

# CRYSTAL CITY INSIDER

*The monthly newsletter of the Crystal City Civic Association*



July 2025

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## PRESIDENT'S CORNER

In August, the Harris Teeter on Glebe Road in the Eclipse will close. The company will continue to rent the space till the end of next year. Please see the article on Page 12 of this newsletter for more details.

The proposed RiverHouse development is continuing. In a June 26 meeting, landscaping, the Green Ribbon, and streets were discussed. Transportation is on the agenda of the next meeting, which is July 28. One big issue is the grade changes on the site and the implication for ADA-accessible paths. With steep hills it is very difficult to find the space for a gradual inclined path. Feedback on open space provisions is being accepted through July 20. For details, visit [here](#).

Lastly, the Virginia Rail Authority has put out an RFP (Request for Proposals) for the 4<sup>th</sup> Track Project. The VRA expects that it will take several months to select a contract and start work on the project, which will separate freight and passenger traffic between Alexandria and Washington.

- Eric Cassel, CCCA President

## What's on your mind? The *Insider* wants to hear from you

The *Insider* welcomes your contributions. You may have ideas for improving the neighborhood, reviews of local stores, tips about unsung local treasures, or just anecdotes about everyday life (like the stories in *The New York Times* [Metropolitan Diary](#)). Perhaps you'd like to write a column about how to redo the Underground or the plans for the CC2DCA connector. You may have a beef with parking enforcement or park maintenance. We would especially welcome suggestions to improve the newsletter – and your offer to cover a “beat” like restaurants or recreation. Send your articles and thoughts [here](#).

## TRANSPORTATION

### The mammoth task of rebuilding Route 1

This is another in a series of occasional stories about the state's long-range plan to redevelop Route 1.

The Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) is proposing to take down two major bridges on Route 1 as part of an effort to transform the busy highway into a boulevard. Planners want to make the road more pedestrian friendly and increase street-level retail and restaurants. The latest report on the project, dated December 2024, can be downloaded [here](#).

While the goal remains controversial, there's no question that construction of this magnitude would be a royal mess.

VDOT envisions the project, which is expected to begin in 2028 at the earliest, would take at least two to three years to complete and cost more than \$260 million. Throughout that period, drivers would encounter delays and detours both on Route 1 and intersecting roads.

The project would be undertaken in six phases. Phase 1 (below) involves preliminary work, such as removing median strips from several sections.

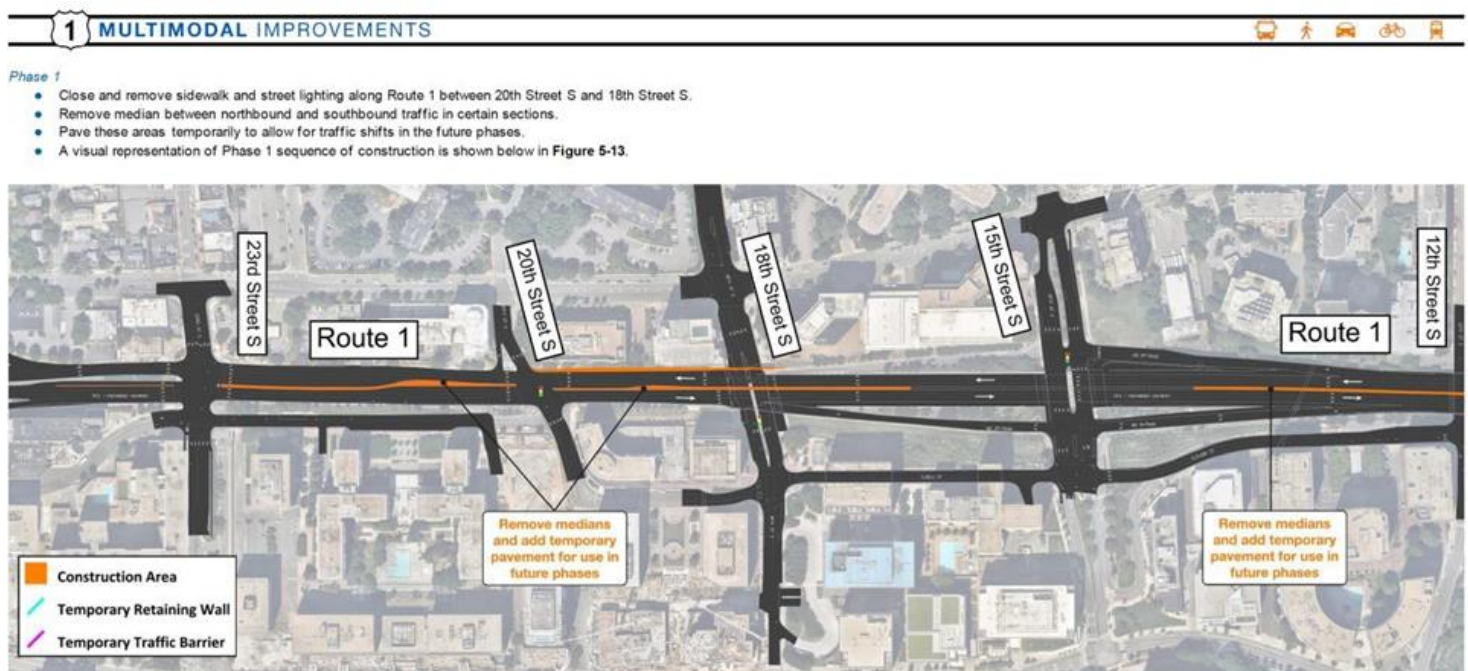


Figure 5-13: Phase 1 Sequence of Construction Representative Diagram

As part of Phase 2 (below), northbound Route 1 lines would be rerouted between 20th and 15th streets to a temporary road on the old S Clark St. alignment. Bus stops and sidewalks would also be shifted.

