



ARLINGTON COUNTY, VIRGINIA

**County Board Agenda Item
Meeting of June 17, 2008**

DATE: May 29, 2008

SUBJECT: SP #11 SITE PLAN AMENDMENT, Public Broadcasting Service, amend comprehensive sign plan, to include one rooftop sign and one approximately 60 square feet tenant identification sign: 2100 Crystal Drive, (RPC # 34020020)

Applicant:

Public Broadcasting Service (PBS)

By:

Walsh, Colucci, Lubley, Emrich & Walsh, PC
2200 Clarendon Boulevard, 13th Floor
Arlington, VA 22201

C.M. RECOMMENDATION:

Approve the Site Plan Amendment request to amend the Comprehensive Sign Plan to include one rooftop sign and one tenant identification sign, subject to all previously approved conditions and one (1) new condition.

ISSUES: The applicant requests an additional 174 square feet of sign area to include one rooftop sign and one tenant identification sign for the Public Broadcasting Service, a tenant of the Crystal Plaza project (SP #11). The proposed signs are consistent with Section 34 of the Zoning Ordinance and the *Sign Guidelines for Site Plan Buildings*. There are no issues with the proposed site plan amendment.

SUMMARY: Two tenant identification signs, one of which would be a rooftop sign, are proposed for the Public Broadcasting Service (PBS) a tenant of the Crystal Plaza site plan project in Crystal City. The two signs are proposed as projecting blade signs. There are currently no exterior signs associated with the PBS. The proposed signs would serve as wayfinding signs for patrons of the PBS and provide clear direction in locating the building

County Manager: _____

County Attorney: _____

Staff: Samia Byrd, DCPHD, Planning Division

PLA-4997

entrances currently indistinguishable on Crystal Drive given the close proximity to the retail entrance. Further, there are no approved rooftop signs associated with this Site Plan (SP #11), nor adjacent buildings (2200 and 2300 Crystal Drive) in this side of the street. Signs approved to date are for pedestrian orientation, directional and retail tenant identification. The proposed signs are consistent with the *Sign Guidelines for Site Plan Buildings* and Section 34 of the Zoning Ordinance. Therefore, staff recommends that the site plan amendment be approved, subject to all previously approved conditions and one (1) new condition.

BACKGROUND: A site plan amendment is requested to add to the Crystal Plaza project’s Comprehensive Sign Plan, one rooftop sign and one tenant identification sign for the Public Broadcasting Service (PBS). A major building tenant since 2006, PBS occupies more than five floors in the eleven story building, in addition to the second floor annex with plans for additional expansion to other floors in the building in the near future. The remainder of the building is leased to a subsidiary and sister organization of PBS, the American Public Television Stations membership organization. The applicant requests the signs to clearly identify the location of their offices at the building’s entrances immediately tangent to and confused with the retail entrance by visitors to the PBS.

Site: 2100 Crystal Drive is located between 20th Street South and 23rd Street South, in the Crystal City Metro Station area. The site which encompasses the entire multiple building Crystal Plaza development is bound as follows:

To the north: 20th Street South
To the west: South Clark Street
To the east: Crystal Drive
To the south: 23rd Street South

Zoning: “C-O” Commercial Office Building, Hotel, and Multiple-Family Dwelling Districts; “RA-4.8” Multiple-Family Dwelling Districts.

General Land Use Plan Designation: four-sevenths (4/7) “High” Residential and three-sevenths (3/7) “High” Office –Apartment-Hotel.

Neighborhood: Crystal City; Adjacent to the Aurora Highlands Civic Association.

Existing Development: Approved in 1963, the Crystal Plaza site plan project is a mixed use office complex comprised of six (6) office buildings, ground floor and underground retail and two (2) apartment buildings. A multiple building and site plan project, the building on which the signs are proposed (2100 Crystal Drive) comprises approximately 1,180,025 sq ft of office, 195,047 sq ft of retail and 816,660 sq ft of residential uses.

Proposed Signs: The following table sets forth the statistical summary for the proposed signs.

