



October 19, 2018

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

Dear Chair Cristol:

The Arlington Chamber of Commerce offers our support for SP #90, Phases I and II, the site plan for the construction of Central District. We believe that this development has to potential to activate the portion of Crystal City closest to the Metro and VRE stations, making for a more dynamic neighborhood overall. We note that the Crystal City BID joins in our support of this site plan.

The Chamber's particular concern in this matter relates to the interpretation of the Crystal City Sector Plan as a guidance document for planning. We believe that it is important to welcome flexibility in the details to allow the Sector Plan's vision to be realized. Indeed, this viewpoint is consistent with text on page 32 of the Crystal City Sector Plan, reading, "The Illustrative Concept Plan represents just one way properties could be developed in accordance with the recommendations set forth in the Policy Directives, and the exact location, scale and design character of public and private improvements may ultimately vary in detail, but should be consistent with the spirit of this plan."

The Chamber believes that the proposal before the Board meets this description, and we are concerned that a too literal reading of the Sector Plan in this instance will telegraph to future developers that any deviation from the diagrams in planning documents will be denied. We fear that such an expectation of denial will inhibit the creative development of our neighborhoods, contrary to the goal of Arlington's sector plans. Moreover, we worry that such a sentiment will preclude any development in locations, such as in this plan, where topography and/or existing conditions make it difficult, expensive, or impossible to realize the literal design of the sector plan.

In this instance, the proposed public park easement of 43,900 square feet meets the Sector Plan's park design recommendation. The applicant's proposed two-story "Corner Building" at the corner of 18th Street S and Crystal Drive achieves the vision in the Sector Plan of creating major retail plazas with "the most important at the Metro station on 18th Street" that makes Metro Market Square a "primary center of retail activity." Moreover, County Staff agrees with this assessment, as is stated on page 3 of the Staff report for Phase II of the site plan."

For all these reasons, the Chamber encourages the County Board to approve the site plan application at its October 20 meeting. Thank you for your consideration of these comments.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kate Bates".

Kate Bates
President & CEO

CC: Arlington County Board members Christian Dorsey, Libby Garvey, John Vihstadt, and Erik Gutshall; and County Manager Mark Schwartz