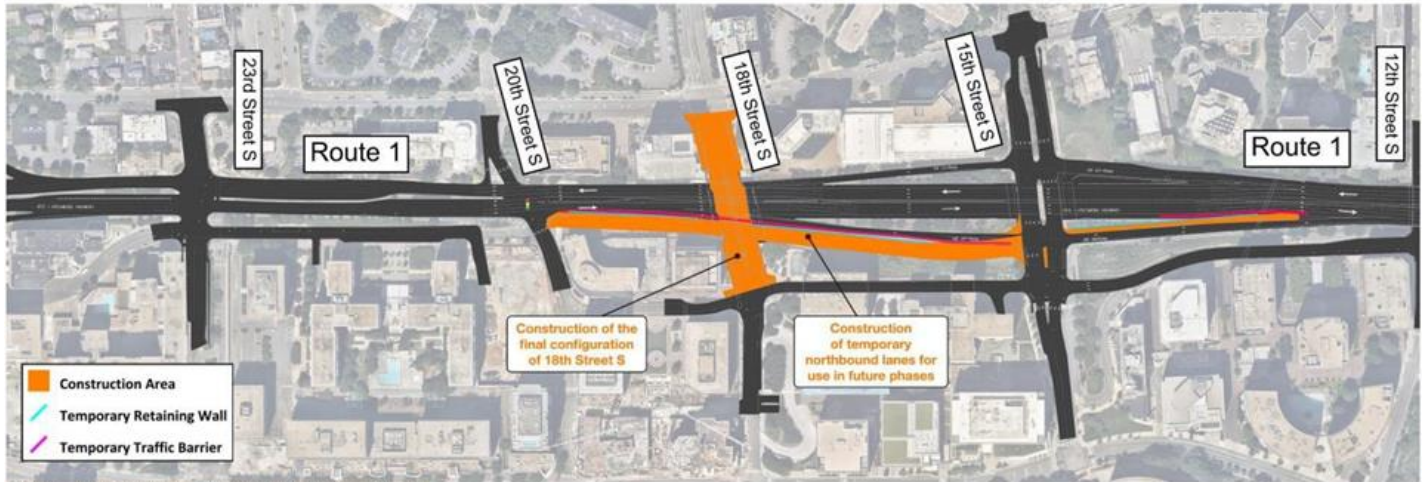


Figure 5-14: Phase 2 sequence of Construction Representative Diagram

Phase 3 work (below) would include shifting northbound traffic temporarily; removing southbound bridges over 18th and 15th streets; lowering southbound Route 1 to final grade; and constructing the western portion of Route 1 between 20th and 12 streets.

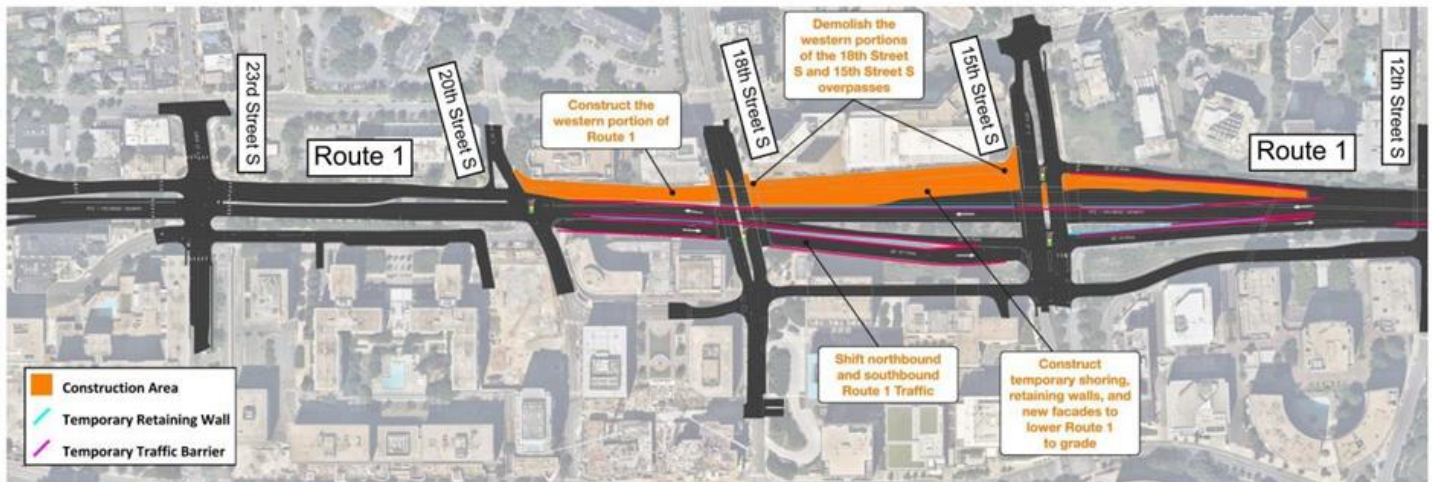


Figure 5-15: Phase 3 Sequence of Construction Representative Diagram



Phase 4 (below) would include constructing the western side (southbound) part of the road.