Sign Type	Sign Dimensions	Area (Sq. Ft)	Text	Height from ASE <i>49.58 ft</i>	Location	Materials
Rooftop Tenant Identification Sign	24'-6" – Length 4'-9" – Width	116.38	"PBS" & organization logo	123.09 ft	East façade, southeast corner of 2100 Crystal Drive	Translucent lexan sign face with white printed film graphic, black letters and B/W logo. Neon tube lighting.
Tenant Identification Sign	17'-3 1/2" – Length 3'-4" – Width	57.64	"PBS" & organization logo	84.58 ft	West façade of 2100 Crystal Drive above the building entrance	Translucent lexan sign face with white printed film graphic, black letters and B/W logo. LED lighting.

The two tenant identification signs would be located at 2100 Crystal Drive. Proposed as projecting blade signs, they would indicate the organization's name "PBS" and associated logo. The proposed rooftop sign would be located approximately 74 feet above grade on the southeast corner of the building's Crystal Drive frontage, between the fifth and seventh floors of the 11-story building (approximately 121.5 ft to roof). The other tenant identification sign would be located along the western façade of the building fronting the interior S. Clark Place, around the second floor just at 35 feet. The faces of both signs are proposed as translucent lexan, with "PBS" printed on graphic film in black letters and the PBS logo, white with black background. The signs would be double sided with blue painted aluminum frames. They would be supported by black stainless steel tubes. Both signs are proposed to be internally illuminated; the rooftop sign with LED lights, the tenant identification sign with neon tubing.

Approved Plans and Policies: Section 34 of the Zoning Ordinance; *Sign Guidelines for Site Plan Buildings*.

DISCUSSION: The Comprehensive Sign Plan for this site plan (Condition #45) defines the number and size of signs allowed for commercial tenants for the entire development which includes multiple buildings with multiple site plan numbers. The Comprehensive Sign Plan was amended by the County Board in 1983, 1989, 1991, 2003, and 2004. The most notable amendments to the Comprehensive Sign Plan include:

- (July 2003) Site Plan Amendment approved an amendment to the Comprehensive Sign Plan for pedestrian way-finding signs, directional signs, parking signs, and address signs. The Amendment reduced the total number of signs from 162 to 142 with a reduction in total sign area from 2,940 sq ft to 2,701 sq ft. This included demolition, refacing and replacement of existing signs plus the addition of new signs.
- (July 2004) Site Plan Amendment approved an amendment to the Comprehensive Sign Plan permitting 1,288 square feet of retail sign area – ground level facades along 20th and 23rd Streets with photographic and text panel signs identifying Underground Shops and directional signs.

Sign Area. For purposes of reviewing the proposed signs for consistency with the *Sign Guidelines for Site Plan Buildings* and Section 34 of the Zoning Ordinance, linear frontage has been calculated for the site plan building on which the signs are proposed as follows:

Building Length @ Street Frontage/Public R-O-W	Linear Feet
East Façade building wall length – 2100 Crystal Drive	205.25
West Façade building wall length – 2100 Crystal Drive	205.25
TOTAL	410.50

As provided in the table above, this measurement is proposed primarily due to the complexity of the site plan project. As part of a larger development complex that includes multiple buildings and multiple site plans, there have been several amendments to the Comprehensive Sign Plan that involved the associated buildings and site plans, but no comprehensive means of tracking signs and sign area for these amendments.¹ In addition, neither the Comprehensive Sign Plan nor any of the associated amendments indicate the amount of sign area permitted for signs specific to individual buildings or site plans of which the project is comprised. And finally, the Comprehensive Sign Plan condition is specific as to pedestrian signs, retail tenant signs and a marquee sign but does not specify requirements with respect to rooftop signs or signs for uses other than retail.

Tenant Identification Sign. The proposed tenant identification sign at 57.64 square feet is within the permitted sign area for the building. The proposed location for the tenant identification sign is the western elevation of the building, which is interior to the site where surrounding uses are a landscaped courtyard, surface parking, access to “the Underground”, and a residential building. Other than a building address sign, there are no other signs on this elevation of the building. The proposed sign would account for only 14% of the total sign area available for the building physically occupy 28% of the building wall frontage. Based on the calculation for linear frontage, this would leave an additional 352.86 square feet of sign area available for this building excluding the approved square footage for retail uses for this complex. Proposed as a projecting blade sign, at 35 feet there would be no impact on the nearby residential building, nor any impact on the public right of way or sidewalk from this sign.

