

Site Plan Review Committee (SPRC)  
Staff Report for:  
**Crystal Plaza 5 (Site Plan #SPLN20-00015)**

There are multiple ways to provide feedback and input on the proposal, County Staff is happy to accept comments in any form. Please use any method listed below.

**Mail-in Comments:**

Arlington County Planning Division  
c/o Michael Cullen  
2100 Clarendon Blvd. Suite 700  
Arlington, VA 22201

**Contact Staff:**

*Contact the Arlington County Planning Staff reviewing this project either by phone or email*

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**Contact the SPRC Chairs**

*The SPRC Chair is a member of the Planning Commission and conducts all SPRC meetings*

**James Schroll**

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**SITE PLAN REVIEW COMMITTEE  
MEETING AGENDA**

**DATE:** September 15, 2022  
**TIME:** 7:00 – 9:00 pm EST  
**PLACE:** Hybrid Meeting:  
In-person at 2100 Clarendon Boulevard, Room 715  
Virtual participation accommodated via Microsoft Teams

**SPRC STAFF COORDINATOR:** Matthew Pfeiffer

**Item 1. Crystal Plaza 5 (2250 Crystal Drive / 223 23rd St. S.)** **7:00pm–9:00pm**  
(RPC#s 34-020-003, -017, -018, -265)  
Planning Commission and County Board meetings to be determined.  
*Michael Cullen (CPHD Staff)*

The Site Plan Review Committee (SPRC) is comprised of Planning Commission members, representatives from other relevant commissions and several appointed citizens. The SPRC reviews all site plans and major site plan amendments requests, which are submitted to the County Board and the Planning Commission for consideration. The major responsibilities of the SPRC are the following:

1. Review site plan or major site plan amendment requests in detail.
2. Advise the Planning Commission by recommending the appropriate action in regard to a specific plan and any conditions, which it might determine to be necessary or appropriate.
3. Provide a forum by which interested citizens, civic associations and neighborhood conservation committees can review and comment on a particular plan, or the effects that the proposed project might have on the neighborhood.

The complete application and drawings are available for review in the on the County's Webpage at:  
<https://projects.arlingtonva.us/projects/1300-1305-n-pierce-st/>

For more information on the Arlington County Planning Commission, go to their web site  
<http://commissions.arlingtonva.us/planning-commission/>

For more information on the Site Plan public review process, go to the Arlington County Planning Division's web site on Development Proposals/Site Plans  
[http://www.arlingtonva.us/Departments/CPHD/Planning/applications/site\\_plans/CPHDPlanningApplicationsSite\\_plansMain.aspx](http://www.arlingtonva.us/Departments/CPHD/Planning/applications/site_plans/CPHDPlanningApplicationsSite_plansMain.aspx)

To view the current Site Plan Review Committee schedule, go to the web site  
<http://commissions.arlingtonva.us/planning-commission/sprc/>

**Crystal Plaza 5 (Site Plan #SPLN20-00015)**  
(RPC#s 34-020-003, -017, -018, -265)

**Public Review and Site Plan Review Committee (SPRC) Process:**

1. Online Engagement Opportunity: May 5 – May 16, 2022
  - Topics:
    - Land Use/Zoning
    - Building form and height
    - Architecture
    - Transportation, parking, and streetscapes
    - Open space, tree canopy, and landscaping
    - Underground connection
    - Other
2. Virtual SPRC Meeting #1 – July 11, 2022
  - A. Introductions
  - B. SPRC Discussion Topics:
    - a. Building architecture
    - b. Open space and landscaping
  - C. Wrap-up
  - D. Public Comment
3. SPRC Meeting #2 – TBD
  - A. Introductions
  - B. SPRC Discussion Topics (anticipated):
    - a. Project updates
    - b. Transportation and streetscapes
    - c. Parking
    - d. Community benefits/green building program/construction/other
  - C. Wrap-up
  - D. Public Comment

**Glossary of Terms:**

Area Median Income (AMI): The income at which half of the families of a particular household size have incomes higher and half have incomes lower.

By-Right Development: May be approved administratively in the respective zoning district subject to all other applicable requirements of this zoning ordinance. Is not required to seek approval by the County Board.

Density: The ratio of a particular use given the area of land. Density measures the intensity of a given land use.

Floor Area Ratio (FAR): The gross floor area of all buildings on a lot divided by the lot area.

General Land Use Plan (GLUP): The GLUP is the primary policy guide for future development in the County. The GLUP establishes the overall character, extent and location of various land uses.

Gross Floor Area: Gross floor area is the sum of the area of the horizontal surface of the several floors of a building measured from the exterior faces of exterior walls, to include all floor area not defined as gross parking area.

Phased Development Site Plan (PDSP): A type of Site Plan; to permit the coordinated development of sites of more than twenty (20) acres in area, or a smaller area as authorized and accepted by the County Manager, the County Board may approve a Phased Development Site Plan (PDSP) in the form of a general plan for land uses, public facilities, transportation, and utilities.

Zoning Ordinance (ACZO): County adopted ordinance that regulates the use and development standards of all land located within the County. There are various zoning districts within the zoning ordinance and each district sets the standards for development. Examples of such requirements are: maximum heights, required parking, required setbacks, density, etc.

**SUMMARY:** The applicant, JBG Smith, proposes to redevelop the site (“Crystal Plaza 5”) located at 223 23rd Street and 2250 Crystal Drive and construct two new multifamily residential towers with ground floor retail space.

Relevant applications and additional project details include:

- Rezoning (#REZN19-00004): to rezone the area of the new site plan for Crystal Plaza 5 from “C-O” Mixed Use District to “C-O Crystal City” Mixed Use Crystal City district.
- Crystal City Block Plan: Block Plan for “Block M” as required by the proposed rezoning above.
- Phased Development Site Plan (PDSP) Amendment (SP #454): an amendment to the existing “Crystal City PDSP” (SP #454) to incorporate the new site plan into the PDSP.
- Site Plan Amendment (# SPLA21-00037, formerly SP #11): site plan amendment to remove 93,732 sq. ft. from the existing SP #11.
- New Site Plan (#SPLN20-00015, formerly SP #464): a new site plan and development proposal to demolish the existing Crystal Plaza 5 (223 23rd Street S.) and retail shops (2250 Crystal Drive) and construct two (2) new multifamily residential buildings with ground floor retail, totaling approximately 10.87 FAR and including:
  - Site area of 93,732 sq. ft. (2.396 acres)
  - “West Tower” (223 23rd Street S.)
    - 30 stories
    - 613 dwelling units (du)
    - 4,379 sq. ft. of retail
    - 309 feet in height
    - 0.30 parking spaces per du (184 total spaces)
    - 15% compact spaces
  - “East Tower” (2250 Crystal Drive)
    - 30 stories
    - 827 dwelling units (du)
    - 13,059 sq. ft. of retail
    - 304 feet in height
    - 0.30 parking spaces per du (249 total spaces)
    - 13% compact spaces
  - New 8,670 sq. ft. public park space (“Open Space #10”) on 23rd Street South
  - New public plaza space (“Open Space #11”) connecting to new Crystal City Underground entrance from Crystal Drive
  - Proposed modifications for:
    - Bonus density
    - Density exclusions
    - Required residential parking (0.3 spaces per unit)
    - Required loading spaces

**BACKGROUND:** Crystal Plaza 5 is one of eight buildings which comprises the mixed use, multiple building development across Block M in Crystal City. The development is subject to Site Plan #11 (Z-1694-63-1) which was originally approved as the “Crystal Plaza” development by the County Board in August 1963 with all buildings largely constructed in the mid-1960’s. The site of the proposed new site plan (SP #SPLN20-00015) includes the existing Crystal Plaza 5 office building and a portion of ground level retail space that was constructed following an amendment to SP #11 in May 2001. Since approval in 1963, SP #11 has been amended numerous times and currently includes the 220 20th Street apartments, Crystal Plaza buildings 3, 4, 5 and 6 (We Work/We Live), the Crystal Drive Shops, and the Crystal Plaza Apartments (north and south buildings). The Crystal Plaza 1 building, located at 2001 S. Clark Street on the northwest corner of the block, is currently being redeveloped following approval of a new Site Plan #458 in May 2021.

**The following provides additional information about the site and location:**

Existing Zoning: “C-O” Mixed Use District

Proposed Zoning: “C-O Crystal City” Mixed Use Crystal City District

General Land Use Plan (GLUP) Designation: “High” Office-Apartment-Hotel (Up to 4.8 FAR Apartment Density); and Note 1: Crystal City Coordinated Redevelopment District.

Neighborhood: The subject site is within the Crystal City Civic Association (CCCA) boundary.