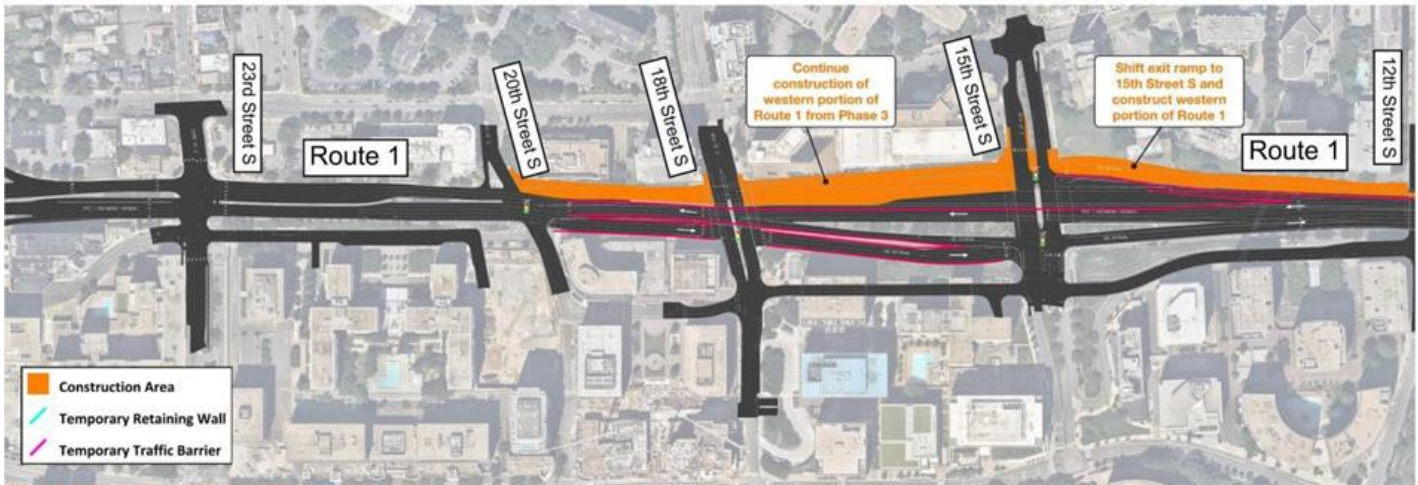


Figure 5-16: Phase 4 Sequence of Construction Representative Diagram

Phase 5 (below) would include shifting southbound traffic to new at-grade pavement; removing the remainder of the bridges over 18th and 15th streets; removing the remainder of the raised portion of the road and then paving at grade level; and constructing the eastern portion of Route 1.

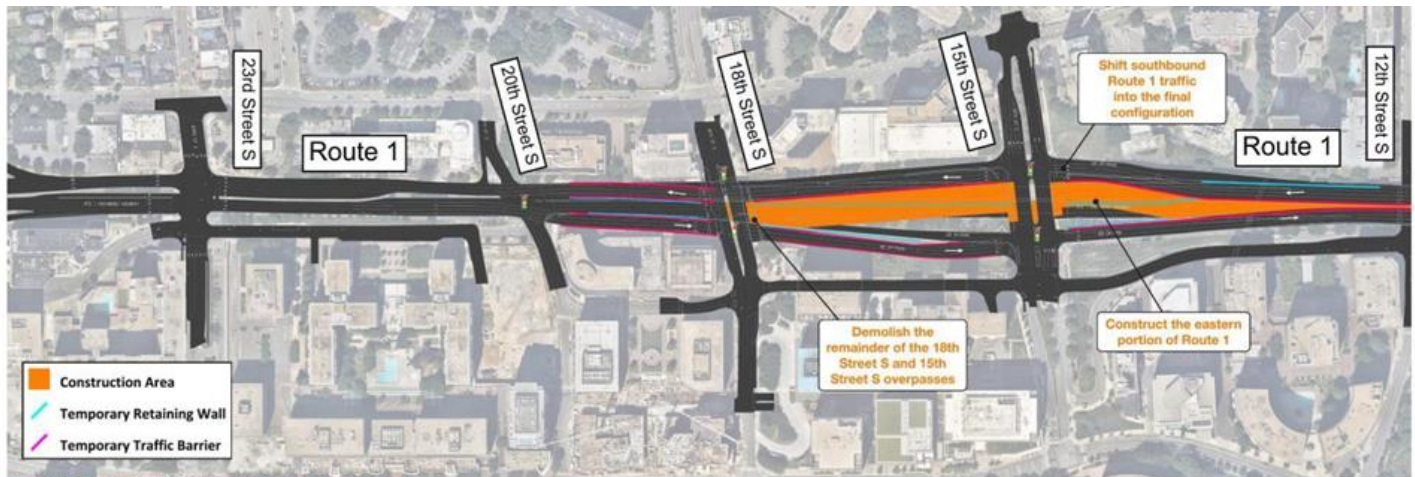


Figure 5-17: Phase 5 Sequence of Construction Representative Diagram

Phase 6 (below) would include completing sidewalks and removing temporary roads.

