



**NATIONAL
LANDING**

PENTAGON CITY

CRYSTAL CITY

POTOMAC YARD

December 1, 2021

James Lantelme
Arlington County Planning Commission
Arlington County
2100 Clarendon Blvd., Suite 700
Arlington, VA 22201

Dear Chair Lantelme and members of the Planning Commission:

On behalf of the Crystal City, Pentagon City, and Potomac Yard business community, the National Landing Business Improvement District (BID) offers the following comments after reviewing the County's **Draft #3 of the Pentagon City Plan**. Similar comments were made in the BID's October 29th letter to staff following review of Draft #2.

Vision Statement –The BID suggested the inclusion of a strong Vision Statement in its August 23rd letter and we appreciate the addition into the draft. The statement, however, now reads that *“Pentagon City, together with Crystal City, will be a dynamic downtown for Arlington and the region...”* which does not include acknowledgment of the National Landing area as the cohesive downtown as requested by the BID in its October 29th letter and reflective of the official name of the current downtown service district. In fact, the document fails to acknowledge National Landing as the broader downtown anywhere in the document. The BID's work as outlined in its County-approved Work Plan, has been focused on elevating the three neighborhoods of Crystal City, Pentagon City, and Potomac Yard as components of a broader downtown – National Landing. To reflect this work and the on-the-ground reality, the BID suggests this vision statement should read as ***“Pentagon City will be dynamic downtown neighborhood within the broader National Landing area serving Arlington and the region, and a place where everyone is welcome and able to live regardless of race, income, age, and immigration status.”*** This statement better reflects the downtown-wide view espoused not only by the BID in the Area-Wide Strategic Plan, but also by the community's *22202 Livability Framework*.

Bike Network Planning – The approach to the Pentagon City bike network could benefit from a downtown-wide perspective. As currently written, it assumes that the Crystal City Bike Network Plan as proposed would be Crystal City's end state and does not acknowledge that the effort itself was focused on short-term, quick fixes that could be attained by 2024. The BID's formal public feedback regarding that effort also included a request for a broader, longer-term downtown bike network plan. The BID encourages the County to include such an effort in the Further Study section of the Planning Analysis chapter of the document.

Financing Tools – During the planning process, the county and consultant team acknowledged that some sites would be more expensive to redevelop than others given building lifecycles and the presence of existing, viable tenants. In the context of realizing the vision of the plan, however, these sites may prove pivotal. In recognition of this complication, the plan could benefit from including potential financial tools that can provide the incentives necessary to encourage owners to pursue redevelopment and implement elements of the plan.

Similarly, the plan could go further in outlining ways by which high priority amenities (e.g., the Green Ribbon) that are too expensive for any one project to absorb or that extend beyond project boundaries could be delivered more rapidly.

Pentagon City is poised for additional growth and development that will help to unify the neighborhoods into a singular downtown. By broadening the context of this initiative, embracing flexibility, and incorporating potential financial tools, this plan can help to shape this growth into an inclusive and sustainable downtown community. The BID looks forward to continuing to participate in the Pentagon City Plan effort and working towards implementation.

Sincerely,

Robert H. Mandle
Deputy Executive Director
National Landing Business Improvement District

**NATIONAL LANDING
BUSINESS
IMPROVEMENT
DISTRICT**

2011 Crystal Drive
Suite 205
Arlington, VA 22202
nationallanding.org

Cc: Tracy Sayegh Gabriel, President and Executive Director, National Landing BID

Previously Submitted National Landing BID
Feedback Referenced in 12/1/2021 Letter



**NATIONAL
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PENTAGON CITY

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POTOMAC YARD

October 29, 2021

Matthew Mattauszek
Department of Community Planning, Housing, and Development
Arlington County
2100 Clarendon Blvd., Suite 700
Arlington, VA 22201

Dear Mr. Mattauszek:

On behalf of the Crystal City, Pentagon City, and Potomac Yard business community, the National Landing Business Improvement District (BID) offers the following comments after reviewing the County's **Draft #2 of the Pentagon City Plan**.

