



## ARLINGTON COUNTY, VIRGINIA

**County Board Agenda Item  
Meeting of March 14, 2009**

**DATE:** February 25, 2009

**SUBJECT:** SP #167 CESC Park Two LLC, convert approx. 5,900 sq ft from retail to office;  
2121 Crystal Dr. (RPC #34-020-234)

**Applicant:**  
CESC Park Two, LLC

**By:**  
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Walsh, Colucci, Emrich, and Walsh  
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Arlington, Va. 22201

**C.M. RECOMMENDATION:**

Approve the minor site plan amendment request to permit conversion of approximately 5,900 square feet of retail space to office space, located at 2121 Crystal Drive, subject to all previously approved conditions.

**ISSUE:** This is a request to convert approximately 5,900 square feet of previously approved ground floor retail space to office space to accommodate the building's new major tenant. No issues have been identified.

**SUMMARY:** The site plan amendment request is to convert approximately 5,900 square feet of previously approved ground floor retail space located at 2121 Crystal Drive, also known as Crystal Park 2, to office space for a new major tenant of the building, Lockheed Martin. The retail space is set back on a private drive, 234 feet from Crystal Drive. The retail space has no immediate access to the outdoors; access instead is from an internal arcade in the building's lobby. The number of tenants in this space has dwindled over the last few years, and the most recent tenants have been of a "secondary retail" nature such as an H & R Block office. By contrast, the applicant has in recent years converted portions of office space to retail in spaces that have frontage on the public street. The proposed conversion also does not conflict with the proposed Crystal City Plan. Therefore, staff recommends approval of the site plan amendment subject to all previously approved conditions.

County Manager: \_\_\_\_\_

Staff: Peter Schulz, Planning Division, DCPHD

PLA- 5202

**BACKGROUND:** Crystal Park is a complex of five (5) office buildings and four (4) residential buildings located in Crystal City between Crystal Drive and the Richmond, Fredericksburg, and Potomac Railroad tracks. The original Crystal Park site plan approved in 1980 designated a minimum 50,000 square feet of retail space to be distributed among the office buildings as the market dictates. In 1985 the County Board approved a site plan amendment to increase the permitted amount of retail to 77,917 square feet to accommodate a restaurant and a health club. The original site plan and subsequent amendments have treated the parking requirements for office and retail as identical. There have been various conversions of retail to office, office to retail, and office to day care center since site plan approval, both approved administratively and by site plan amendment. Currently, the Crystal Park office buildings have a total of 71,000 gross square feet of retail (excluding the 5,900 square feet that the applicant proposes to convert).

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

Site: Crystal Park 2 (located at 2121 Crystal Drive) is one of the five office buildings in the Crystal Park site plan. As viewed from above, the office buildings form an “E”. Crystal Park 2 is set deeply back from Crystal Drive, against the RF&P railroad tracks.

To the north: Crystal Park 1 office building, Zoned C-O-1.5

To the west: An internal courtyard and Crystal Drive. Across Crystal Drive is the Crystal Plaza complex, zoned C-O

To the east: The RF&P tracks, zoned C-O-1.5

To the south: Crystal Park 3 office building, zoned C-O-1.5

Zoning: The subject site is zoned “C-O-1.5 Commercial Office Building, Hotel and Apartment Districts”.

Land Use: The General Land Use Plan designation of the site is 1/3 “Medium” Residential (32-72 units/acre) and 2/3 “Low” Office-Apartment-Hotel (1.5 F.A.R. allow. office density, up to 72 units/acre apartment density, and up to 110 units/acre hotel density).

Neighborhood: While the site is not within a civic association, the Aurora Highlands Civic Association has been notified of this request. They have not contacted staff regarding this proposal.

**DISCUSSION:** The applicant proposes to permanently convert approximately 5,900 square feet of retail space in Crystal Park 2 to office space for the new tenant, Lockheed Martin. Lockheed Martin will occupy over 120,000 square feet of office space in Crystal Park 2.