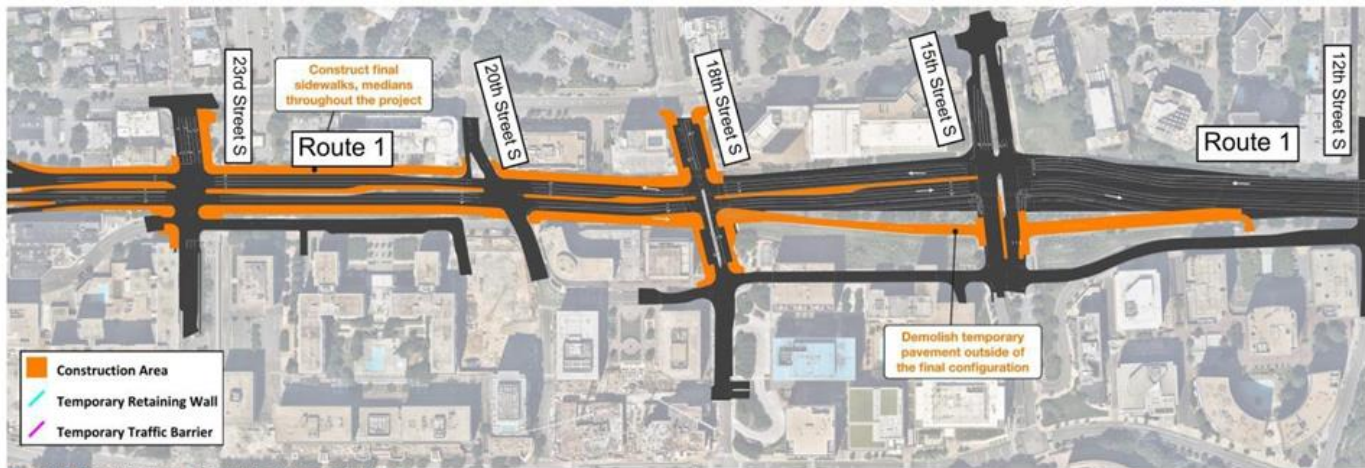


Figure 5-18: Phase 6 Sequence of Construction Representative Diagram

VDOT is still amassing the funding for the project and needs to prepare final documents. If the project actually breaks ground before 2030, it would be a surprise. The public comment phase on the project design is over; the only way to stop it is to block the money.

For more on the project, see this [ARLnow](#) story and this [state website](#).

### Bus lines renamed; new pay options for subway riders

WMATA has just launched its system-wide bus route renaming and update initiative. Bus routes starting in Alexandria and Arlington will now begin with the letter “A.” For details on route and schedule changes, visit [here](#).

Under its new “Tap. Ride. Go. Program,” Metro riders can tap contactless credit/debit cards, phones, or smartwatches at rail station faregates to pay their fares. The program is targeted for tourists and occasional riders. WMATA recommends that regular users and those with discounts or SmartBenefits stick with their SmarTrip cards.

### Blue Line riders should expect delays in Alexandria

Parts of the Blue Line in Alexandria will be closed between July 5 and July 26 to allow for construction and rehab work. The Van Dorn Street and Franconia-Springfield stations will be out of service, with free shuttle buses replacing train service (free parking will be available at the stations during the interruption). Outbound Blue Line trains will only run as far as National Airport. Yellow Line service will continue as usual at Potomac Yard, Braddock Road, and King Street-Old Town stations. However, expect delays on the weekends of July 12-13 and July 19-20 due to single-tracking between Huntington and Braddock Road. For details, visit [here](#).





### Reagan National ranks 3<sup>rd</sup> among nation's airports

Reagan National Airport came in No. 3 and Dulles No. 17 in a [Washington Post ranking](#) of the nation's top 50 airports. Only the airports in Portland, Ore., and Long Beach, Calif., respectively, ranked higher than National.

The paper considered reader responses and data that focused on what people value at airports. Included were some 450 airports that served at least 1,000 passengers last year. Yelp reviews and parking were also considered.

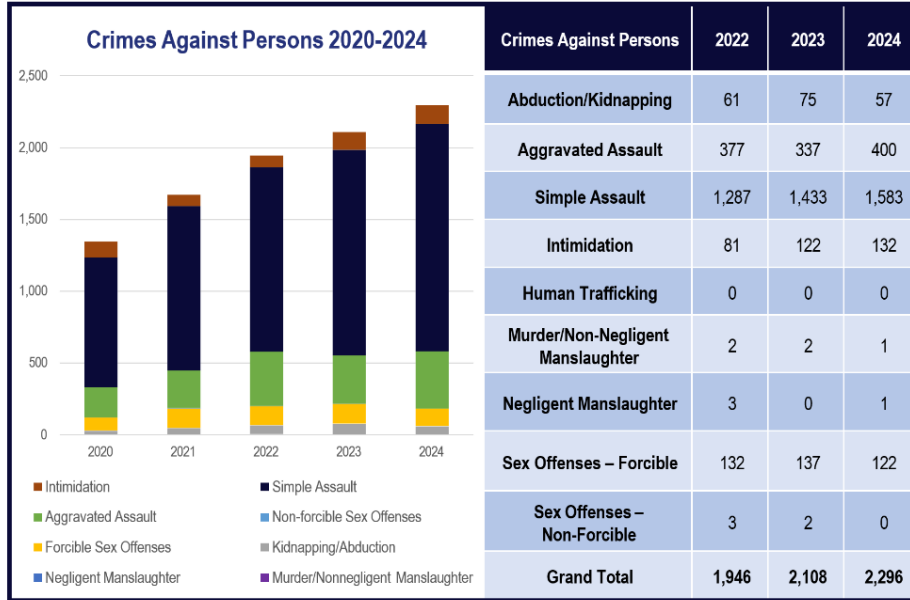
Travelers preferred airports that were "easy to get to (and through) above all else," according to the report. National, the Post notes, is convenient to DC by Metro, car, and even bikes. Within a decade, "by foot," can be added to that list with the completion of the pedestrian bridge connecting Crystal City to the airport.

