

Crystal & Pentagon Cities Council (CPCC)

3rd Quarterly Meeting Summary | Meeting Date: September 30, 2025, 6:00 – 8:00 p.m.

This meeting was a Hybrid (virtual and in-person) public meeting held through electronic communication means.

CPCC Members in attendance (in-person, unless otherwise noted):

- Ben D’Avanzo, Chair
- Robert Vaughn, Vice Chair
- Rob Mandle
- Pan Van Hine
- Judy Freshman
- Jeffrey Williams
- Rich Kelly
- Wes Mehr
- Meg Flores
- Susan English
- Gary Shinnars
- Alexander Chakrin
- Stacy Meyer
- Matt Ginivan
- Tommy Amal (virtual)
- Emily Norton (virtual)
- Micheal Dowell (absent)
- Harmar Thompson (absent)
- Peter Robertson (absent)
- Haley Norris (absent)

County Staff in attendance (in-person)

- Anthony Fusarelli, Jr., Planning Director, CPHD Planning Division
- Jennifer Smith, Comprehensive Planning Manager, CPHD Planning Division

Others in attendance (in person, unless otherwise noted):

- Carol Fuller (virtual)
- Tarsi Dunlap
- Nick Giacobbe
- Guiseppe Lanzone

Chair Ben D’Avanzo opened the meeting at 7:05 p.m. After welcoming remarks, introductions, and hybrid meeting procedures, he introduced County Board, Chair, Takis Karantonis, as the past liaison to CPCC, and to give welcoming remarks.

Chair D’Avanzo reminded the CPCC members about its Charge stating the group’s responsibility is to focus on implementation of the Crystal City Sector Plan and Pentagon City Sector Plan, and the plans’ respective goals/recommendations, and to share the collective CPCC perspective(s) or information with the County Board on sense of direction and how projects or other attributes of those plans are moving forward.

1. Q&A with County Board Chair

Chair, Takis Karantonis provided remarks to CPCC, followed by a question-and-answer session with the Council members.

CPCC Questions and Comments generally focused on the following topics:

- Adaptive Reuse proposals in Crystal City and Pentagon City:
 - Concerns that adaptive reuse projects may undermine planned improvements set by the Crystal City and Pentagon City sector plans, particularly recommendations that strengthen and provide cultural resources such as theater and library, or public spaces.
 - Will adaptive reuse proposals provide more opportunity for generating more affordable housing, if adaptive reuse proposals are less costly than full redevelopment?

- A request for continuing to improve how community benefits are tracked over time. *It was noted that the ongoing CBO audit for site plan projects may provide for improved presentation / communication of community benefits.*
- *The benefits of adaptive reuse projects include conversion of vacant, obsolete office buildings to reoccupied buildings with residents which generates revenue and therefore helps support the community; new residents support other businesses.*
- *The community could benefit from more awareness and understanding of adaptive reuse projects and related benefits, with minimal impacts as the buildings already exist.*
- Suggestion for improvements could be guided towards program enhancements, such as enhanced bus services. *Interwoven elements related to transportation networks, cultural assets including entertainment and businesses, and green/public space are each important and support quality of life and livability.*
- Neighborhood-wide improvements:
 - Questions raised on how the TIF (tax increment financing) can be leveraged, or more strategically used, to realize public infrastructure improvements. *TIF can be leveraged, and new adaptive reuse proposals will help support TIF with new revenue. More review and discussion with colleagues on TIF is needed.*
 - A suggestion made for more planning and discussion to prioritize future CIP and TIF funded projects.
 - How will the desired parks and library improvements be realized – is there any direction yet on CIP? *The CIP will be leveraged, but projects must be feasible.*
 - Are there any updates on changes to Route 1? *No updates.*

2. RiverHouse Neighborhood

CPCC Chair D'Avanzo opened discussion by mentioning this is the first project coming forward under the recently adopted Pentagon City Sector Plan and reminded members that their comments should be framed around how the proposal aligns with the adopted sector plan recommendation to help him distill feedback for the County Board.

