



Aurora Highlands Civic Association

To: Members of the Arlington County Board

From: Natasha Atkins, President, Aurora Highlands Civic Association

Date: 18 October 2018

Re: SP #90

I am writing on behalf of the Aurora Highlands Civic Association to urge deferral of Phase II of Site Plan #90. AHCA supports Phase 1 of the proposal, which includes the retail improvements along Crystal Drive south from 15th Street to 1770, and residents west of Route 1 will surely benefit from these. But given the applicant's deferral regarding conversion of 1770 Crystal Drive to residential housing, we believe that approving a hastily designed and reviewed building at the corner of 18th Street, on an otherwise unplanned open space, is premature. Like our sister civic associations in Crystal City and Arlington Ridge, we decry the process that excluded the community and rides roughshod over the Crystal City Sector Plan.

There is time to plan that open space; funding still does not exist for planning or building either the park or the new Metro station entrance. Plunking down a retail building as a place holder makes no sense at this time. It would encumber proper planning of how the park should relate to an adjacent high-rise (whose use is still to be determined) and how a Metro entrance should be accommodated at the corner. It would also permanently alter the size and quality of the existing open space and the options going forward. Moreover, it would preclude a thoughtful and inclusive review of the community's needs for open space, which has been promised yet continually whittled away.

In short, there is no hurry to approve this part of the plan. Do it later, and do it right.

Sincerely,

Natasha Atkins