garlic oil, parmesan, and rosemary dipped in oil – not the typical focaccia we get here. The Gnocchi Pesto with basil and mint pesto, toasted pinenuts, zucchini, preserved lemon, and whipped ricotta was tasty and filling. It had much more pesto than a lot of places provide, but this was definitely creamy. The Tagliatelle Bolognese was made with lamb and porcini with tomatoes and parmesan and was nicely sauced. A light dessert of poached pears topped it off.

The restaurant includes a 20 percent service charge and clearly states that tips are not required but appreciated. The waiter was super attentive, but on this quiet New Year's weekday we had little company for most of lunch.



*Whole Wheat Focaccia at left and Tagliatelle Bolognese, above.*

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My one surprise was that the waiter accepted my offer to pay for a full glass of wine that I accidentally spilled, when usually a restaurant will comp something like that – but I did offer. I had intended to tip the waiter with the cost of the wine but chose not to do so as a result.

All in all, a great Italian meal, quiet enough for two old friends to meet and talk.

\* \* \*

There are many good Italian restaurants in the DMV area without having to go far. A few of my personal favorites are:

**Mazzaro Italian Restaurant**, 2909 Wilson Blvd., Arlington, (703) 276-3099: A new eatery that offers classic Italian cuisine and Neapolitan pizza baked in a specialized, wood-fired oven imported from Italy. Parking in the Clarendon area is limited.

**Osteria da Nino**, 2900 S. Quincy, Arlington, (703) 820-1128. Cozy Shirlington restaurant with authentic Italian food.

**Federico Italiano**, 519 23rd St. S, Arlington, (703) 486-0519. Our local friendly Freddy Lutz's place on Restaurant Row for a cozy, family meal.

**Via Sophia**, 1001 14th St. NW, Washington, (202) 218-7575.

## ABOUT CCCA

The Crystal City Civic Association (CCCA) was formed on Jan. 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 ensure the needs of residents are met.

### CRYSTAL CITY CIVIC ASSOCIATION BOARD

**President** Eric Cassel

**Vice President** Tarsi Dunlop

**Meeting Secretary** Sheryl Eaton

**Communications Director** Andrew Damitio (by appointment)

**Membership Liaison** Matthew Fuzi

**Treasurer** Steve Miller

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Send a check for \$10 to:

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