Presentation by JBG Smith representative, Matt Ginivan:

- Matt Ginivan indicated the RiverHouse site plan proposal has gone through extensive LRPC and SPRC review and there was good, overall discussion. The proposal has evolved since the applicant's first submission. He indicated County Board approval of a Phased Development Site Plan (PDSP) application and Final Site Plan applications for multiple buildings will be needed with this phase. Key highlights of this presentation included:
 - The age of the complex, with three building towers comprised of over 1,600 rental units, surrounded and served by over 1,800 surface parking space but with less than 1,200 used on a common basis today. The planned infill development would be phased in over time.
 - Two final site plan applications are proposed which would guide near term development. The PDSP would be in place to guide future development and emphasize how and when site improvements called for by the PCSP (i.e., green ribbon) would be achieved.
 - JBG Smith intends to accommodate a mix of housing types on the property with a mix of for sale townhouse units, including 2-over-2 condo-style townhouse units;

multifamily units including approx. 100 units in C-1 building and approx. 500 in the N-1 building; and deliver a new urgent/emergent care facility. Future phases include the C-2, C-3, N-2, N-3 buildings which would add over 2,000 units.

- The site improvements include new open space and green ribbon per the sector plan.

Remarks by Jeffrey Williams, CPCC representative to SPRC:

- Jeffrey Williams' presentation included the LRPC and SPRC history, evolution of the applications and comments on how the design has evolved, noting the current proposal more closely follows the PCSP.
- He indicated that feedback was mixed at LRPC/SPRC with some wanting lower heights to preserve views, others desired increased density, with concerns raised about impacts on services and streets, and noise that new development could bring.

Presentation by CPHD Planning Director, Anthony Fusarelli, Jr.:

- Anthony Fusarelli commented that the County conducted an appropriately scaled, robust engagement process given the scale of the site and proposed composition of buildings; and he, too, recognized the evolution of the proposal through the process.
- Since SPRC concluded in late July 2025, County staff and JBG Smith have been working together on the proposed application, staff is finishing providing technical comments and revisions by the applicant for final plans to be presented to the Planning Commission and County Board later this year. The timeline is targeted for December.
- The application meets several important goals of PCSP and there are areas for continued refinement.
- A few details are not in full alignment with the PCSP and staff is continuing to discuss these items with the applicant, but recognized that some components may not fully align.

CPCC Discussion with Comments and Responses focused on the following:

- Density:
 - Density is a deviation from the PCSP. What will be foregone lost and what are the tradeoffs for not achieving the full density envisioned by the PCSP?
 - *Staff responded to indicate the final County Manager's staff report will lay out the proposed density and community benefits. It was noted the affordable housing envisioned by the PCSP is based on the amount of net new residential growth over the base density, and the initial phases of infill development proposed is less than the full potential density specified in the PCSP. Therefore, beyond base density affordable housing contributions required by the Zoning Ordinance, more affordable housing contributions realized through bonus density would be expected as part of future phases of development at RiverHouse when the net new residential density surpasses the base density of 72 units/acre.*
 - *It was noted that other improvements recommended in the PCSP (i.e., public space) are included in the application and provided incrementally with the final site plan applications.*

- Public Space/Green Ribbon:
 - Does the proposal align with the PCSP? *The JBG Smith applicant indicated the site layout in the current proposal aligns with the PCSP, and the spacing of buildings allows for the envisioned green ribbon alignment and size.*
 - Is the applicant willing to make contributions to support maintaining Virginia Highlands Park, and will current amenities at RiverHouse be removed and replaced during construction? Will non-native, invasive plants be removed? In response, the PCSP recommends on-site infrastructure improvements, such as the Joyce Street cycle track, green ribbon connections, and new open spaces, which would be a focus for the RiverHouse application(s). The children's play area will not be affected with the current phase of development. The applicant will work with the Dept. of Parks and Recreation (DPR) when master planning for on-site open spaces occurs, which will solicit community input on the design and features. The applicant intends to remove invasive plants onsite, particularly along the western border, and a landscape plan specifies installation of multi-sized and native plants.
- Housing and Affordability:
 - Will existing units continue to be maintained, and provide affordable/lower rents than new units? *The applicant indicated the approximately 1,600 existing market-rate affordable units would continue to be rented at lower rates than new market rate units in the neighborhood, primarily due to the age of buildings/units and the amenities provided. JBG Smith will continue to maintain the units. The owner explored upgrades to add in-unit washer/dryers however upgrades to electric and plumbing loads were considered cost prohibitive and challenging to provide and these features are not planned.*
 - *It was noted the existing James building includes 42 committed affordable units (CAFs) per previous site plan agreements made with JBG Smith projects on Crystal Drive.*
 - *As noted above, the applicant will meet the required affordable housing contributions on the base density, however, additional affordable housing commitments would be delivered with future phases of development when bonus density is requested, above the base density of 72 units per acre. At that point, the PCSP calls for 10% of net new density as committed affordable housing. The Chair asked for clarification of this detail when bonus provisions start based on a read of different passages in the PCSP.*
 - Is there a possibility for any existing units to be converted from a market-rate affordable unit (MARK) to a CAF in the future? *In response, it was noted the PCSP indicates this as a possibility, however, the contribution expectation is higher (i.e., 2x higher than providing new, onsite CAFs).*
 - Is there flexibility where CAFs can be provided onsite? *In response, it was noted there is flexibility; but the decision would occur in the future, when, per the PCSP, an application includes bonus density and CAFs are expected in return.*
- Overall feedback
 - A member commended staff and the applicant on the process, indicating the RiverHouse site and proposed development is complex, with limited deviations from the PCSP, and the design is good.

