

CENTER FOR URBAN EDUCATION
2206 South Knoll Street
Arlington, VA 22202-2203

February 17, 2010

Re: Proposed Crystal City Redevelopment

Arlington County Board
2100 Clarendon Boulevard, Suite 300
Arlington, VA 22201

Dear Chairman Fiset and Arlington County Board members:

The Center for Urban Education (CUE), a non-profit corporation, is concerned about environmental protection issues which arise in urban settings. The Center promotes an environmentally sound solution to urban problems, and we are interested in protecting those who live and work in an urban setting from the exacerbation of unhealthy conditions that confront urban dwellers. We also seek a safe environment in which people can live and work. The Center is particularly concerned about the environmental impact of the proposed Crystal City redevelopment in Arlington County, and after considering many aspects of the proposal, opposes the redevelopment. Some of the reasons are set forth in this letter. Redeveloping Crystal City under the existing zoning appears to be far more appropriate.

- The Crystal City proposal involves a massive redevelopment and increase in density leading to significant up-zonings, variances, and density bonuses, thereby vastly changing the General Land Use Plan (GLUP). The proposal will dramatically increase Crystal City's already substantial office, residential, and retail space nearly doubling the density.
- A significant part of the density increase is outside the ¼ mile bullseye radius of the Metro station. Indeed, buildings of mixed use are planned to be 300-330' tall at 23rd Street between Route 1 and Crystal Drive. This is approximately 30 stories and will cause significant traffic generation, air pollution and noise impacts on community streets (23rd and Arlington Ridge Road) and the surrounding neighborhood. Additionally, cars will seek routes through the residential community. The construction of the buildings will destroy a park, known as Cheerios Park. Since this part of the Crystal City redevelopment will take place first, the park will be destroyed before applying for any Federal funds for road construction. Use of Federal funds for roads may be jeopardized if the impacts of the road will affect parks. In a community with a lack of park space, this situation should not be allowed to occur. Additionally, these extremely large buildings will create a massive wall slightly over 500 feet from single family homes destroying a sense of space, air and wind patterns.
- A substantial portion of the proposed redevelopment lies west of Route 1 adjacent to single family neighborhoods, threatening the boundaries, perimeters, livability, integrity, and stability of those single family neighborhoods. Yet, no benefits to the surrounding neighborhood have been identified.
- Massive public outlays of money will be required to build the infrastructure of the proposed Crystal City redevelopment. Federal, State and Arlington County funds have already been invested and include billions of dollars in infrastructure for Crystal City and the immediate area, e.g. Route 1 upgrade (including Clark Street), National Airport, Metro system. In today's continuing deficit situation no new funds should be spent for Crystal City infrastructure at this time. What is more important is to fund the existing Metro system.

Thank you for your consideration in this crucial environmental matter.

Sincerely,

Richard Herbst
President, Center for Urban Education