**Figure 1: Aerial View of the Site and Surrounding Area**



**Existing Development:** The site includes the 12-story Crystal Plaza 5 office building with approximately 187,100 sq. ft. of GFA and a 14,150 sq. ft. portion of the one-story Crystal City Shops retail space, as well as an existing surface parking lot, landscaped plaza area, and vehicular drive connecting to the Crystal City Shops and through the Crystal Plaza 5 and 6 buildings on the south side of Block M. In total the existing on-site density is approximately 223,932 sq. ft. of GFA. The existing office building includes one level of below-grade parking structure. The images below provide further detail of the existing conditions:

**Existing Crystal City PDSP (SP #454):** Originally approved in March 2020 and amended in May 2021 with new Site Plan #458, the PDSP is an innovative and holistic approach to the delivery of community benefits in Crystal City and for achieving the goals of the Sector Plan. The existing PDSP as amended binds four (4) non-contiguous projects together from the perspective of the maximum amount of density achievable with the associated Final Site Plan applications and a community benefits package related to the cumulative amount of additional density associated with the four (4) site plan projects. The existing sites are: Crystal Plaza 5/2300 Crystal Drive/223 23rd Street (subject to this site plan application); 1900 Crystal Drive (SP #456, approved March 2020); 101 12th Street (SP #421, approved November 2020); and Crystal Plaza 1/2001 S. Clark Street (SP #458, approved May 2021). The Sector Plan specifically identifies a PDSP-approach as an “improvement implementation” tool for achieving major improvements in Crystal City.

**Development Potential:** The following provides a statistical summary of the development potential for the site area.

District	Density Allowed/Typical Use	Maximum Development
<b>Existing Zoning</b>		<b>Total Site Area: 102,159 sf (2.35 acres)</b>
C-O: By-Right	All uses (maximum 0.6 FAR)	61,295 sq. ft. GFA
C-O: Site Plan	Commercial or Hotel (3.8 FAR); or Residential (4.8 FAR)	388,204 sq. ft. GFA 490,363 sq. ft. GFA
<b>Proposed Zoning</b>		<b>Total Site Area: 102,159 sf (2.35 acres)</b>
C-O Crystal City: By-Right	All uses (maximum 0.6 FAR)	61,295 sq. ft. GFA
C-O Crystal City: Site Plan	Commercial or Hotel (3.8 FAR); or Residential (4.8 FAR)	388,204 sq. ft. GFA 490,363 sq. ft. GFA

**Development Proposal:** The applicant, JBG Smith, proposes to redevelop the site and construct two new 30-story multifamily residential towers with ground floor retail space, totaling approximately 10.87 FAR with 1,439 residential units, 22,199 square feet of retail space, and 1,110,837 square feet of total GFA. The proposed residential parking ratio is 0.30 spaces per unit; however, the applicant proposes that 200 of the 443 total proposed parking spaces be located off-site in the Crystal Park development (SP #167) located directly across the street at 2231 Crystal Drive. The project would deliver two new public park spaces envisioned in the Crystal City Sector Plan, and would relocate the Crystal City Underground entrance on 23rd Street to the interior of the site. The applicant proposes LEED Gold certification for both



buildings but is not seeking additional density through additional measures outlined in the Green Building Incentive Program. Requested modifications include: additional density, density exclusions, required residential parking (0.3 spaces per unit), and required loading spaces.

**Figure 2: Proposed Site Layout**



The following table sets forth the preliminary statistical summary for the proposed site plan (#SPLN20-00015):

SP # SPLN20-00015 Crystal Plaza 5	
<b>SITE AREA</b>	102,159 sf 2.35 acres
<b>Density</b>	
Proposed Residential GFA (Total)	1,088,638 sf
Proposed Residential Dwelling Units (Total)	1,439
Proposed Retail GFA (Total)	22,199 sf
Proposed FAR (Total)	10.87
<b>223 23rd Street Building</b>	
Proposed Residential GFA	440,737 sf
Proposed Residential Dwelling Units	613
Proposed Retail GFA	7,998 sf
<b>2250 Crystal Drive Building</b>	
Proposed Residential GFA	655,899 sf
Proposed Residential Dwelling Units	826
Proposed Retail GFA	14,201 sf
Proposed Exclusions <sup>1</sup>	209,211 sf

<sup>1</sup> Density exclusions still under review by staff.



<b>SP # SPLN20-00015 Crystal Plaza 5</b>	
Proposed Density (units per acre)	613
<b>Green Building</b>	
LEED Certification	Gold
Bonus Density	N/A
<b>Building Height</b>	
Average Site Elevation Above Sea Level	40.70 ft
<b>223 23rd Street Building</b>	
Main Roof Height (above average grade)	309 ft
Mechanical Penthouse Height	16 ft
Number of Stories	30
<b>2250 Crystal Drive Building</b>	
Main Roof Height (above average grade)	304 ft
Mechanical Penthouse Height	16 ft
Number of Stories	30
Maximum Permitted Building Height <sup>2</sup>	300 ft
<b>Parking</b>	
Total Number of Spaces <sup>3</sup>	443
Total On-Site Spaces	243
Total Off-Site Spaces	200
Minimum Required Residential Parking Ratio	1.125 spaces/unit per first 200 units + 1 per each additional unit
Proposed Residential Ratio	0.3 spaces/unit
Proposed Visitor Parking Ratio	0.05 spaces/unit <sup>4</sup>
<b>2250 Crystal Building</b>	
Total Number of Spaces	249
On-Site Spaces	126
Off-Site Spaces (2231 Crystal Drive)	123
Compact Spaces	17
Compact Ratio	13%
Residential Visitor Spaces (minimum)	10
<b>223 23rd Street</b>	
Total Number of Spaces	194
On-Site Spaces	117
Off-Site Spaces (2231 Crystal Drive)	77
Compact Spaces	18
Compact Ratio	15%
Residential Visitor Spaces (minimum)	10

<sup>2</sup> Subject to the Crystal City Sector Plan Building Heights Map Figure 3.8.5: recommended maximum building height of 300 feet, while “an additional 2 to 3 stories may be considered in 300’ zones along 18th and 23rd Streets.

<sup>3</sup> Inclusive of proposed off-site parking spaces within the existing Crystal Parks office garage located across Crystal Drive at 2231 Crystal Drive (SP #167).

<sup>4</sup> Spaces per unit of designated visitor parking for the first 200 units.

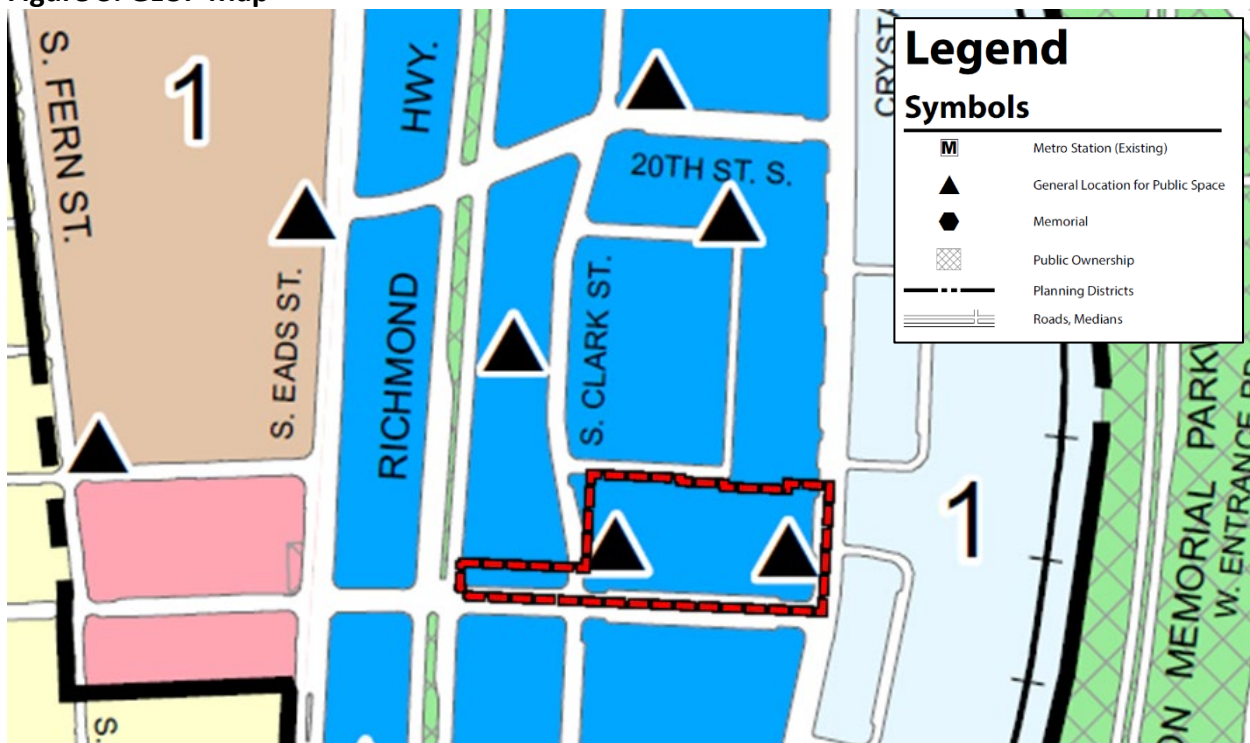
## DISCUSSION:

**Adopted Plans and Policies:** The following regulations, plans, and guiding documents are applicable to development on this site:

- General Land Use Plan (GLUP)
- “C-O Crystal City” Zoning Ordinance Regulations
- Master Transportation Plan (MTP)
- Crystal City Sector Plan

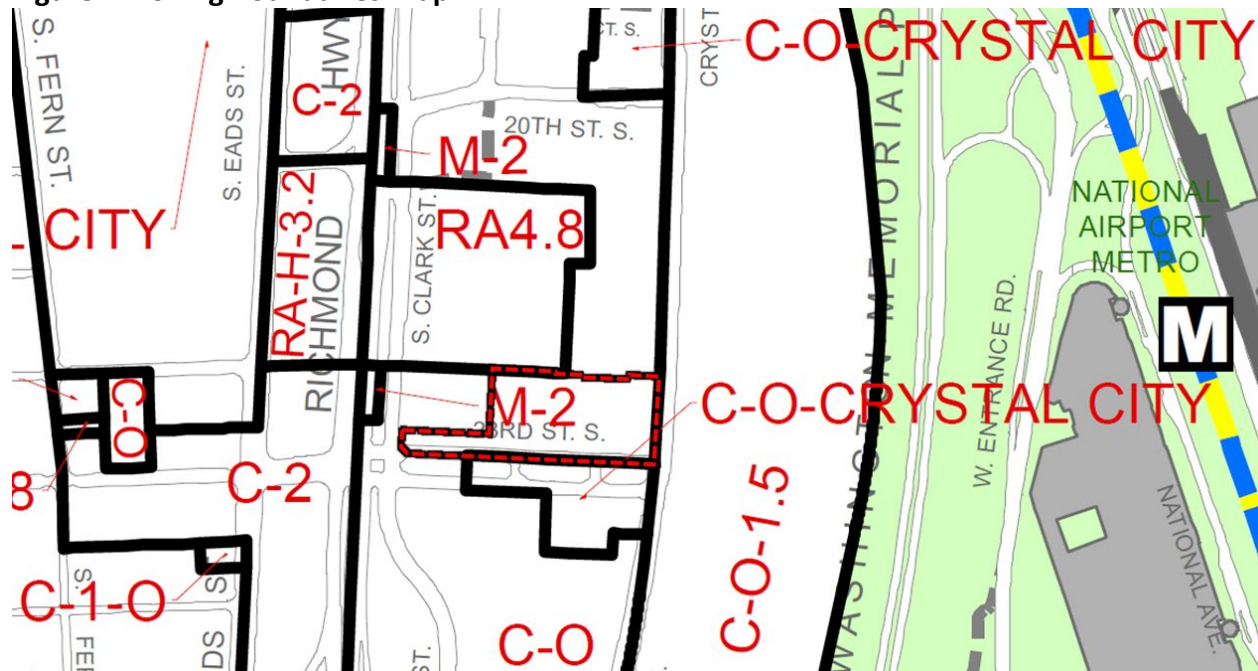
**GLUP:** The site is designated “High” Office-Apartment-Hotel, which outlines a base density range of up to 4.8 FAR. The site is not located within a special planning area but is subject to Crystal City Block Plan guidance for Block M and provisions approved under an amended “Crystal City PDSP” (SP #454).

**Figure 3: GLUP Map**



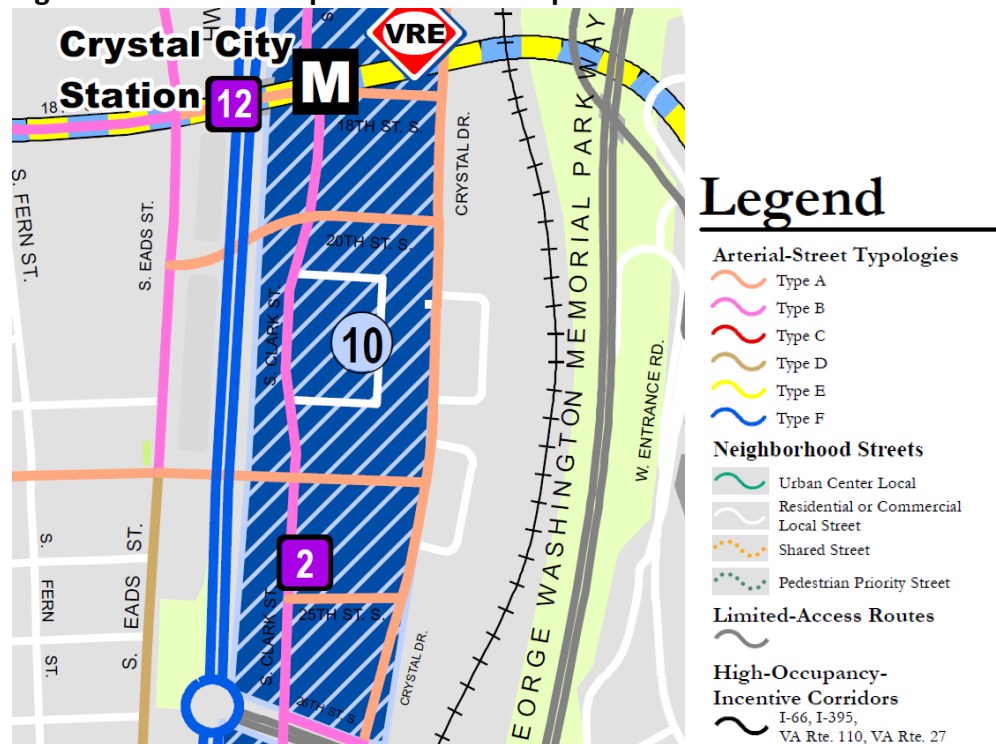
**Zoning:** The site is zoned C-O Mixed Use District, but the applicant proposes a rezoning of the site to C-O Crystal City Mixed Use Crystal City District. This proposed district corresponds with the “High” Office-Apartment-Hotel GLUP designation and allows for multifamily buildings at a base density of up to 4.8 FAR for residential and 3.8 FAR for commercial or hotel use, with significant additional density achievable under the parameters outlined in the Crystal City Sector Plan.

Figure 4: Zoning Boundaries Map



Master Transportation Plan (MTP): The MTP identifies both 23rd Street and Crystal Drive as Type A Arterial Street typologies, as shown in Figure 5 below.

Figure 5: Master Transportation Plan Map



**Crystal City Sector Plan:** The Crystal City Sector Plan (“Sector Plan”) provides guidance for redevelopment of the subject site and serves as the basis for the regulations provided in the Zoning Ordinance for “C-O Crystal City” site plan development. The Plan provides general guidance related to the building envelope, mass, architecture, and urban design, as well as land use, transportation, and public open space. The Plan outlines appropriate land uses and base density, while additional densities can be achieved through provision of identified features or amenities within buildable envelopes under the building height and massing guidelines. Sector Plan guidance adherence under the subject site plan proposal are discussed below.

**Density and Uses:** The total proposed density is approximately 10.87 FAR, which exceeds the C-O Crystal City Zoning District’s maximum density of 4.8 FAR and 3.8 FAR for residential and commercial uses, respectively. Additional density is permitted on sites located in the Crystal City Coordinated Redevelopment District on the General Land Use Plan under C-O Crystal City district standards for special exception site plans, identified in Section 7.16 of the ACZO, which may be achieved only if the project is designed in a manner that meets the objectives of the Crystal City Sector Plan and through provision of features or amenities identified therein.

Proposed residential units include studio and junior one-bedroom units, one-bedroom, and two-bedroom units, as shown in the table below.