Vision Statement - The BID suggested the inclusion of a strong Vision Statement in its August 23rd letter and we appreciate the addition in the latest draft. The statement, however, reads that "*Pentagon City will be a dynamic downtown for Arlington and the region*", suggesting inaccurately that Pentagon City itself would be its own downtown alongside a separate Crystal City downtown. The BID's work as outlined in its County-approved Work Plan, has been focused on elevating the three neighborhoods of Crystal City, Pentagon City, and Potomac Yard as components of a broader downtown – National Landing. To reflect this work, the BID suggests this vision statement should read as "***Pentagon City will be a dynamic and urban neighborhood that is part of National Landing, the broader, cohesive, and connected downtown for Arlington and the region.***" This statement better reflects the downtown-wide view espoused not only by the BID in the Area-Wide Strategic Plan, but also by the community's *22202 Livability Framework*.

Downtown Mobility – The Plan would benefit from recognizing the broader downtown context in its approach to mobility. In the transit section, there is no reference to the 16M enhanced bus service promised as part of the County's approved Transit Development Plan. With National Landing as the County's fastest growing employment center and Columbia Pike the fastest growing residential corridor, prioritizing launch of the 16M service is paramount and critical to getting people who want to commute via transit to choose to live along the Pike.

Similarly, the approach to the Pentagon City bike network could benefit from a downtown-wide perspective. As currently written, it assumes that the Crystal City Bike Network Plan as proposed would be Crystal City's end state and does not acknowledge that the effort itself was focused on short-term, quick fixes that could be attained by 2024. The BID's formal public feedback regarding that effort also included a request for a broader, longer-term downtown bike network plan.

Community Benefits and Bonus Density – While the current draft offers much more clarity around how bonus density can be earned, it does not go far enough and leaves too much variation to provide confidence that development projects will be economically viable.

Transportation Study – The transportation studies conducted provide a better understanding of the roadway and transit capacities within the Pentagon City area. They do not, however, provide sufficient guidance on how future development projects would be evaluated against the study outcomes. Additionally, the Study lacks concrete infrastructure plans to further support expanded mode splits. For example, the Crystal City Sector Plan offered a range of capital projects and transit improvements necessary to support the anticipated growth. This plan could benefit from a defined collection of similar County investments.

Illustrative Context – The BID's August 23rd letter called for the inclusion of a clear "How to use the Plan" section in the plan. Though a section with this name was in fact added, the narrative could be strengthened by directing the Site Plan Review Committee, Commissions, and other citizen review bodies to focus on the vision, principles, and regulatory framework of the Plan and caution against strict adherence to the document's imagery.

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Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Robert H. Mandel". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name being the most prominent.

Robert H. Mandel
Deputy Executive Director
National Landing Business Improvement District

Cc: Tracy Sayegh Gabriel, President and Executive Director, National Landing BID

DRAFT Pentagon City Plan Comments

- Pages 1 – 15: Though this section is titled “The Pentagon City Vision,” the whole plan can benefit from a more succinct Vision Statement that offers a hopeful and inspirational outlook on the future envisioned by the Plan.
- Page 35 – The Near-Term Illustrative Plan graphic could benefit from colors that differentiate between new and existing buildings.
- Page 37 – The infographics on Plan Use Mix are useful to understanding how the community will feel at build out. They would be even more helpful by including the entire Pentagon City area, not just the planning study since the actual community doesn’t strictly follow these boundaries.
- Pages 61, 65 – Additional detail is needed to fully understand how the envisioned Pentagon City bike infrastructure intersects with the rest of National Landing. In some cases, facility designs inside the boundary don’t match those outside the boundaries making for what might be a very disjointed bike network. A broader National Landing Bike and Micromobility Plan that builds on the intent of the Pentagon City plan and the Crystal City Sector Plan and the more recently approved Crystal City Bike Network Plan would be a useful next step.
- Page 80 – Plan may benefit from more clearly defining what “facing neighboring areas” means. Does this mean building fronts? Or does it simply mean adjacent to neighboring areas?
- Page 87 – Retail Map does not illustrate what existing planning guidance (i.e., Sector Plan and Retail Plan) calls for on the opposite side of South Eads Street just outside the boundary. Would be important to understand context.
- Page 105-106 - The Plan references possible design guidelines for the Wayfinding System of the “Green Ribbon” open space network. Given the BID’s Work Plan priority of initiating a National Landing-wide wayfinding planning and design effort, the Plan should clarify the illustrative nature of those elements. Developing successful wayfinding systems requires a massive planning and outreach effort that was not included in the scope of the current effort and should not hinder future flexibility in creating a world-class system.

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