The Post called National "that rare modest airport that punches well above its weight in flights to much of the country. ... Terminal 2, designed by noted architect César Pelli and opened in 1997, is a 'cathedral of flying,' as one reader put it. After security, pass through the expansive National Hall to admire one of the [best airport views](#) in the country, a panorama of planes, the Potomac River, the Washington Monument and the Jefferson Memorial. If you're lucky, you can see the entire city laid out beneath you during landing."

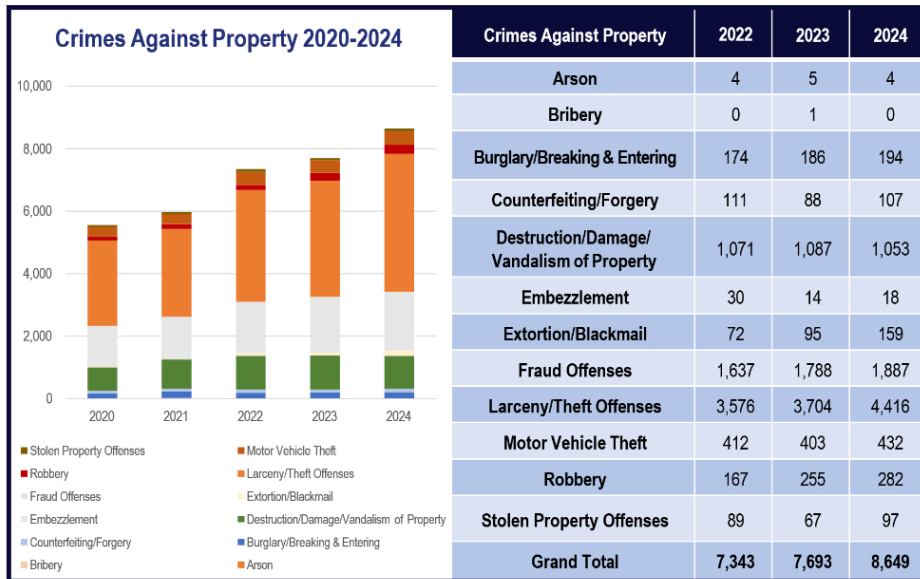
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## INFORMATION AND EVENTS – ARLINGTON



Data Source: Virginia State Police NIBRS Agency Crime Overview; data shown as submitted to Virginia State Police in March of each year, with the exception of one case, reclassified to a [homicide](#) in April 2023, and subsequently reflected in the totals above.



Data Source: Virginia State Police NIBRS Agency Crime Overview; data shown as submitted to Virginia State Police in March of each year.

### Police report crime increased in 2024

Crimes against person increased by nearly 9 percent last year from the year before, while crimes against property rose by more than 12 percent over the same period.

The figures are included in the [2024 annual report of the Arlington County police](#), which was released last month. The

60-page report includes a wealth of statistics on crime and accidents. It also offers details about community and department demographics; new crime and safety programs; notable investigations; community engagement; use of force and police pursuits; internal investigations; and unmanned aircraft systems.

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## After nearly a year, Drought Watch ends for metro DC

The soaking rains of late spring have put an end to the regional drought watch that began at the end of last July. The last Drought Watch occurred 15 years ago and lasted just a month. Officials credit this record to the region's investments in drought resilience and the public's conserving water.

## Karantonis handily wins Democratic primary for County Board



Incumbent County Board member [Takis Karantonis](#) defeated challenger James A. DeVita in last month's Democratic Party primary. Karantonis, the current board chair, won 64 percent to 36 percent out of nearly 26,000 votes cast. His margin was slightly larger in Crystal City. Latest results are [here](#).

In November, Karantonis will face Republican Bob Cambridge and three independent challengers — [Audrey Clement](#), [Carlos De Castro Pretelt](#) and Jeramy Lee Olmack. Karantonis has been on the County Board since winning a 2020 special election, when he handily defeated Cambridge and Susan Cunningham.

## County considers 20 mph speed limit on some streets

The County Board this month will consider a zoning amendment that would lower the speed limit to 20 miles per hour on streets in business or residence districts where the existing posted speed limit is 25 miles per hour and the county manager has designated a "bicycle boulevard." This item will be heard at the County Board's July meeting.

## New fund helps federal workers felled by Trump budget ax

[Arlington Thrive](#) is helping out-of-work federal employees who are in dire financial straits. The nonprofit's new Federal Workers Resilience Fund provides direct aid for rent, utilities, and other essentials for workers who lost their jobs because of Trump administration cuts. To be eligible, beneficiaries must be Arlington residents who have a bank balance below \$1,000 and have been at or below 80 percent of the area median income for three months. For details, visit [here](#).

## Comments sought on county's programs for seniors

How is Arlington doing in serving the needs of adults 60 and over? The Area Plan for Aging Services for the 2026 fiscal year, which begins Oct. 1, has been posted [here](#). The plan maps out programs for the next four years. To comment, visit [here](#), email [arlaaa@arlingtonva.us](mailto:arlaaa@arlingtonva.us) with the subject line "Public Comment AAA Area Plan," or mail to: Arlington AAA, 2100 Washington Blvd, 4<sup>th</sup> Floor, Arlington, VA 22204.

