



To: Mark Schwartz, County Manager

From: Eric Cassel, President of the Crystal City Civic Association

Date: July 1,, 2024

Subject: Capital Improvement Plan (CIP)

Crystal City desperately needs several items in the proposed CIP. With over 1,200 brand new apartments coming online and many more nearing approvals, we are concerned about the increase in demand for all County Services. The following examines several key parts of the CIP for Crystal City.

First, currently none of the Crystal City Sector Plan (CCSP) proposed parks are completed and under County Control. Even though at least 4 buildings from the site plan process are complete and 2 more will be shortly, none of the required parks are complete. The CIP does have \$22 million for parks that are required for even a minimal design and building of parks in the CCSP. We look forward to working with the Parks Department to identify and build a number of parks. Green amenities like this are essential to the largest growing demographic in the County.

Second, we are pleased to see a Crystal City Library added to the CIP, including ongoing operational costs. Unfortunately, that dream is many years away and a site has not been identified. Moreover, we are concerned that the relationship between the main property holder in Crystal City and the County is in tatters. We hope a solution can be found that the County can find acceptable. Again, our growing population needs more amenities than upscale restaurants and bars.

Third, 18th and Crystal Drive is going to be a key transportation hub. While construction is never pleasant, we look forward to the 2nd Entrance of the Crystal City Metro. We also are hopeful that the CC2DCA Bridge will start construction in the coming year(s). Both of these projects will make transit more available and convenient for our residents and visitors.

Fourth, numerous roads need to be made compliant with the Crystal City Sector Plan. We hope some of the money for roads will mean 15th Street between Crystal Drive and Route 1 will finally be completed. We know the engineering is 100% complete, but understand some legal issues delayed the project. After many years, we hope the County Legal Team has worked out the details.

In addition, we hope that the full length of Clark Street can be completed according to the CCSP. We know the “We Work” building has held up the southern end of the street. Recently, the company holding the lease has declared Chapter 7 bankruptcy and maybe we can see further progress on Clark Street.

The 20th street and US 1 intersection also needs attention. With the site plans from JBGS and Dweck and VDOT's Route 1 work, we hope this intersection might become more normal.

Fifth, we are looking forward to the Long Bridge pedestrian/bike bridge over the Potomac. We know that some improvements are needed to Long Bridge Drive and Long Bridge Park to ensure bicycle traffic can be accommodated. This bridge will significantly change not only the bike patterns, but also the pedestrian traffic patterns.

Sixth, the Transitway is scheduled for additional work. We are not a fan of the route, but understand the importance of having a clear transit route to Columbia Pike. While we have concerns about the project, we do hope it succeeds. The lowering of Route 1, if it happens, will require transit to be more effective and more convenient. If the Transitway fails to increase ridership, the automobile traffic in Crystal City will be in constant gridlock.

Seventh, as VDOT finalizes its plans for Route 1, we understand that the concept plan to connect 10th Street South and Army Navy Drive under the I-395 ramp will only happen if the County takes the project on. We believe that this connection would greatly relieve the existing traffic on 12th Street, which will only increase if and when Route 1 is brought down to grade. We ask that the County planners start looking at this project as something that needs to be done sooner rather than later.

Finally, while not mentioned in the CIP, the new VRE/Amtrak station is important to increase transit ridership. We believe that having a rail/Metro/Pedestrian access to DCA will decrease automobile traffic to DCA. Given the changes to Route 1 and the increase in residents, any decrease in auto traffic will be welcome.

CC: County Board