

I will not be saying a lot about the specific proposal before you. Instead, I will take the opportunity to comment on what this proposal illustrates and signifies.

Clearly, when seen in isolation, the proposal has the general support of our community. How could we object to an effort by a land owner to make an office building more attractive to new tenants, and more modern in its appearance. They consulted us correctly on the project features, and they have listened to our very limited requests regarding the prevention of glare and night-time light.

We trust that they will make every effort to ensure a vibrant and easily accessible retail component in the new configuration. Going back to the debate during the Sector Plan process, many Crystal City residents are still suspicious, because of the inclinations of both land owners and County at that time to eliminate the Underground with its retail and services and with its function as a passageway to the Metro. And they now notice the possible disappearance of our post office.

Turning to the big picture, the Staff Report correctly notes that a renovation of this building was not what was envisaged under the Sector Plan. Instead, both this building and its neighbors were to be replaced, a very large Metro Market Square with some retail and market features were to be established, and a new Metro entrance would be created. We assume the latter is still in the works.

We appreciate that the market reality and the financial viability situation is now what it is. The Sector Plan is not, and could not be binding. And perhaps it would not be so bad if this was an isolated situation. But we have seen the plans for a flagship office building at 1900 Crystal Drive come and go, and we have seen a shelving of plans for the important Plaza 5 project.

And of course, the lack of redevelopment also means a lack of resources to go ahead with anticipated amenities, facilities and improvements of the public realm, such as the Metro Market Square which is now quietly falling by the wayside. While the BID is trying to achieve an attractive realm within existing structures and means, we see very little in terms of County efforts to make Crystal City more attractive.

One aspect is the public transit situation. While we have talked about the Transitway and Metroway, the very real issues related to the Metro Blue Line do not seem likely to get more than band-aid solutions. And despite the construction of a multi-modal center, it seems the County is moving the transit hub to Pentagon City while leaving Crystal City as a backwater.

And while we are getting expanded bus maintenance facilities and continue to enjoy the odor of the Water Treatment Plant for sewage, it seems more difficult to allow us a more positive form of water treatment in a facility in Long Bridge Park. A facility which is needed in the County and certainly would be a timely feature in the efforts to make our area more attractive to office and residential tenants.

So in the difficult market situation, **on the one hand**, we need to see the County put its money where its mouth is. Many in our community feel that the County is perfectly happy to continue to count on Crystal City as an economic engine, while at the same time giving all the attention to the R-B corridor, Columbia Pike, Lee Highway etc.

On the other hand, it is clear that the implementation of the Sector Plan is not just a bit slow; it has quickly and unexpectedly become rather unrealistic in some respects. We do not expect the County to change the reality. But we owe the community realistic expectations. Therefore, we are requesting, as we have already conveyed informally to staff, that the County provide an exercise or a forum, in the first

half of 2016, to bring the stakeholders together to review what has or has not happened, and what would be a more realistic set of expectations for the foreseeable future, regarding the development, infrastructure, transit, retail, public amenities and County facilities.