#### Unit Mix

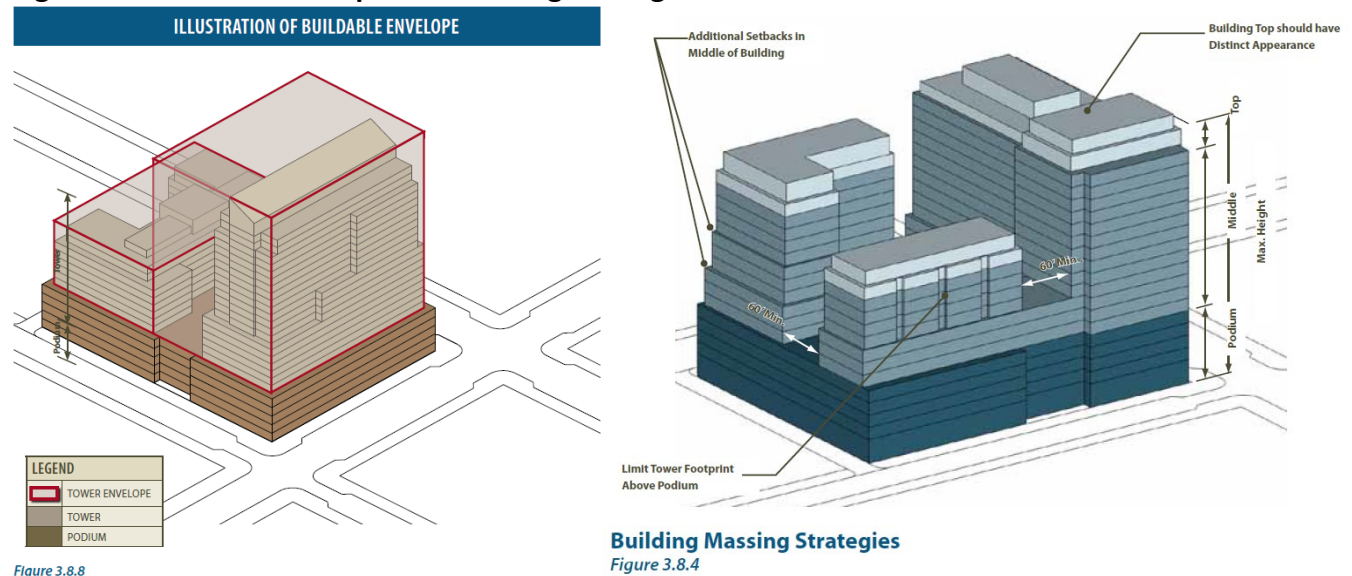
Type	Studio/1-JR	1-Bedroom	2-Bedroom	Total
223 Building	341	178	94	613
2250 Building	397	223	206	826
<b>Total Units</b>	<b>738</b>	<b>401</b>	<b>300</b>	<b>1,439</b>

**Site Design:** As shown in Figure 2 above, the site layout orients the primary entrance for both buildings toward 23rd Street South, with a new north-south connection extending from 23rd Street South to provide access to parking and loading entrances for both buildings. The 223 23rd Street Building is oriented around a proposed 8,670 sf park space (“Open Space #10”) with a rear drive area that may serve as additional surface parking. The 2250 Crystal Drive Building is located at the corner of 23rd Street South and Crystal Drive, and is framed on the north side by a proposed public plaza (“Open Space #11”) that extends from Crystal Drive and provides access to a new entrance to the Crystal City Underground located across from the northwest corner of the building.

**Building Height, Form, and Architecture:** Section 3.11 of the Crystal City Sector Plan provides Design Guidelines for use as reference in the redevelopment of Crystal City. These guidelines recommend that all new and substantially renovated buildings incorporate a design scheme that provides a distinct podium, middle and top. As defined by the Crystal City Sector Plan, the podium consists of the lower five (5) to six (6) stories (or less) of the building, while the remaining stories consist of the middle and top elements that comprise the building’s tower. The middle consists of those stories above the podium, but excluding the top elements that are

defined as the upper two (2) to four (4) stories. The guidelines “are intended to be flexible” and many are “aimed at allowing adequate sunlight to reach public streets and open spaces, as well as achieving a level of architectural interest, articulation, and sculpting currently lacking in Crystal City.” These guidelines achieve multiple goals, including: regulating achievable densities; realizing pedestrian-oriented design of new development; creating a visually interesting skyline; and ensuring adequate sunlight for public spaces.

**Figure 6: Buildable Envelope and Massing Strategies**



Design Guidelines for building form include the following categories:

- **Maximum Allowable Height:** As noted above, the combined height of the podium and tower for development of the subject site should not exceed 300 feet except along 23rd Street South where an additional two to three stories of building height may be permitted, and the applicant meets this requirement.
- **Podiums:**
  - **Minimum Frontage Requirements:** The Sector Plan recommends that the podium should engage the Recommended Build-to-Line (RBL) within zero to two (2) feet for a minimum of 80 percent of the street frontage, and that no portion of the building should be located greater than 10 feet from the RBL. Both buildings are consistent with this guidance.
  - **Required Building Frontage:** The Sector Plan recommends that every building should have at least one (1) podium frontage on an RBL for a minimum of 65 feet along the RBL. The applicant’s proposal meets and exceeds this recommendation for both buildings.
  - **Encroachment:** The Sector Plan recommends that no building should encroach within the public right-of-way of any street or open spaces, except for building

frontage elements such as awnings, canopies, bays, blade signage and other similar features. The proposed tower podiums meet this recommendation.

- Podium Height: The Sector Plan recommends that the maximum height of any podium (first five to six floors of the building) should not exceed 65 feet. The proposed tower podiums meet this recommendation.
  - Podium Separation Requirement: The Sector Plan recommends that Where a podium base does not occupy an entire site and no party-wall condition exists, the podium should maintain a minimum separation distance of 40 feet from all other adjacent buildings, except when the separation is for an alley or other vehicular way, which should typically be 25 feet wide. Both tower podiums meet this recommendation, including a 43-foot separation between the buildings along the north-south connection, a 43-foot separation along the east-west plaza connection, a 40-foot separation between the 223 Crystal Drive Building and the existing 2221 S. Clark Street (Crystal Plaza 6) building, and a 30-foot separation along the rear alley/drive lane west of the north-south connection.
  - Base Frontage: The Sector Plan recommends that the ground floor of the podium base should be distinguished from other stories of the building by providing a pedestrian friendly quality with a greater floor-to-ceiling height than other floors. Both proposed towers have distinct ground floor treatment, and current proposed designs include ground-level retail along the north side of Open Space #10, 23rd Street South and Crystal Drive. Staff has identified a need for additional distinction for the west frontage of the 223 23rd Street Building, which will ultimately be a street-facing frontage once the Clark-Bell Street extension can be realized through redevelopment of adjacent sites.
  - Top of the Podium: The Sector Plan recommends that the top of the podiums have a horizontal architectural unity through the use of cornices or other banding projections placed at the top of the upper most floor of the podium. The proposed tower podiums meet this recommendation.
  - Location of Parking in Podiums: The Sector Plan recommends that any parking provided within the podium should be screened with active building liners and that garage entry doors should not exceed 25 feet in width. The parking for this project is proposed below grade, rather than in the podium, with entrances located on a new north-south connection between the buildings. Parking structure access for both buildings is provided from a single two-way entrance in the 2250 Crystal Drive Building.
- Towers:
    - Tower Separation: The Sector Plan recommends that towers maintain a minimum separation of 60 feet. The 2250 Crystal Drive Building meets this requirement, while the 223 23rd Street Building does not in this interim phase, until the adjacent Crystal Plaza 6 site can be redeveloped and provide the full 60-foot separation.