Rooftop Sign. This sign would be located on the eastern elevation, which is the Crystal Drive frontage, which is currently activated with one-to-two stories of retail at the ground floor. There currently exist no rooftop signs on 2100 Crystal Plaza. The rooftop sign proposed at 116.38 square feet is within the permitted sign area, accounting for 28% of the total permitted sign area for rooftop signs for this building. A total of 294 square feet of sign area would remain for rooftop signs. Given the proposed location of the sign on Crystal Drive immediately across from retail and office uses, there would be no impact on residential neighborhoods from this rooftop sign. In addition, the sign proposed as a projecting blade sign would not impact the pedestrian

¹ Based on these most recent approvals for amendments to the Comprehensive Sign Plan for this project, a total of 1,967 feet of building wall length not including the two apartment buildings is associated with this site plan project. This area includes frontage along 20th Street South, Crystal Drive, 23th and Clark Street. Total sign area for the project was reduced with the sign plan amendment approved in 2003 from 2,940 feet to 2,701 feet. In 2004, 1,288 sq feet of sign area was approved for the project for retail frontage.

experience or impose on the public right of way given that the sign would be located approximately 74 feet above the sidewalk and the building wall is set back from the street by one-to-two story retail frontage that wraps the building.

Projecting Signs. The *Sign Guidelines for Site Plan Buildings* provides “in interior areas such as plaza or courtyards, where signs mounted flat on the building would be hard to see, projecting signs and/or awnings should be considered in lieu of a sign band treatment.” The *Sign Guidelines* further indicate, that signs identifying retail tenants located on an interior courtyard or plaza or other exterior location not visible from the public right-of-way adjacent to the major entrance of the building shall be permitted as part of the approved treatment facing the public right of way.” As indicated above, the western elevation of 2100 Crystal Drive where the PBS tenant identification sign is proposed is an interior area, where the building entrance and points of access are not visible from Crystal Drive. On this façade, the proposed sign as a projecting sign would meet the standards set forth in the *Sign Guidelines*. With respect to the PBS rooftop sign proposed on eastern façade fronting Crystal Drive, access to the office from Crystal Drive is unclear given the integration of the entrance within the close proximity to the retail frontage. The elevators and access to the office building are located beyond the retail but with no sign, it is visually difficult to discern where the building entrance is from this exterior location. As the sign is intended therefore to direct patrons to the PBS, a projecting as opposed to a flat mounted sign to provide greater visibility and clarity as to the building entrance location from Crystal Drive would be appropriate and consistent with the provisions of the *Sign Guidelines for Site Plan Buildings*.

Community Process: Staff notified the Aurora Highlands Civic Association regarding the proposed site plan amendment. To date staff has not received any response regarding the proposed signs.

CONCLUSION: The proposed tenant identification signs for the PBS would more clearly direct patrons to the PBS offices, providing visibility for the organization distinguishable from the retail entrances, where none currently exist. The proposed signs are consistent with the *Sign Guidelines for Site Plan Buildings* and the Zoning Ordinance. Therefore staff recommends that the site plan amendment be approved subject to all previously approved conditions and the following new condition:

1. The developer agrees to limit signs on the site to those signs of the comprehensive sign plan as amended and approved by the County Board on July 10, 2004, as such comprehensive sign plan may be amended from time to time, including one tenant identification sign and one rooftop sign approved by the County Board on June 17, 2008 for the Crystal Plaza building located at 2100 Crystal Drive (SP#11). The developer agrees that the total sign area permitted for all signs other than rooftop signs for the Crystal Plaza project building at 2100 Crystal Drive (SP #11) and excluding pedestrian signs, retail tenant signs and a marquee sign and other signs as approved for the Crystal City Wayfinding Sign Program consistent with Condition #45, shall not exceed 410.50 square feet. This total includes 56.74 square feet permitted for one (1) tenant identification sign located on the western façade of the building identified as 2100

Crystal Drive (SP #11). The developer further agrees that the total sign area permitted for rooftop signs for the Crystal Plaza project building at 2100 Crystal Drive (SP #11) shall not exceed 410.50 square feet. This includes 116.38 square feet permitted for one rooftop level sign permitted and located on the eastern facade of the building identified as 2100 Crystal Drive under SP #11.