## DEVELOPMENT

### Planners to review proposal to convert office buildings



2200 Crystal Drive



2100 Crystal Drive

*JBG Smith plans to convert 2200 Crystal Drive into an apartment building and 2100 into a hotel.*

A proposal to transform a pair of vacant 11-story office buildings on Crystal Drive into residential and hotel use goes before the Planning Commission this month.

JBG Smith plans to convert 2100 Crystal Drive into a hotel (344 rooms) and 2200 Crystal Drive into apartments (195 two/three-bedroom units). Aside from updated facades, the basic structures would remain the same. They date from 1968. The existing pedestrian entrances on Crystal Drive to the Underground would be converted to residential and hotel lobbies. Under current plans, the hotel would not be connected to the Underground.

The project is the first proposed under the county's new [adaptive reuse](#) program, which was launched in response to declining demand for office space. JBG Smith reports that occupancy in its portfolio office space in National Landing is 76 percent today, compared with 95 percent in 2011. That figure would be 69 percent if 2100/2200 Crystal Drive were counted.

While the adaptive reuse program is intended to expedite the approval process, the JBG Smith project has been off to a slow start as the county figures out how to implement the initiative. In a letter to county planners this week, the Crystal City Civic Association criticizes the lack of community involvement so far in the process. "As this is a novel application, we urge the County to ensure robust community engagement moving forward to avoid setting a precedent of inadequate consultation," the letter states.

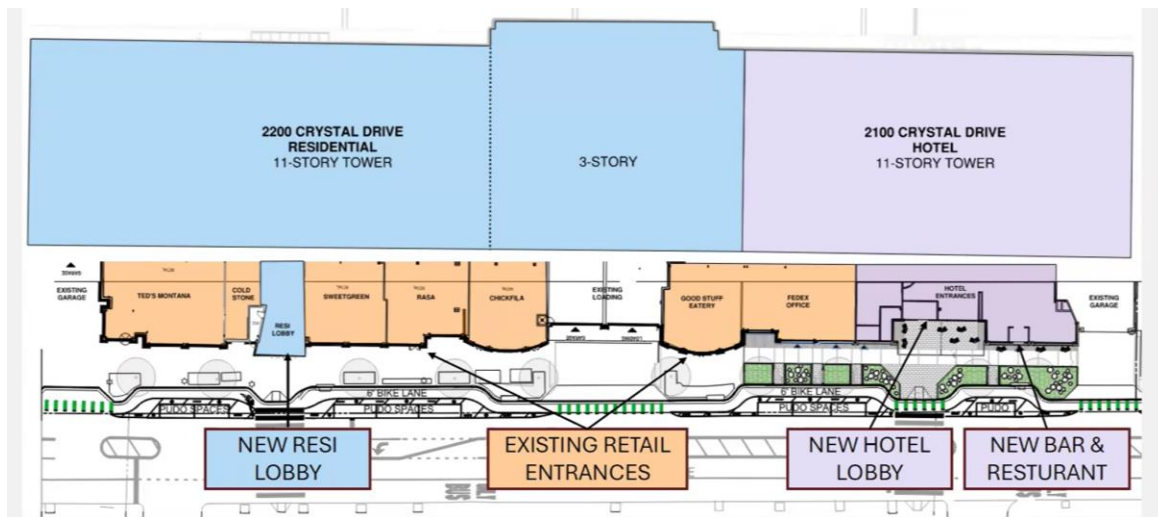
Overall, the CCCA expresses support for the project, but does detail major concerns.

#### Positives:

**New hotel development.** National Landing has 400 fewer hotel rooms today than it did before Covid. No hotels have been constructed in the last five years and several have closed.

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*Existing retail and restaurants will remain. Existing entrances to the Underground will serve as new lobbies for the apartment and hotel buildings. A new bar and restaurant are planned for the hotel.*

**Repositioning existing space.** Such conversions minimize the noise and dust associated with new construction.

**Residential unit mix.** The inclusion of more two- and three-bedroom units compared with other JBGS properties advances the goal of meeting diverse housing needs.

#### Needs improvement:

**Crystal City Underground access.** The proposal excludes portions of the Underground from public access. “The Underground is a vital interconnecting feature of Crystal City, and restricting access contradicts both the spirit and intent of the Crystal City Sector Plan,” the letter states. “We recommend maintaining public access to the Underground, with secure entry points (e.g., key fobs) for residents and hotel guests to access their respective lobbies. Limiting access risks undermining the Underground’s role as a community asset, and we are concerned about JBGS’s apparent intent to diminish its functionality.”

**Parking allocation.** With two- and three-bedrooms units likely to attract families, the apartment building is likely to need more parking spaces than the proposal allocates. The developer has underutilized parking that could meet the need.

**Pick-Up/Drop-Off (PUDO) facilities.** “We are concerned about potential double-parking and misuse of bike lanes by delivery vehicles,” the letter states. “We recommend that JBGS incorporate dedicated underground PUDO areas, accessible via elevators in the parking garages, as implemented in other local developments.”

**Parks.** “All of the additional housing increases the demand for open space, yet no parks have been delivered from the Sector Plan, and only one small park is under construction,” the letter notes. “We



recommend that the County and JBGS prioritize and expedite the development of parks as outlined in the Sector Plan to meet the growing recreational needs of the community.”

The project is on the agenda for the July 7 Planning Commission meeting. Visit [here](#) to sign up to speak. For more on the plan, visit [here](#).

