



Aurora Highlands &lt;ahcapresident@gmail.com&gt;

## Questions Regarding CC2DCA 30% Design Package

1 message

President, Aurora Highlands Civic Association &lt;president@aurorahighlands.org&gt;

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To: kklng@arlingtonva.us

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Dear Kyle,

Below please find consolidated questions I have received to date regarding CC2DCA 30% Design Package. Per our discussion, I am asking AHCA residents to continue to send in questions through April. When will we receive a response to these questions? Thanks,

Regards,

Stacy Meyer,  
President, Aurora Highlands Civic Association

### 1. Is the 30% Design Completion Milestone Met?

The current submission does not appear to meet the standard expectations for a 30% design, which typically represents the conclusion of schematic design. At this stage, the program and key elements should be clearly defined. However, several fundamental aspects remain unresolved:

- The number and configuration of elevators
- Inclusion and design of the VRE platform
- Provisions for potential Amtrak service
- Projected user volumes
- Pick-up and drop-off planning
- Intended use of the bridge (e.g., bicycle corridor, pedestrian promenade, or hybrid)

These are critical decisions with direct cost and funding implications. Given the importance of the 30% milestone, it is essential that requirements be finalized and these issues addressed prior to further design progression.

### 2. Is There a Current Business Case and Project Justification?

To date, there has been no clearly articulated business case for CC2DCA. The project originated as part of the state's Amazon HQ2 proposal, primarily as a convenience feature for airport access. There has been limited public discussion regarding the necessity of this project, particularly given:

- Existing Metro connectivity between Crystal City and DCA
- Amazon's ultimate location in Pentagon City rather than near the proposed bridge

Given current conditions—including County budget pressures, slower-than-anticipated Amazon development, and rising project costs—it may be appropriate to pause and reassess the project's justification.

### 3. Where is the TIF Accounting?

Public information indicates Arlington may contribute approximately \$8–13 million. However, prior discussions suggested that any County contribution would be funded through a Tax Increment Financing (TIF) structure. Clarification is requested on:

- The current status of the TIF strategy
- Whether funds previously contemplated for other projects (e.g., cultural or community uses) are being redirected
- A comprehensive "sources and uses" breakdown for the project

This is particularly important in light of competing County priorities, including schools, parks, and community facilities.

**4. Why is the Crystal City Sector Plan Being Cited as Justification for CC2DCA When It Wasn't in There?**

Project materials suggest that CC2DCA was envisioned in the Crystal City Sector Plan. However, the Sector Plan did not propose a new bridge over the GW Parkway. Instead, it referenced improvements to pedestrian access via the existing bridge. This represents a materially different scope and cost. Clarification is requested as to why the Sector Plan is being cited as supporting justification.

**5. What are the Traffic and Pick-Up/Drop-Off Impacts to CC2DCA?**

The project may effectively extend airport-related activity into Crystal City. Key questions include:

- Whether Crystal Drive may function as a secondary airport drop-off location
- Potential impacts on congestion, particularly as an alternative to Route 1
- Whether traffic and circulation studies have been conducted

Additionally, it is unclear whether dedicated pick-up and drop-off areas will be incorporated into the design.

**6. Will CC2DCA Extend Airport Parking and Related Uses Into Crystal City?**

The project may induce additional airport-related uses in Crystal City, including parking and rental car operations. Clarification is requested on:

- Whether new airport parking or rental car facilities are anticipated
- The role of private stakeholders, including JBGS, in shaping adjacent land uses

**7. Provide More Information on the VRE Platform Configuration**

The proposed VRE alignment and platform design are unclear. Current concepts suggest a relocated platform extending between Water Park and the bridge. It would be helpful to understand:

- Why the bridge does not directly connect at the existing Water Park location, as previously proposed
- The rationale for the current configuration

**8. What is the Potential for Amtrak Service and Provisions for an Amtrak Station?**

Amtrak service could significantly enhance the project's utility compared to VRE-only service. Clarification is requested regarding:

- The feasibility of an Amtrak stop at this location
- Required infrastructure and planning considerations
- Potential operational and congestion impacts like Union Station or Alexandria would be problematic in Crystal City

**9. Will the Architectural Design and Civic Presence Be Iconic?**

The current design does not appear to align with the architectural significance of National Airport. Given the project's prominence, consideration should be given to:

- Enhancing the design to serve as a civic gateway
- Engaging firms with experience in landmark infrastructure like Cesar Pelli, High Line or Santiago Calatrava to review the design
- Exploring partnerships or funding sources to support a higher-quality design outcome

**10. Provide More Information on the Vertical Circulation and User Experience**

The proposed approach to vertical transportation raises significant concerns.

- The absence of escalators may result in excessive reliance on elevators, creating accessibility and safety challenges, particularly for travelers with luggage
- Weather exposure and surface conditions further exacerbate these concerns
- Elevator capacity and usage assumptions require detailed analysis
- The ramped bridge itself is an issue for those with luggage, and if uncovered unsafe in ice. Further, the slope makes it look like a freeway instead of a gateway entrance.

A comprehensive approach to accessibility, safety, and user experience is needed.

**11. Operations and Management Questions**

Additional clarity is needed regarding long-term operations, including:

- Hours of operation and nighttime use
- Lighting and security measures
- Availability of amenities (e.g., hydration, restrooms)
- Ownership and management responsibilities should be integrated, what is the plan?

- Will it be covered, will there be a bike lane or a park, or hybrid. If a park, and covered will irrigation be required and is that an issue in winter?

The bridge should function as a cohesive and well-managed public asset.

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Given the number and significance of these outstanding questions, it is recommended that the County provide additional analysis and clarification before advancing the project beyond the current stage.