The signs shall be of the same materials, dimensions, text and location as shown on the plans dated May 12, 2008, and presented to and approved by the County Board on June 17, 2008, and prepared by Gensler. The signs shall be illuminated only as shown on the drawings dated 05/12/08 with the hours of illumination being from dusk, to 12:00 midnight, seven days a week.

Minor changes to the approved rooftop signs may be approved administratively by the Zoning Administrator. For the purposes of the preceding sentence, minor changes shall include only the following: (i) a minor adjustment in the location of the sign to meet field conditions (less than 1 foot in any direction); or (ii) a minor change in the area of the sign (less than 5%). All other changes to the approved rooftop signs will require site plan approval or amendment.

PREVIOUS COUNTY BOARD ACTIONS:

- August 10, 1963 Approved a rezoning from "M-2" to "C-O."
Approved a site plan (SP #11) for a six-building office complex.
- April 4, 1964 Approved a site plan amendment (SP #11) to modify subdivision lines, reduce building heights and bulk, and modify location of parking.
- December 12, 1964 Approved rezoning a portion of site from "C-O" to "RA-4.8" (2021 & 2201 Jeff. Davis Hwy.).
Approved a site plan amendment (SP #11) to add two residential buildings to the approved site plan.
- March 6, 1965 Approved a GLUP Amendment from "Industrial" to "Offices and Apartments."
- April 10, 1965 Approved a site plan amendment (SP #11) for the office building complex regarding parking.
- July 24, 1965 Approved a site plan amendment (SP #11) for a temporary building to house model apartments.
- September 11, 1965 Approved a site plan amendment (SP #11) for a sign for the temporary building.
- December 18, 1965 Approved a site plan amendment (SP #11) to increase the size of the four office buildings and an option to construct a parking deck.
- June 4, 1966 Approved a site plan amendment (SP #11) to revise the parking, and construct a 6,080 square foot ice skating rink on the first basement level, two (2) machinery areas and a 1,440 square foot equipment room on the second basement level.
- July 30, 1966 Approved a site plan amendment (SP #11) for signage for the residential buildings.
- September 10, 1966 Approved a site plan amendment (SP #11) for the Crystal Plaza South residential building to convert 2 units to a dental office and a central telephone exchange.

December 3, 1966	Approved a site plan amendment (SP #11) to convert 2,330 square feet of parking to an expanded telephone equipment room.
June 17, 1967	Approved a site plan amendment (SP #11) for identification and directional signage for Crystal Plaza.
July 15, 1967	Approved a site plan amendment (SP #11) to modify the building alignment of office buildings 1 and 2.
September 23, 1967	Approved a site plan amendment (SP #11) for signs for office buildings 3 and 4.
February 9, 1974	Approved a GLUP Amendment from "Offices and Apartments" to 4/7ths "High" Residential and 3/7ths "High" Office-Apartment-Hotel with a maximum office F.A.R. of 1.5.
November 9, 1974	Approved a site plan amendment (SP #11) for a temporary billboard.
July 7, 1979	Approved a site plan amendment (SP #11) to permit designated space on the plaza levels for use by profit and non-profit organizations, and for directional signs.
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.
May 7, 1983	Approved a site plan amendment (SP #11) for the parking deck.
July 8, 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.

- 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.
- January 16, 1993 Deferred a site plan amendment (SP #11) for a four-story addition and associated improvements to the March 6, 1993 County Board meeting.
- March 6, 1993 Deferred a site plan amendment (SP #11) for a four-story addition and associated improvements to the April 3, 1993 County Board meeting.
- April 3, 1993 Deferred a site plan amendment (SP #11) for a four-story addition and associated improvements to the July 10, 1993 County Board meeting.
- July 13, 1993 Deferred a site plan amendment (SP #11) for a four-story addition and associated improvements to the September 11, 1993 County Board meeting.
- September 11, 1993 Deferred a site plan amendment (SP #11) for a four-story addition and associated improvements to the March 1994 County Board meeting.
- March 5, 1994 Deferred a site plan amendment (SP #11) for a four-story addition and associated improvements to the June 4, 1994 County Board meeting.
- June 4, 1994 Deferred a site plan amendment (SP #11) for a four-story addition and associated improvements to the September 10, 1994 County Board meeting.
- September 10, 1994 Approved a site plan amendment (SP #11) for a four-story addition and associated improvements
- May 17, 1997 Approved site plan amendment (SP #11) for conversion of approximately 1,103 square feet of retail area to office space for a period not to exceed five years.