### **Harris Teeter to close store in Potomac Yard**

The Harris Teeter in Potomac Yard is expected to close August 4. The grocery chain has a lease on the space until the end of next year and is prepared to “eat” the rent. The site is at 3600 S. Glebe Road next to Four-Mile Run at the Alexandria/Arlington line.

The closing is bad news for the people in the Eclipse on Center Park condo community, which shares the building with the commercial space. The site plan for the development specifies that a grocery store occupy the space. But other grocers may shy away from the space, given low-price competition from the nearby Amazon Fresh store. Artemis Real Estate Partners, the owners of the commercial space, have contacted the CCCA about amending the site plan to allow other uses, such as a trampoline company or other non-traditional retail.

Respond to the CCCA poll [here](#) to help us determine our stance. We are concerned about losing another grocer, but also about the space sitting vacant for years.

Harris Teeter is closing another Arlington store, located on S. George Mason Drive, as well as branches in Tysons Corners and North Bethesda. The store in Pentagon City will remain open. For more on the closings, see [ARLnow](#).

Still no word on when the scaled-down Whole Foods will open on Crystal Drive and 15<sup>th</sup> Street S.

### **At last, Crystal City to get a hardware store**

Sanding paper. A screwdriver. A hammer. As of this fall, you no longer will have to hop in your car to get to a hardware store. Twins Ace Hardware plans to open then on the ground floor of The Zoe apartments at 2051 S Bell St.

This will be the second Twins hardware owned by Jeff and Craig Smith in Arlington; the other is in Courthouse Square. “We’ve worked hard to build a neighborhood destination where people can find everything from tools and paint to unit gifts, party supplies, plants, and more,” said Jeff Smith in a press release.

The store will occupy 8,000 square-feet of space in the Zoe, which is owned by JBG Smith.

The hardware store is another step in planners’ efforts to make Crystal City a 15-minute neighborhood, reflecting the time it takes to get to essential businesses and services by foot or bike. Still no word on when the scaled-down Whole Foods will open at 15 Street and Crystal Drive.

## Ruling revives ordinance promoting multi-family units

Developers have regained the opportunity to build multi-family units in areas zoned exclusively for single-family homes. Arlington County's "[missing middle](#)" zoning provision is back on the books after a state appeals court panel effectively reversed a [circuit court decision](#) made last year. The [appeals ruling](#) did not address the legal arguments in the lawsuit, but rather said that developers who had taken advantage of the ordinance should have been included in the legal proceedings. Wilsons Ventures was in the midst of developing two properties on 25th Street and Quincy Street in Arlington. The "missing middle" saga, though is far from over, should the plaintiffs decide to refile their suit in accordance with the appeals ruling. See [ARLnow](#) for more.



*A rendering of the Concorde provided by JLL Experience.*

## Upscale conference and events center to open at 2011 Crystal Drive

It won't be your typical conference center, promises Tyler Kethcart of JLL Experience Management. By January, the company plans to open [Concorde](#), a 12,000-square-foot space at 2011 Crystal Drive. The "upscale hospitality-forward conference" center will feature one large presentation hall with seating for 300 and five other smaller meeting spaces. In total, the space is expected to accommodate 470 people. Catering will be provided by Chicago-based restaurateur [David Morton](#).

The planned conference center is part of a [renovation project](#) of the 11-story building that owner JBG Smith announced last summer. It also includes upgrading the façade and communal outdoor spaces.

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### Amazon gets three-year extension on HQ tower

The County Board last month granted Amazon a three-year extension to build the [futuristic spiral structure](#) planned for the intersection of S. Eads Street and 12th Street S. The new deadline to act on its current site plan is June 30, 2028. An Amazon representative told [ARLnow](#) that the company still has plenty of space at its current Metropolitan Park location, but sees PenPlace as a long-term investment.

The company wrote in a [memo](#) to employees last month that it anticipates shrinking its corporate staff as it adopts more AI. Amazon did not respond to a question from ARLnow about staffing at the HQ2 campus in Arlington. The headquarters' [webpage](#) still touts a total of 25,000 new jobs, but indicated [only “moderate” confidence](#) in meeting that goal in an application for Virginia taxpayer subsidies earlier this year.



### Analytics firm plans to add 248 jobs in Crystal City

[Technomics](#), a Crystal City-based analytics firm, plans to invest \$5 million to expand its operations here, adding 25,000 square-feet and 248 jobs. With headquarters at 1225 South Clark Street, the company has expanded its Arlington facility three times since 2022. It now employs about 300 professionals here, helping US and international government clients make optimal decisions based on cost, scheduling, and risk.

### Plant boutique offers greenery, artwork

Washington-based [PLNTR](#) has opened a garden boutique at 269 19<sup>th</sup> Court S. Besides offering a variety of greenery and plant-related supplies, the shop hosts events and classes and provides repotting services. Also on sale are botanical artwork, candles, and books. Staff will help customers create dried flower bouquets and terrariums. A needle punch artwork class is being offered in late July.





## Preservation study pushes Melwood decision into next year

Look to next spring at the earliest for a decision on redeveloping the [Melwood site](#) into a five-story multi-use building. At issue is whether the century-old schoolhouse at 750 23<sup>rd</sup> Street S should be preserved as a historic site. The Historical Affairs and Landmark Review Board [was told last month](#) that a study of the property won't begin until December. The push for preservation is seen in part as a move by opponents of the project. Melwood and Wesley Housing want to replace the schoolhouse with 105 units of affordable housing, some of it reserved for people with disabilities, and ground-floor support facilities. The County Board [approved](#) the project in February.