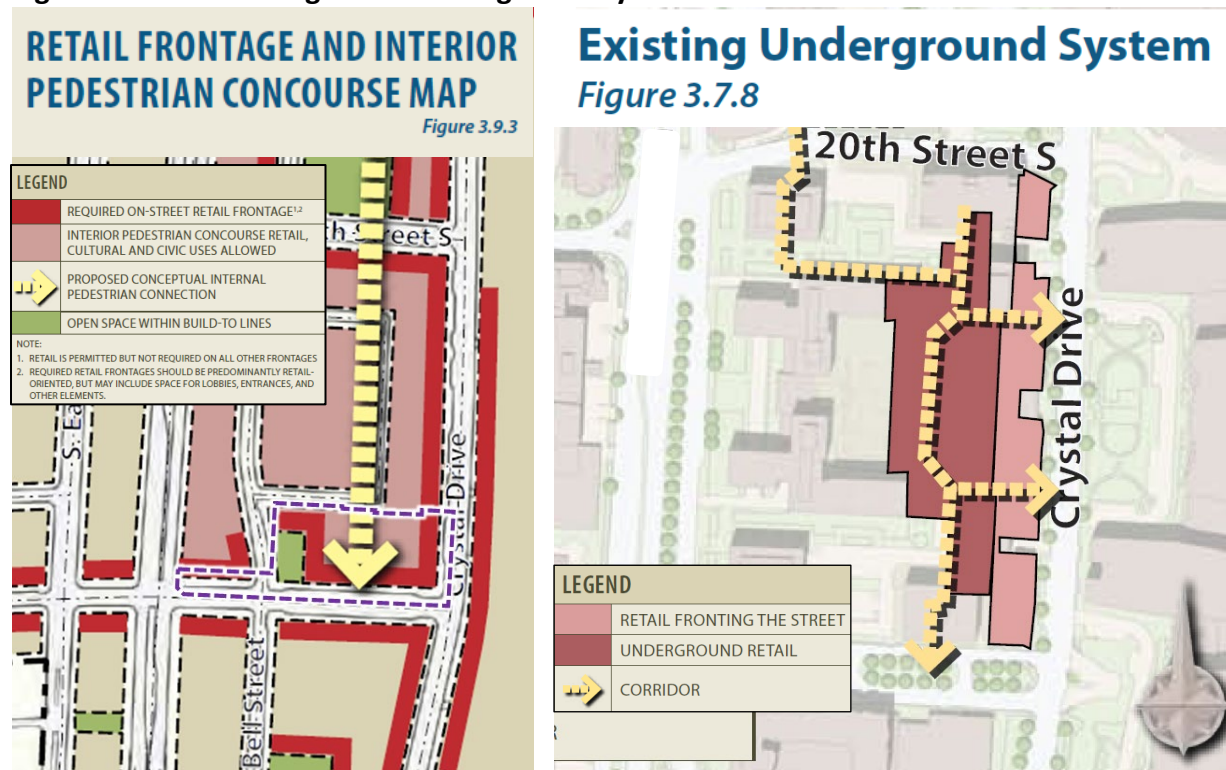
- Tower Coverage: The Sector Plan recommends that building tower coverage not to exceed 85 percent for the subject site. The proposed tower coverage is not anticipated to exceed 85 percent; however, the applicant will confirm.
  - Forming Towers: The Sector Plan recommends that tower massing should allow light, air, and views to penetrate and through blocks. For uses other than commercial office uses, tower floor plate sizes above the podium base should generally not exceed: 40,000 square feet up to 250 feet of height; or 30,000 square feet above 250 feet of height. In general, towers should be configured such that no block has less than two (2) towers. The proposal is consistent with this recommendation, and tower floor plates do not exceed 23,582 square feet in the 2250 Building or 16,534 square feet in the 223 Building.
  - Building Setback Profiles: The Sector Plan recommends two (2) approaches for achieving sculpted buildings with distinct podiums, towers, and tops – a Multiple Setback Approach, and a Single Setback Approach. While the podium should continuously engage the Build-to Line and meet the back of the sidewalk, the tower massing above should taper or step back from the podium along streets and open spaces to achieve aesthetically interesting and attractive buildings, and to allow for light and air between buildings. For building tops, it is generally recommended that the upper two (2) to four (4) floors of all buildings should be no closer than 20 feet from the Build-to Line, unless the proposed design of the building top involves a dramatically creative architectural treatment that is integral to the overall composition of the building. The proposed towers deviate from this guidance in terms of tower massing setbacks, although alternative massing designs with 5-foot step-backs on street frontages have been provided that are in closer alignment with this guideline. However, there is no step-back identified on the west tower façade of the 223 Building, which will be the location of a future Clark-Bell Street alignment. Staff has identified this concern and will continue to evaluate whether these deviations detract from the overall Sector Plan objectives.
- Building Tops:
    - The Sector Plan recommends that a distinctive top, consisting of the upper two to four floors of a tower, should be provided through a change in at least two (2) of the following features - window rhythm, apparent floor height, setbacks, sculpted form, or materials. Staff has identified concerns with both buildings. Specifically, the 223 Building fails to distinguish the top of the central tower element, which currently proposes metal mesh screening of the mechanical penthouse that neither integrates with the overall façade design nor creates a distinctive top feature.
    - Mechanical Penthouse: The Sector Plan recommends that the walls of all penthouse structures should be setback from the edge of the roof a distance no less than the height of the wall. All penthouse structures should have enhanced façade treatments of a quality and character consistent with the building's tower



façade. The recommended setbacks are not provided uniformly on either tower; however, the 2250 Building features an enhanced façade treatment consistent with the building tower façade. As noted above, however, the 223 Building does not implement a similar enhanced façade treatment and is therefore not consistent with this guideline.

**Retail Frontages and Underground System:** The Sector Plan prescribes retail frontages over much of the site, including along Crystal Drive, 23rd Street South, and lining Open Space #10. The plan also calls for maintaining the “conceptual” Crystal City Underground pedestrian connection as shown in the figure below. The Plan asserts that “retail building fronts should be composed in a manner that encourages active streetscape environments” and that retail frontages may also “include space for lobbies, entrances, and other elements” associated with residential building uses.

**Figure 7: Retail Frontages and Underground System**



**Crystal City Underground (Pedestrian Concourse):** The site includes an existing section of the Underground pedestrian concourse, which connects existing Underground retail nodes to the north of the site. The Sector Plan defines the Underground as “an internal pedestrian concourse system, often lined with retail, that connects most buildings on the east side of Crystal City, and some buildings on the west side. The system provides access to shopping and transit in a climate-controlled environments.” While the Sector Plan does not prescribe a specific route for new or replaced Underground segments, it does set an objective of maintaining a continuous connection from 12th Street South to 23rd Street South.

Notably the Sector Plan contemplates that “new development that replaces existing buildings will require an evolution in both its form and program” and acknowledges that improved access to street frontages will “lead to street level crossings where it’s not feasible to continue the Underground below the street.” Although this project proposes to relocate the existing 23rd Street entrance toward the interior of the site, it does so in order to provide improved retail frontages at the sidewalk grade while providing multiple pedestrian paths and is therefore compliant with Plan recommendations.

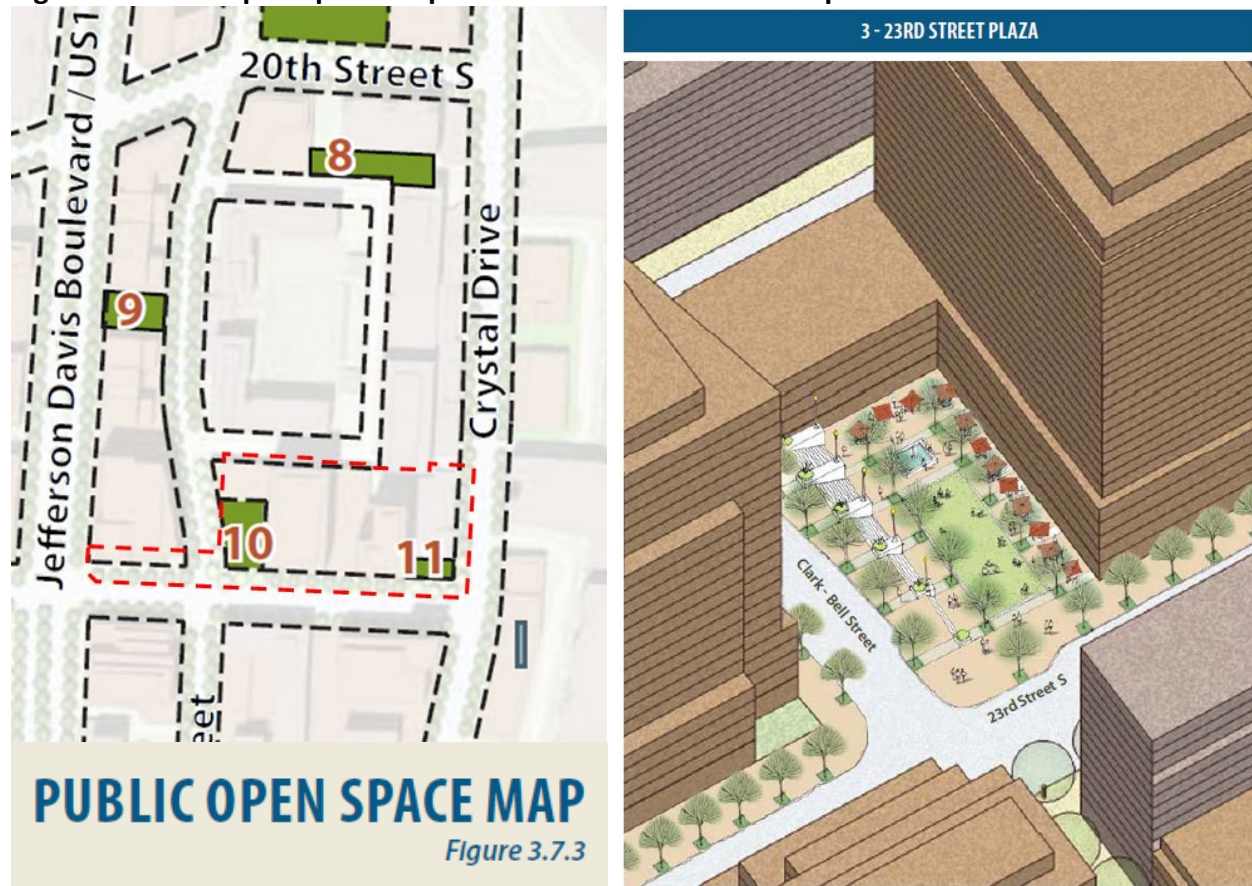
**Public Open Space:**

On the subject site, the Sector Plan calls for the creation of two new public park spaces as shown in Figure below:

- Open Space #10 or the “23rd Street Plaza” identified to be a 13,000 square foot public space described as “active retail plaza with benches, a fountain, café seating, civic art, and landscape will be the heart of the 23rd Street retail spine.”
- Open Space #11, simply described as a landscaped plaza with tables and seating for outdoor dining, is envisioned as a small 3,300 sf space that is not defined by build-to lines or the exact location identified in the Sector Plan

The applicant is proposing a phased Open Space #10 with an initial phase that is 33% smaller than the 13,000 square feet called for in the Sector Plan at 8,670 square feet. This initial phase would be designed and constructed as part of this site plan review, while the final phase would be subject to a future development application of the adjacent Crystal Plaza 6 site and a separate public review process.

