



To: Matt Kelly, CEO JBG Smith

Date: June 11th, 2024

Subject: The Crystal City Underground

We, the Presidents of the three civic associations in 22202 (Arlington Ridge, Aurora Highlands, and Crystal City), constituting the Livability22202 coalition, write to request a meeting with your leadership team and more fulsome engagement regarding retail in the Underground and opportunities being explored in its absence.

Over the past several years, the community affirmed its desire to maintain the Underground and JBG Smith appeared committed to maintaining it as well. The 2010 Crystal City Sector Plan (CCSP) cited the Underground as an important component, and recommended a study to improve and develop a strategy for preservation. From 2019 to the present, Livability22202 and the Crystal City Civic Association provided extensive creative ideas for occupancy by both retail and non-retail tenants. The Livability22202 Action Plan of November 2019 called for transforming “the Underground as a unique linear chain of art galleries, performance and creative spaces linked by a pedestrian corridor.”

While JBG Smith has hosted monthly community meetings, engaging with the Civic Associations and other interested residents, these sessions have not yielded fruitful discussions or feedback on our recommendations or rationale for their rejection. The Underground was frequently discussed, but despite the efforts and suggestions provided, JBG Smith has not implemented any of the community’s ideas.

These discussions about the Underground continued in March, but in May, JBG Smith announced the shuttering of all retail in the Underground. Given this abrupt change, the community has been at a loss of what the plan is or next steps are for such a valued and treasured landmark that has served a vital function to the neighborhood, as both a retail space and venue community gathering.

We recognize as a business there are factors for JBG Smith we may not be aware of, and that there are obligations to shareholders, but, without more fulsome engagement it has been difficult to discern fact from rumor. The decision, the process, and its effects have left many feeling uncertain and questioning JBG Smith’s commitment to the current residents of the neighborhood. We want residents to be excited about JBG Smith’s vision for the space and neighborhood. This can only occur if the residents feel involved and understand the vision JBG Smith has for the community.

We feel that a strong partnership between JBG Smith and the community is vital to expanding our thriving community. We look forward to a conversation between JBG Smith and the three civic association Presidents on both the future of the Underground and the opportunities for improved partnership on future developments. And we also request it be followed by a meeting with the community and the civic associations to explain this business decision, discuss what the loss of retail means to the community and to the safety of the Underground, and for JBG Smith to share their vision for the future of Crystal City. If possible, we would like to continue what has always been a friendly and mutually beneficial partnership.

Sincerely,



Kateri Garcia, President
Arlington Ridge Civic Association



Rachel Hicks, President
Aurora Highlands Civic Association



Eric Cassel, President
Crystal City Civic Association

CC:

Arlington County Board Members
Representative Don Beyer
State Senator Adam Ebbin
Virginia Delegate Adele McClure
Andy Van Horn, CEO Dweck.
Crystal Gateway, Crystal Park, Waterford House