The office building in which the retail space under consideration is located more than 200 feet from Crystal Drive and faces a private drive and courtyard. The retail space itself is located inside the building with no outside access, accessible only from the building lobby. These retail

spaces have proven to not be viable. It has been slowly vacated since 2005, with the most recent tenant moving out last year. Before that, the type of retail occupying this space was what is considered “secondary retail” such as an Enterprise Rent-A-Car office and an H&R Block tax office. The proposed space will be used by Lockheed as office space. By contrast, the most successful retail in the Crystal Park development has been the kind that fronts directly on Crystal Drive. Indeed, in 2006, about 6,800 square feet of first floor office space that fronted directly on Crystal Drive was converted from office to retail, and in 2001 a first floor educational use in another office building fronting Crystal Drive was converted to a Chipotle, Quizno’s and other prime, street enlivening tenants. The draft Crystal City Plan also envisions all retail in this area having direct frontage on Crystal Drive.

**CONCLUSION:** The retail space in this location has not proven viable, while better-located retail in Crystal Park has thrived. After the conversion, 71,000 gross square feet of retail will remain in the Crystal Park office buildings. In addition, conversion of the space from retail to office will help attract a major tenant to the building in a time when Base Realignment and Closing is causing an exodus from Crystal City. The proposed conversion also does not conflict with the proposed Crystal City Plan. Therefore, staff recommends approval of the site plan amendment to convert approximately 5,900 square feet of ground-floor retail space located at 2121 Crystal Drive (also known as Crystal Park 2) to office space for Lockheed Martin, subject to all previously approved conditions.

PREVIOUS COUNTY BOARD ACTIONS:

- May 17, 1980 Approved a rezoning from “M-1” to “C-O-1.5” and approved a related site plan (Z-2180-80-1) for a mixed use development, subject to conditions #1-#44.
- February 5, 1983 Approved a site plan amendment (SP #11, 56, 90, 135 and 167) for identification and directional signage for Crystal City and the Crystal Plaza Shops.
- April 9, 1983 Deferred a site plan amendment to add 120 residential units to May 21, 1983.
- May 21, 1983 Accepted withdrawal of a site plan amendment to add 120 residential units.
- January 7, 1984 Approved a site plan amendment to add 120 residential units, increase garage parking and revise loading dock area, subject to all previous conditions.
- May 12, 1984 Approved a site plan amendment to delete the common lobby between the residential buildings, relocate the lobby to the first floor of the residential buildings, and relocate the garage entrances, subject to a new landscape plan.
- July 7, 1984 Approved a site plan amendment to adjust the boundary of the Crystal Park project by removing 23,866 square feet of land from the south end and adding a like amount to the north end, and a rezoning Z-2257-84-1 to rezone the parcel from “M-1” to “C-O-1.5”.
- May 18, 1985 Deferred a site plan amendment to amend Condition #29 to increase office gross parking area to 1,600,700 square feet.
- July 13, 1985 Approved a site plan amendment to amend condition #29 to increase office gross parking area to 1,584,100 square feet and increase retail commercial from 50,000 square feet to 77,917 square feet.

December 7, 1985	Approved a site plan amendment to permit subdivision into parcels with each building being on a separate parcel of land, subject to all previous conditions with new conditions #42 and #43.
August 13, 1988	Deferred a site plan amendment to amend Condition #34 to permit rooftop signs on east and west elevations, 234 square feet each (2341 Crystal Drive).
September 10, 1988	Denied a site plan amendment to amend Condition #34 to permit rooftop signs on the east and west elevations, 234 square feet each (2341 Crystal Drive).
February 11, 1989	Approved a site plan amendment for a freestanding directional sign at 2231 Crystal Drive, subject to all previous conditions.
July 11, 1989	Deferred a site plan amendment (SP #11, 56, 90, 135 and 167) for a coordinated sign plan consisting of 60 new signs and retention of 13 existing signs to the August 12, 1989 County Board meeting.
August 12, 1989	Approved a site plan amendment (SP #11, 56, 90, 135 and 167) for a coordinated sign plan consisting of 60 new signs and retention of 13 existing signs including Metro Station and Buchanan House signage, subject to conditions.
September 8, 1990	Deferred a site plan amendment to amend the comprehensive sign plan to allow temporary leasing banners to November 17, 1990.
November 17, 1990	Deferred a site plan amendment to amend the comprehensive sign plan to allow temporary leasing banners to January 5, 1991.
January 5, 1991	Deferred a site plan amendment to amend the comprehensive sign plan to allow temporary leasing banners to February 9, 1991.
February 9, 1991	Approved a site plan amendment (SP #11, 56, 90, 135 and 167) to amend the coordinated sign plan to permit two temporary office leasing banners, at