The applicant proposes an alternative location for Open Space #11 by creating an approximately 5,000 sf public plaza connection to the Underground entrance from Crystal Drive on the north side of the 2250 Crystal Drive Building; however, the total space provided is significantly larger than the 3,300 sf called for in the Sector Plan and the proposed design is consistent with the landscaped plaza referenced in the Sector Plan. This public open space would also be designed and constructed with this site plan development.

**Figure 8: Public Open Space Map and 23rd Street Plaza Concept**

**Sustainable Design:** The building is proposed to be designed to achieve an LEED “Gold” certification, but is not seeking any additional density under the optional [Green Building Density Incentive Program](#) that would be subject to the baseline prerequisite standards and the “Extra List Options” under the Green Building Incentive Policy (GBIP). It should be noted that the residential sustainability commitment at the time of PDSP approval in 2020 was LEED “Silver” for all future projects under the PDSP. Although the current proposal is at a higher certification level, the current GBIP requires a new baseline certification of LEED “Gold” in addition to the aforementioned baseline and extra list measures that must be implemented for additional density of 0.25 FAR up to 0.70 FAR.

**Transportation:** The project is located in Crystal City at the northwest corner of the intersection of Crystal Drive and 23rd Street South. The site is accessible by multiple modes of transportation, allowing for a variety of transportation choices for accessing the site. The Crystal City Metrorail Station, serving the Yellow and Blue line is located 0.5 miles from the site there is a Metroway bus station one block to the west of the site on S. Clark Street, and a bus stop and Capital Bikeshare Station along the site frontage.

**Streets and Sidewalks:** The Master Transportation Plan (MTP) identifies Crystal Drive and 23rd Street South as a Type A-Primarily Retail Oriented Mixed-Use arterial. The site is also located in

an area identified as planned for new streets as part of the Crystal City Redevelopment. The project proposed to introduce a north-south connection between the two proposed buildings to provide garage and loading access for both building.

*23rd Street South:* The project proposed to narrow 23rd Street South from Route 1 to Crystal Drive with the removal of the median area, Cheerios Park, as shown in the Crystal City Sector Plan. The southern curb location will be maintained, and the northern travel lanes will shift south allowing for the proposed development and a temporary open space between the proposed development and Clark-Bell Street. This will align better with the location of 23rd Street South west of Route 1. Additionally, the garage entrance at the eastern end of 23rd Street South will be narrowed to align with the relocated 23rd Street South and reduce the pedestrian crossing distance, reduce the number of travel lanes, and reduce impervious area. The street cross section totals 79' including two (2) travel lanes in each direction and an additional turn lane in the westbound direction at the Route 1 intersection and a 6' wide median separating the travel lanes. Protected bicycle facilities will be provided in both directions separated by a raised median or a striped area with vertical elements to maintain separation from the travel lanes or curb space and the bicycle facility. Curb space for parking and pick-up/drop-off will be provided along the north and south curb, with the south curb space designated for pick-up/drop-off use only. Protected intersection elements are provided as space and alignment allows along 23rd Street South. The Crystal City Sector Plan specifies a 77' curb to curb street section with parking on both sides and five (5) travel lanes including a shared bicycle/travel lane in each direction. As part of the Crystal City Bike Network (CCBN) development, 23rd Street South has been redesigned to include parking, separated bicycle facilities and four (4) travel lanes and the proposed design shown reflects the final CCBN street cross section.

Along the project frontage a minimum 15' wide streetscape is provided comprised of a 6' wide tree planting area inclusive of a 6" flush banding around the edge and an 8' clear sidewalk. The streetscape treatment is proposed to maintain the 6' wide planting area inclusive of a 6" flush banding around the edge and an 8' clear sidewalk between the proposed development and Clark-Bell Street. The Crystal City Sector Plan specifies a 15' to 18' sidewalk with a minimum 6' clear sidewalk and 6' tree/furniture one.

In the existing Crystal City PDSP (SP #454) there is a Condition that indicates the Developer agrees to coordinate with the County on the design, permitting, and construction of roadway improvements to 23rd Street South between Crystal Drive and South Eads Street and the details will be determined as part of the approval for this project. County staff are actively working with the Developer on the design of the roadway from Route 1 to Crystal Drive with the intent of the Developer designing, permitting, and constructing this portion concurrent with the proposed development. With the magnitude of changes to the cross section, it is more efficient and effective for the entire street section from Route 1 to Crystal Drive be completed at once. The improvements to the portion of 23rd Street South from South Eads Street to Route 1 were already completed as part of a County Capital Improvement Project. The 23rd Street South cross section is reflective of the cross section developed through the CCBN project

development including extensive public engagement and is consistent along the length of 23rd Street South, except the inclusion of a westbound left turn lane at Route 1. As such, the SPRC meeting will serve as the public engagement opportunity for 23rd Street South west of the proposed development to Route 1.

Additionally, Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) is currently completing a Route 1 multimodal improvement study. As presented at the June 21, 2022, Public Information Meeting, VDOT is evaluating modifications to the intersection of Route 1 and 23rd Street South. County staff is coordinating with VDOT staff to ensure improvements are coordinated with the 23rd Street South proposed improvements as part of this project. Currently it is anticipated the proposed improvements as part of this project would be constructed prior to proposed improvements as part of the VDOT study. As the projects move forward, staff will continue coordination and make changes to the intersection of Route 1 and 23rd Street South and the work effort delineation as appropriate.

*Crystal Drive:* The project proposes to maintain the street cross section of 59' however the space is being reallocated from the existing conditions. As with 23rd Street, through the CCBN development, Crystal Drive has been redesigned to include separated bicycle facilities in the southbound direction, parking in the southbound direction, one (1) travel lane in each direction, a center turning lane, and a northbound transit lane. The Crystal City Sector Plan specifies a 59' cross section with the same elements as is proposed.

Along the project frontage a minimum 18' wide streetscape is provided comprised of a 7' wide street planning area inclusive of a 6" flush banding around the edge and an 9' clear sidewalk. The Crystal City Sector Plan specifies a 15' to 18' sidewalk with a minimum 6' clear sidewalk and 6' tree/furniture one.

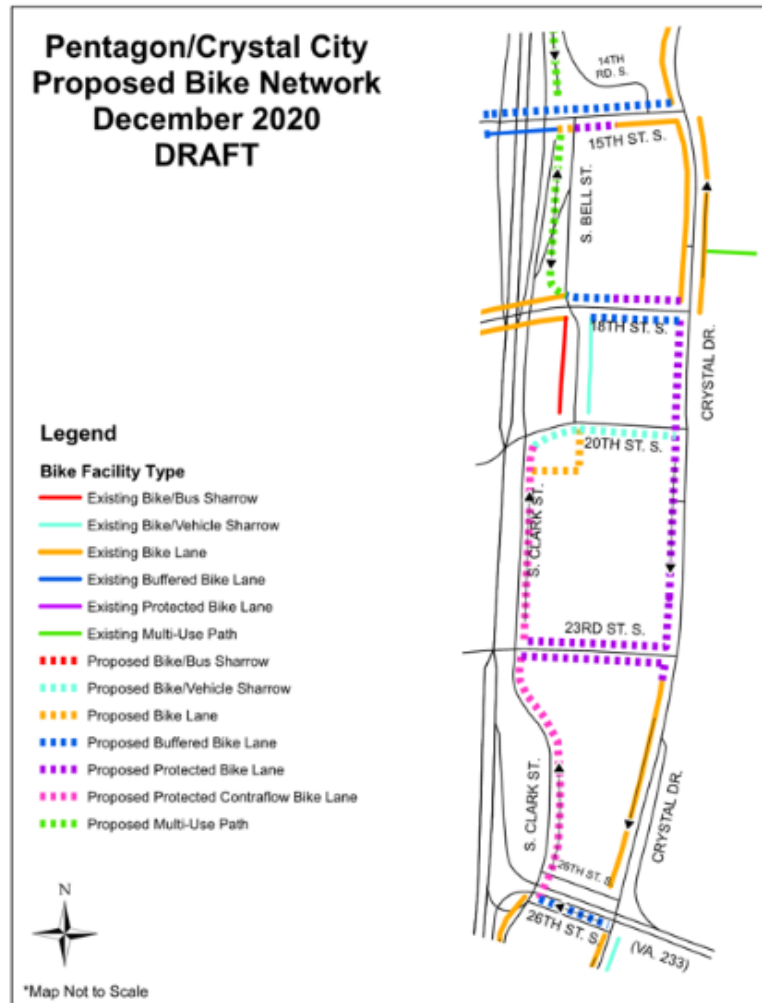
*North South Connection:* The project proposed a 42' wide space between the two building that includes two (2) 13' travel lanes and a minimum 8' sidewalk on both sides. This area is to all be the same elevation with different pavement treatments and a flush curb to delineate the travel lanes from the pedestrian space. This connection provides access to the garage entrance in the east building that serves both buildings and the loading areas in both buildings. At the northern end of the connection, north of the west building there is a paved area for parking for the building that is private and will be maintained by the applicant. This connection does not connect to any existing infrastructure for vehicles. North of the east building there is an open space and the east-west connection for pedestrians to access Crystal Drive and the Underground that traverses a portion of Crystal City north to 12th Street South.