## PARKS & RECREATION

### Art, fitness, social events featured in 55+ Guide

Explore the [Summer 55+ Guide](#) for programs including art classes, fitness programs, and social events. Activities include a lecture explaining AI, a board game night, and a workshop on preparing your garden for fall. Programs begin in June, but check the [55+ Guide](#) for specific start dates.

### 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 and WalkArlington's [Walkabout Maps](#), which features 22 self-guided walks around the County.

## DOINGS IN CRYSTAL CITY (AND NEARBY)

### Arlington Philharmonic performs pops concert at Water Park

The Arlington Philharmonic will perform Pops in the Park at the Water Park on Crystal Drive on July 5 at 7 p.m. The free concert includes an armed forces salute, selections from “Wicked” and other Broadway hits, the “Mission Impossible” theme, and the Washington Post March. Learn more [here](#).

### Tune up your body Mondays at Water Park

[DC Fray](#) offers free, instructor-led fitness classes Mondays, 6-7 p.m., from June 9 through July 29. No experience required. Attend multiple classes to be eligible for prizes; details [here](#). Bring your own towels, water, snacks, and mats. Spots are limited; RSVP [here](#).

**July 7:** Pilates by Mind Your Body Oasis

**July 14:** Yoga Stretch by Mind Your Body Oasis

**July 21:** Barre by Barre Unbound

**July 28:** Flow Class by Mind Your Body Oasis



### Soul to salsa on menu at Fridays at the Fountain

Fridays at the Fountain features free concerts by Washington area bands ranging from soul to salsa at Water Park on Crystal Drive. Enjoy the music while grazing the area’s only outdoor food hall. Sponsored by National Landing BID and Pipkin Creative. Register [here](#).

### Farmers market open Tuesdays and Saturdays

The twice-weekly farmers market continues at Met Park, 1400 South Eads St., through October. Some 50 vendors offer goods including fresh fruits, vegetables, artisanal breads, teas, baked goods, and more. Produced by [Eat Loco](#), the farmers market is held Tuesdays, 10 a.m.-2 p.m., and Saturdays, 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. Besides stocking up on goodies, visitors can connect with local farmers and artisans, learning the stories behind their creations. Find the updated weekly layout of the Saturday market [here](#) and of the Tuesday market [here](#).

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## MoCA on the Move brings art and music to Met Park

[MoCA on the Move](#) hosts free family events Sundays, 10 a.m.-1 p.m., at the central green of Metropolitan Park. Sponsored by the Museum of Contemporary Art Arlington, the spring series features live music, light snacks, and art-making activities. In case of rain, the program will be held indoors, at MoCA Arlington's Innovation Studio + Store, 525 14th S.

**July 13:** Andrew Barco, flower pounding on fabric; music from Evan Herring & Zack Broach

**July 20:** Make a paper mosaic masterpiece; music from Scott Ricker

**July 27:** Artist [David Amoroso](#); music from [Caleb Hacker](#)



## Watch the July 4<sup>th</sup> fireworks from the ground or up high

The Washington, D.C. fireworks start at 9:09 p.m. July 4. Long Bridge Park, 475 Long Bridge Drive, offers unobstructed viewing. The fireworks will close some area roads including Memorial Bridge and Circle; for details, visit [here](#).

The [Skydome restaurant](#) is offering two prepaid fireworks watch parties 6-11 p.m.: Fireworks Watch Party in the Sky, with a buffet dinner; and, one floor down, Family-Friendly Fireworks Watch Party, also with a buffet. Details [here](#).

The Skydome rotates 15 stories up, atop Double Tree by Hilton Crystal City Hotel, 300 Army Navy Drive.

## Fiddle your green thumbs at Plants in the Park

Bring your green thumb to Plants in the Park, featuring fun and easy plant-related activities at Metropolitan Park, 1330 S Fair St. on July 9, 11 a.m.-2 p.m. The event is hosted in partnership with [PlantHouse](#), a terrarium workshop and plant store in Alexandria.

## For more activities, visit ...

- **[Events at National Landing](#)**
- **[Arlington Parks and Recreation](#)**
- **[Arlington arts events](#)**
- **[Arlington Convention and Visitors Services](#)**
- **[Events for Kids](#)** Library activities including Family Game Night, Take & Make Crafts, and Sensory Story Time.

## DINING IN CRYSTAL CITY (AND NEARBY)

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### **Tex-Mex restaurant opens on ground floor of Quimby**

A 20-year veteran of the metro restaurant scene has just opened a Tex-Mex restaurant in Crystal City. Julian Giraldo opened La Posada on the ground floor of Quimby, 320 23<sup>rd</sup> Street S. Initial offerings included braised beef ribs, tacos, salads, burgers, cocktails, and frozen drinks. Posada is the maiden name of Giraldo's grandmother.

### **Dim sum restaurant debuts in Westpost shopping center**

Fans of traditional Cantonese dim sum have a new destination in Pentagon City. The restaurant 1983 Chinese Cuisine had a "soft open" last month in the Westpost shopping center.

General Manager Cuong Vo told [ARLnow](#) that he is awaiting public feedback before putting out a finished menu and hosting a grand opening. Dim sum is a small-plate meal, with such offerings as pepper steak, salt and pepper calamari, congee, shrimp dumplings, meatballs, turnip cake, and honey barbecue pork rolls. Vo said that he chose "1983" because that is the year of the water pig, symbolizing luck and money.

## 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

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**Vice President** Tarsi Dunlop

**Meeting Secretary** Sheryl Eaton

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

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