3. Adaptive Reuse Proposals (1800 and 1901 Bell Street)

Presentation by JBG Smith representative, Matt Ginivan, who shared highlights and background information on recent and current adaptive reuse proposals in Crystal City:

- 2100 & 2200 Crystal Drive: conversions were approved in July and construction documents were submitted for permits. JBG Smith hopes to start construction by the end of 2025.
- 1800 and 1901 S. Bell Street: Built in 1960s; 1800 S. Bell is vacant; 1901 S. Bell expected vacancy by end of 2026
- The applicant can deliver different residential unit mix in converted office buildings in contrast to new high-rise residential construction due to existing space and floor plate sizes. Units are larger (approximately 1,100 sf/unit compared to ~750-800 sf/unit new construction) and can offer multiple bedroom units (more 2- and 3-bedroom units); no studio units are expected; other features include in-unit laundry and den/extra rooms.
- The applicant expects these units will attract a different renter demographic and commented that filling these obsolete buildings will bring people to the neighborhood who can support other businesses and features.

Presentation by CPHD Planning Director, Mr. Fusarelli, Jr.:

- Anthony Fusarelli commented on the processes for reviewing adaptive reuse proposals, recognizing the policy which calls for more streamlined review processes and procedures, and clarified some proposals would continue to be reviewed and considered although may not realize all planning goals.

CPCC Discussion:

- Member comments focused on the following:
 - The unlikelihood that certain public infrastructure (i.e., parks) would be implemented by the County any sooner due to high costs if adaptive reuse proposals are not supported
 - Support for adaptive reuse proposal due to current fiscal crisis, will bring more, important revenue; and will bring in more residential units, and families, who can use other facilities in neighborhoods
 - Recognizing that other spaces, beyond Center Park, can meet community needs
 - Realizing library improvements in the neighborhood as community desires may be more difficult; no library improvements are planned with the adaptive reuse proposals as no new density is requested
 - Whether these older buildings should be retained as office space for future use. It was noted these are obsolete and other office buildings in neighborhood are better suited to maintain/attract employers
 - Proposed design changes will include operable windows and façade design elements

4. Electronic Meeting Policy Update

- The [2025 Electronic Meeting policy](#) was approved. The Chair gave a reminder that no more than 2 times per year, or up to 50% of meetings, may be held as virtual meetings, which for CPCC would be two meetings per year with the other two held as hybrid meetings. Members must be present for meetings, with allowances for remote

participation up to two meetings or 25% of meetings per year due to a personal matter and when the remote participation is reported to the Chair and staff in advance.

5. CPCC Decision Making and Communications Practices

- The Chair indicated his interest in future discussion about how the group can best meet its Charge and represent its discussions to the County Board, given the group is not a voting body like some other advisory groups.
- He requested members to think and discuss with others they represent about what may be the preferred method to formalize how CPCC conducts its business, and to convey impactful input to the County Board.
- For review by CPCC members first, the Chair and Vice Chair typically draft a written letter, or talking points for a verbal presentation, for submittal to the County Board that generally conveys the CPCC discussion on issues or projects that come to the County Board for approval. This would be the steps taken on tonight's discussion topics: RiverHouse and South Bell Street adaptive reuse proposals.
- He expected future CPCC discussions on this topic over the coming year.

There were no Public Comments.

The meeting ended at 8:08 PM.