**Bicycle Facilities:** The site is well served by bicycle facilities along the project frontage and is connected to additional on-street and off-street facilities including the Mount Vernon Trail. As part of a directive from the County Board, the County is developing a plan to improve the bicycle network in Crystal City by the end of 2024. This plan is known as the Crystal City Bike Network (CCBN) and includes improvements in the area bound by Route 1, Long Bridge Park, Crystal Drive, and Four Mile Run. After public input and staff analysis, the CCBN



recommendation includes a part of one-way north/south bicycle facilities along with improvements to the east/west streets. An implementation plan is in development to determine the order and timeline for installation of the various improvements. Some of these improvements are to be completed by the County, however some are not able to be implemented until redevelopment occurs. The proposed 23rd Street South and Crystal Drive cross section have been designed to align with the recommendation of the CCBN.

**Figure 9: Draft Crystal City Bike Network Plan**



The applicant proposed 332 Class 1 bicycle parking spaces for residents and retail employees within the building and garage and 20 Class 3 bicycle parking spaces around the exterior of the site for visitors.

**Transit:** The project site is well served by public transit facilities with the Crystal City Metrorail Station and the VRE station within 0.5 miles of the site. There is a Metroway bus stop within a block of the site, a bus stop serving WMATA routes 23A and 23B across the street and a bus stop serving Omniride, Loudoun County Transit, and Fairfax Connector along the project frontage.

Multimodal Transportation Analysis & Trip Generation: A Multimodal Transportation Assessment (MMTA) was submitted by the applicant, prepared by Gorove/Slade, dated August 26, 2021. The analysis looked at 18 intersections around the site and evaluated the intersection in the existing conditions, future conditions without the proposed development, and future conditions with the proposed development. The analysis concluded that the proposed development will generate an additional approximately 236 vehicular, 515 transit, 74 pedestrian, and 27 bicycle trips during the AM peak period and approximately 249 vehicular, 553 transit, 145 pedestrian, and 34 bicycle trips during the PM peak period. The analysis assumed approximately 68% of residential and 95% of retail trips would be made by modes other than single occupancy vehicles (walk, bike, transit, or non-SOV).

The analysis showed that the overall operations of all the signalized intersection is at an acceptable Level of Service (LOS) under existing conditions, future conditions without the proposed development, and future conditions with the proposed development except for the intersection of Route 1 and 23rd Street South. This intersection has an LOS F in the future conditions with and without the proposed development. In addition, the intersections of South Clark Street and 23rd Street South and the Parks driveway and Crystal Drive have specific movements that are below the acceptable LOS as noted in the MMTA.

The analysis also assessed the impact of the development on the adjacent street, sidewalk, transit, and bicycle network and considered additional trips generated by approved unbuilt projects and transportation improvements to be completed within the study area.

Parking and Loading: The project proposes a two level underground parking garage that will span both buildings including under the North-South Connection and be accessed from the east building. The garage will include access to the existing large garage located under the entire block. 443 parking spaces and a maximum of 15% compact spaces are proposed with 243 parking space in the underground garage on site and the remaining 200 parking spaces located in the garage at 2231 Crystal Drive. The project is within the Richmond Highway corridor study area for the Off-Street Parking Guidelines for Multi-Family Residential Projects Approved by Special Exception in the Rosslyn-Ballston and Richmond Highway Metro Corridors ("Residential Parking Guidelines"), approved in 2017, which identifies specific parking requirements based on housing affordability and distance to Metro area. The Residential Parking Guidelines also require no fewer than 0.05 spaces per unit of designated visitor parking for the first 200 units. With 443 parking spaces, the resulting ratio is 0.30 spaces per unit and the required 10 visitor parking spaces. For market-rate units, the minimum parking ratio per the Residential Parking Guidelines is 0.3 spaces per unit. The Residential Parking Guidelines do allow off-site shared parking provided the garage is located within the Richmond Highway planning corridor, a public entrance to the garage is within 800 feet of the proposed building, and the buildings have the same owner.



Three (3) loading spaces are provided in each garage and accessible from the North-South connection. Per the Crystal City Sector Plan loading access is to be provided on alleys to limit the visibility of the facilities from the street.

**Community Benefits**

Community benefits for additional density have yet to be determined as of the date of this report. However, site plan projects also deliver a number of standard benefits that are required by conditions of approval, including a Public Art contribution, Utility Fund contribution, and streetscape improvements, including undergrounding of existing utilities around the site.

**Modification of Use Regulations:** The applicant requests the County Board modify the following use regulations:

Additional Density: The applicant is requesting 673,669 square feet of total additional density above the total base density of 446,186 square feet. The community benefits associated with additional density are under review by staff.

Density Exclusions: The applicant is requesting a total of 209,211 square feet in density exclusions for below-grade mechanical/service space, vertical shafts, and rooftop mechanical space. Proposed density exclusions are under review by staff.

Required Parking Ratio: The applicant requests a Zoning modification for the residential parking ratio. The Zoning Ordinance requires 1 1/8 parking spaces per dwelling unit for the first 200 units and 1 space per unit after. The applicant proposes a parking ratio of 0.3 spaces per unit; however, that is inclusive of off-site parking spaces proposed within the existing Crystal Parks office garage located across Crystal Drive at 2231 Crystal Drive (SP #167). This is consistent with the minimum parking ratio recommended in the Residential Parking Guidelines for market-rate units. The Residential Parking Guidelines do allow off-site shared parking provided the garage is located within the Richmond Highway planning corridor, a public entrance to the garage is within 800 feet of the proposed building, and the buildings have the same owner.

Required Loading Spaces: The Zoning Ordinance requires at least one off-street loading space to be provided for each use classification, but for multi-family uses over 50 units, a loading space is required for each additional 200 units or fraction thereof. The project proposes six (6) individual loading spaces that serve residential and retail uses. Under the loading space requirements for each building, a total of eight (8) residential loading spaces are required in addition to one loading space for retail use in each building, for a total of ten (10) loading spaces required.

**Outstanding Issues:** Staff identified some design issues with the proposal that are expected to be further discussed with the applicant, or which have been recently addressed through submission of revised designs, and which are detailed below.