heights below 35 feet, on two office buildings until November 27, 1991, at 1225 and 2211 Jefferson Davis Highway.

- March 2, 1991  
Approved a site plan amendment with amended Conditions #37 and #41 and new condition #45 and the approved comprehensive sign plan to permit construction and operation of Virginia Railway Express commuter rail platform.
- July 13, 1993  
Approved a site plan amendment for conversion of approximately 2,450 square feet of retail gross floor area to office use for the parcel of real property known as 2231 Crystal Drive with new condition #47.
- March 18, 1995  
Approved a site plan amendment for an amendment to the Crystal City Comprehensive Sign Plan to permit a rooftop sign of 531, revised to 426, square feet on the east building elevation of 2121 Crystal Drive with one (1) new condition.
- November 21, 1995  
Approved a site plan amendment for conversion of 1,650 square feet of gross floor area to conference facilities for the Patent and Trademark Office for the parcel of real property known as 2121 Crystal Drive with one new condition.
- April 26, 2003  
Approved a site plan for a rooftop sign on the southwest elevation of the Crystal Park V Office Building subject to one (1) new condition.
- September 18, 2004  
Approved a site plan amendment for a rooftop signage on the Crystal Park III building, subject to all previous conditions and one (1) new condition.
- April 22, 2006  
Approved a site plan amendment to amend the comprehensive sign plan for 2345 Crystal Drive to permit signs at the garage entrance, subject to all previous conditions and two (2) new conditions.
- May 20, 2006  
Deferred a site plan amendment to convert approximately 11,000 square feet of first floor office for daycare use located at 2451 Crystal Dr. to the June 10, 2006 County Board meeting.

	Deferred vacation of a portion of a public use easement for recreational purposes, Parcel 1 of Crystal Park (2451 Crystal Drive) to the June 10, 2006 County Board meeting.
June 10, 2006	Deferred a site plan amendment to convert approximately 11,000 square feet of first floor office for daycare use located at 2451 Crystal Dr. to the July 8, 2006 County Board meeting.
	Deferred vacation of a portion of a public use easement for recreational purposes, Parcel 1 of Crystal Park (2451 Crystal Drive) to the July 8, 2006 County Board meeting.
July 8, 2006	Approve the conversion of approximately 11,000 square feet of office space to child care use, subject to eleven (11) new conditions which apply solely to the subject child care use and with a review in one (1) year (July 2007).
	Enacted an ordinance to vacate a portion of a public use easement for recreational purposes, Parcel 1 of Crystal Park (2451 Crystal Drive) subject to six (6) conditions.
September 16, 2006	Approved a site plan amendment for a rooftop sign at Crystal Park 5 (2451 Crystal Drive), subject to all previous conditions and one (1) new condition.
December 9, 2006	Approved a site plan amendment for a rooftop sign at Crystal Park 1 (2011 Crystal Drive), subject to all previous conditions and one (1) new condition.
July 7, 2007	Defer review of conversion of approximately 11,000 square feet of office space to child care use to the July 2008 County Board meeting.
July 19, 2008	Renewed a site plan amendment for conversion of approximately 11,000 square feet of office space to child care use, subject to all previous conditions, with a County Board review in three (3) years (July 2011).