- November 13, 1999 Approved site plan amendment (SP #11) to convert approximately 3,748 square feet of retail space into an educational institution.
- March 11, 2000 Deferred site plan amendment (SP #11) for renovations to 23rd Street South street facade of the Crystal Plaza Five and Crystal Plaza Six, including modifications to Crystal City Shops and garage entrances along 23rd Street South, and an associated comprehensive sign plan including banners.
- May 20, 2000 Deferred site plan amendment (SP #11) for renovations to 23rd Street South street facade of the Crystal Plaza Five and Crystal Plaza Six, including modifications to Crystal City Shops and garage entrances along 23rd Street South, and an associated comprehensive sign plan including banners.
- July 22, 2000 Deferred site plan amendment (SP #11) for renovations to 23rd Street South street facade of the Crystal Plaza Five and Crystal Plaza Six, including modifications to Crystal City Shops and garage entrances along 23rd Street South, and an associated comprehensive sign plan including banners.
- October 7, 2000 Accepted withdrawal of a site plan amendment for renovations, and a comprehensive sign plan for Crystal Plaza Five and Crystal Plaza Six.
- February 10, 2001 Deferred General Land Use Plan amendment to change the striping pattern from 3/7 "High" Office-Apartment-Hotel and 4/7 "High Residential to 3/5 "High" Office-Apartment-Hotel and 2/5 "High Residential".
- Deferred Master Transportation Plan amendment concerning changes in the number of through lanes, deleting pedestrian overpasses, and deleting a bike trail.
- March 17, 2001 Deferred General Land Use Plan amendment to

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change the striping pattern from 3/7 “High” Office-Apartment-Hotel and 4/7 “ High Residential to 3/5 “High” Office-Apartment-Hotel and 2/5 “High Residential”.

April 21, 2001

Deferred General Land Use Plan amendment to change the striping pattern from 3/7 “High” Office-Apartment-Hotel and 4/7 “ High Residential to 3/5 “High” Office-Apartment-Hotel and 2/5 “High Residential”.

May 9, 2001

Approved conversion of office space to educational use for the University of Oklahoma at the Crystal Plaza Arcade.

May 19, 2001

Approved a site plan amendment to add approximately 134,050 square feet of retail use, convert approximately 24,314 square feet of office use to retail use, and add approximately 84,034 square feet of office use, modification of use regulations for loading, density, open space and parking including number, percentage of compact spaces, tandem spaces, and a comprehensive sign plan.

March 15, 2003

Deferred Site Plan Amendment SP #11 for installation of a building identification rooftop sign at 2111 South Jefferson Davis Highway to April 2003.

April 26, 2003

Deferred Site Plan Amendment SP #11 for installation of a building identification rooftop sign at 2111 South Jefferson Davis Highway to June 2003.

June 17, 2003

Approved a site plan for installation of a building identification rooftop sign (back-lit rooftop building identification sign with a sign area of 150 square feet mounted on the west elevation of Crystal Plaza Apartments.

July 19, 2003

Approved a site plan to amend a comprehensive sign plan for SP #11.

March 13, 2004

Approved site plan amendments to delete pedestrian

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bridges.

June 15, 2004

Approved the placement of neighborhood banners on street light poles within Crystal City Metro Station area.

July 10, 2004

Approved a site plan to amend a comprehensive sign plan for SP #11.

October 15, 2005

Approved a site plan amendment to continue an educational use in approx 3,748 sq. ft. of retail space and approx. 3,500 sq. ft. on fifth floor, and expand into approx. 4,475 sq. ft. on the first floor located at 2001 S. Clark St. with County Board review in five year (2010).

July 8, 2006

Approved renewal of site plan amendment for the University of Oklahoma to continue education use within a space designated for retail use within Crystal Plaza subject to one revised condition, which applies solely to the Site plan amendment, and with a review by the County Board in five (5) years (April 2011)