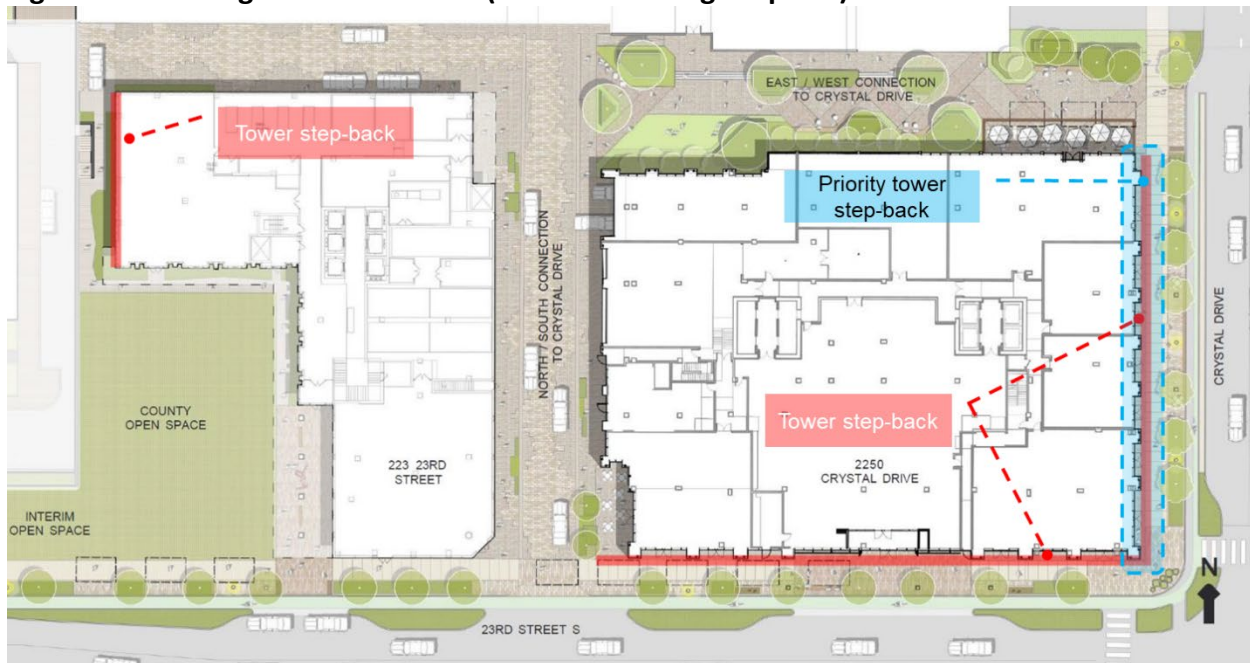
Open Space Details: although the full Open Space #10 area will not be achieved with this project alone, staff recommended that additional design elements be incorporated into the 8,670 sf space that would be delivered with this project, including: consideration of less intensive landscaping to frame the space and add interest compared to a simple grass lawn area; and improved pedestrian pathways to both the retail frontage along Open Space #10 and to stairs shown on the northwest side of the site that would provide access to the interior of the block. These issues have largely been addressed in the most recent submission, as shown in Figure 10 below.

**Figure 10: Revised Open Space #10 Lawn Concept**

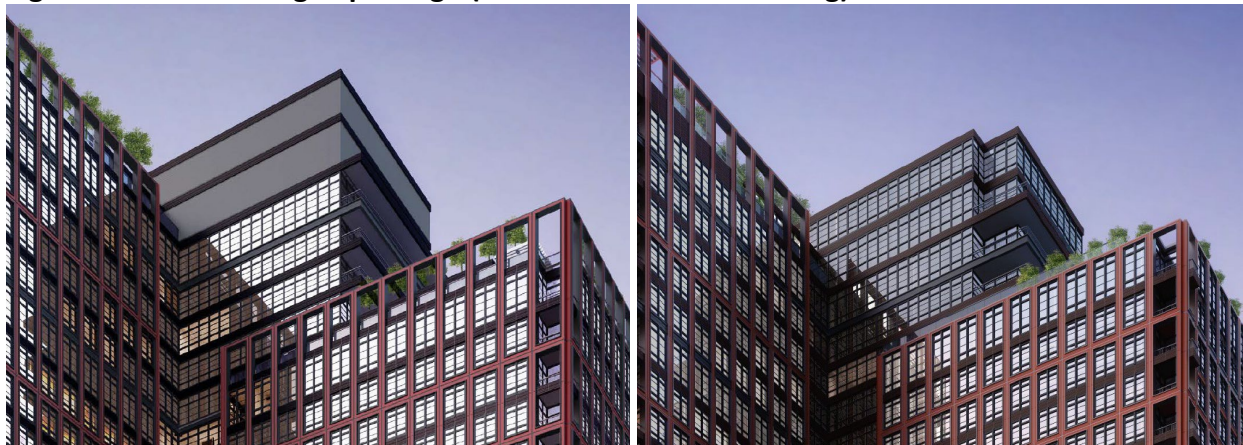


Building Form and Tower Step-Backs: previously the applicant provided alternative massing designs for both towers during the first SPRC meeting in July, during which there was some consensus that issues such as retail façade designs and rooftop or penthouse articulation needed to improve. Following the most recent design revisions, however, staff has significant concerns over remaining deviations that are in conflict with Sector Plan guidance, as noted above, and illustrated in the figures below.



**Figure 11: Building Form Deviations (Revised Massing Proposal)**

*223 23rd Street Building:* although a minimum step-back of approximately five feet has been implemented along the 23rd Street frontage, the applicant still fails to account for the future Clark-Bell Street alignment in the proposed western building face with no tower step-back or other tower sculpting. The central tower mass, which contains mechanical penthouse space, now features an improved glass façade treatment of a quality and character consistent with the building's tower façade; however, the south wing of the building, fronting 23rd Street, now features less articulation than the preliminary site plan submission design. Previously, as shown in Figure 12 below, this wing featured a treatment similar to the western building wing with a step-back of the top floor footprint that created a sense of openness and transparency.

**Figure 12: 223 Building Top Design (Penthouse and South Wing)**

Preliminary Design (June 2021)

Current Design (August 2022)

*2250 Crystal Drive Building:* the current massing design for the 2250 Building incorporates one additional foot of tower step-back along Crystal Drive, for a total full tower step-back of 22 inches; however, no step-backs or tower tapering is proposed along 23rd Street. Podium level residential balconies are now proposed to cantilever over the sidewalk along Crystal Drive. The tower wings fronting 23rd Street South have been reduced to the original proposed height and symmetrical configuration, which staff believes is more consistent with Sector Plan recommendations.

**Figure 13A: Crystal City Building Form Examples with Insufficient Definition**



2231 Crystal Drive (Crystal Park SP #167)



1770 Crystal (Central District Retail Phase II; SP #448)



**Figure 13B: Crystal City Building Form Examples with Pedestrian-Scale Definition**



2200 Crystal Drive (SP #11)



1550 Crystal Drive (Central District Retail Phase I; SP #90)



1900 Crystal Drive (SP #56 and #421) Under Construction



As noted above, staff has significant concerns over the lack of podium definition on several frontages as shown in Figure 11; however, among these frontages Crystal Drive represents the most difficult design deviation. With no tower-step backs or other mass sculpting, the design fails to consider the design context on Crystal Drive that includes existing development such as the one-story Crystal City Shops at 2200 Crystal Drive, or modifications to existing sites such as Central District Retail Phase I at 1550 Crystal Drive; or recently approved projects underway such as 1900 Crystal Drive that take into account elements of both the Multiple Setback Approach and Single Setback Approach to achieving sculpted buildings as envisioned in the Sector Plan. There are many examples in Crystal City of buildings, constructed in past decades, without these considerations to pedestrian scale podium design, such as the Crystal Park buildings on the east side of Crystal Drive. The Central District Retail Phase II building at 1770 Crystal Drive, which was recently amended along with the Central District Retail Phase I project to incorporate significant façade design improvements to a vacant office building, illustrates how a building with improved façade quality still imposes over the streetscape due to its building form designed and built in the 1970's.

**Figure 14A: Rosslyn Building Form Examples with Insufficient Definition**



The Waterview (SP #25) – View on 19th Street



International Place (SP #35) – View on N. Lynn Street

There are also relevant examples from Rosslyn as shown here in Figures 14A and 14B which illustrate good and bad examples of building form that better defines a streetscape for pedestrians. The Waterview building on 19th Street and the North Lynn Street frontage for International Place both illustrate tall towers that give a sense of figuratively towering over pedestrians either due to a single façade plane or even due to the tower cantilevering over the sidewalk. Conversely, the North Lynn Street frontage for Central Place provides a good example of building taper and transitional massing that protects visual access to sky and sunlight. The Highlands development was recently completed last year and the east tower housing Fire Station 10 provides a great example of slight tower step-back and massing variation as a means to improve the pedestrian realm. Although Rosslyn currently has greater density than Crystal City, examples such as those identified here are appropriate since similar densities may be achieved in Crystal City provided future redevelopment meets the aforementioned building form and design guidelines of the Sector Plan.

**Figure 14B: Rosslyn Building Form Examples with Pedestrian-Scale Definition**



Central Place (SP #335) – View on N. Lynn Street



The Highlands (SP #445) – 1555 Wilson Boulevard



Reallocation of Parking on Block M: separate applications have been filed to amend Site Plan #11 (Block M) and Site Plan #167 (Crystal Park) to reduce and reconfigure parking ratios between each site. With the proposed garage redesign on the subject Crystal Plaza 5 site, existing JBG parking allocations on the remainder of Block M will be reconfigured and, in most cases, a portion of existing on-site parking will be provided off-site in the Crystal Park garage structure located across Crystal Drive. The current proposal includes approximately 40% of residential spaces from the 220 20th Street building, and approximately 40% of total office parking across the block; however, this current restructuring includes moving all existing retail parking for the Crystal City Shops off-site. Although these reallocations are requested under separate site plan amendments, these requests are connected to the subject site plan request and staff has notified the applicant that the County currently does not support moving all retail parking off-site. We anticipate discussion of a more distributed reallocation of retail, office, and residential parking with the applicant.

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