

DESIGNING CC2DCA: PRIORITIZING ICONIC, IMPACTFUL DESIGN AND SEAMLESS PEDESTRIAN CONNECTIVITY

CC2DCA Design Priorities of the NATIONAL LANDING BID

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INTRODUCTION

The Crystal City to Reagan Washington National Airport Intermodal Connector (CC2DCA) will be the first pedestrian bridge of its kind connecting a downtown “main street” to a major airport.

CC2DCA will also integrate direct access to major rail services like Amtrak, Metro, Virginia Railway Express (VRE), and eventually, Maryland Area Rail Commuter (MARC) service, transforming National Landing's Crystal City neighborhood into a leading intermodal hub. The promise of this unprecedented level of urban mobility and mode integration has already attracted major private sector investments and will unlock additional economic development opportunities once constructed. As such, this critical piece of urban infrastructure demands a level of design excellence befitting such a transformational project.

The purpose of this document is to highlight for Arlington County and other interested parties the design priorities for CC2DCA of the National Landing Business Improvement District (BID) and its stakeholders, including commercial and residential property owners, hotels, corporations, institutions, and small businesses. By focusing on user experience, connectivity, and iconic design, CC2DCA can realize a once-in-a-generation infrastructure opportunity and serve as Arlington's featured landmark in National Landing, ultimately defining the area's identity, strengthening transportation, and driving economic advantage for years to come.



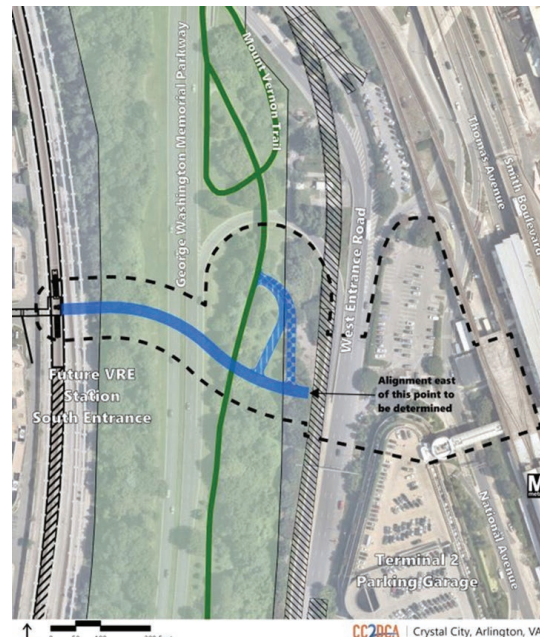
Rendering from the BID's 2018 Feasibility Study which envisioned an iconic design from the outset, commensurate with the groundbreaking nature of this facility.

BACKGROUND

CC2DCA is one of many interconnected transportation projects that are part of the vision for mobility infrastructure that will make National Landing the nation's most connected downtown.

Initially conceived by the National Landing BID in 2018 through a feasibility study, CC2DCA presented a unique opportunity to create easy and direct pedestrian access between National Landing's Crystal City neighborhood and National Airport (DCA). In the summer of 2021, Arlington County launched the National Environmental Protection Act (NEPA) process to evaluate several proposed alternatives for the project. In 2022, the County identified a preferred alternative alignment and bridge type to secure the connection to DCA. The preferred alignment begins at the future relocated commuter rail station at 2011 Crystal Drive and extends to the Metro lobby at DCA, providing a direct airport connection to Crystal Drive, VRE, Amtrak and anticipated MARC service at National Landing Station, and the Mount Vernon Trail. Once completed, the journey from the foot of the bridge in Crystal City to the newly constructed security check point at Terminal 2 at DCA is estimated to be about 1,200 feet, or a roughly five-minute walk.

The project is fully funded at an estimated cost of \$57.2m and has received full approval under the NEPA process. In January 2025, Arlington County initiated public engagement on the bridge's design. This document will be submitted to Arlington County as part of that initiative with the goal of ensuring that the priorities of local stakeholders will help to shape the ultimate design of this critical connection.



Alignment CC2DCA per NEPA allows for a roughly 1,200 ft pedestrian connection from Crystal Drive to DCA

CHAMPIONING ICONIC DESIGN

In 2024, the National Landing BID initiated a series of interactive workshops with National Landing business community stakeholders facilitated by Perkins Eastman to understand core elements of CC2DCA's design that should be prioritized.

The themes of pedestrian-centric functionality, integrated rail accessibility, and iconic design emerged as key principles—creating a bridge that not only serves practical needs but also enhances the overall user experience and delivers civic pride through design excellence.

The design principles outlined in this document reflect these goals and offer a roadmap to deliver a bridge that is both functional and visually striking. The BID will champion the following conceptual design priorities during Arlington County's 2025 public engagement on CC2DCA design.



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DESIGN PRIORITIES:

- 1 Pedestrian Priority
- 2 Easy Navigation, Clear Pathway
- 3 Lush Landscape Integration
- 4 Articulated Canopy as an Architectural Feature
- 5 Well-Lit and Inviting at Night
- 6 Attractive Seating
- 7 Designated Viewpoint Areas and Continuous Views

PRINCIPLE 1

CC2DCA's bridge deck design is inviting to pedestrians as a well-lit, landscaped connection incorporating a continuous canopy.

The bridge's deck design must reflect the needs of expected users: business travelers, tourists, and residents. The design, while allowing bicyclists and scooters, must prioritize pedestrian comfort and safety by using design elements to slow speeds and favor circulation for those who are walking. The approximately 20-foot-wide path creates space constraints, and all users will need to safely and easily utilize the bridge, including those who may be walking with carry-on bags, riding scooters or those who want to sit and linger on benches within designated viewpoint areas. Well-lit and visible signage will help users easily navigate to and from Crystal Drive and DCA. A landscaped pathway will make the bridge more inviting and an extension of the parkland it traverses.



DESIGN PRIORITIES:

- 1 Visually Striking Canopy Treatment
- 2 Iconic Modern Architecture that Creates a New Landmark
- 3 Public Art Integration
- 4 Contiguous Facility with Sinuous Design
- 5 Seamless Integration with Rail Station, Mount Vernon Trail, and Metro

PRINCIPLE 2

CC2DCA's design connects Crystal City and DCA as one contiguous, iconic facility with a striking, modern design that builds civic pride.

CC2DCA will stitch National Landing and DCA together while providing a seamless connection to several transportation facilities: VRE's planned National Landing Station, the Mount Vernon Trail, Metro and DCA. While these facilities are controlled by separate entities, the public will experience them as one contiguous facility. The iconic signature canopy and sinuous alignment offers solar and weather protection while serving as an attractive National Landing landmark. The underside of the connector's canopy should allow users to experience its dynamic, sinuous design through material, alignment, and color. Public art integrated into architecture might be one approach to ensure captivating design. CC2DCA must read as a striking and memorable design from a distance and above to convey its architectural significance and elevate civic pride, creating a new landmark for Arlington.



PRINCIPLE 3

CC2DCA's design complements and enhances Parkway setting.

A view of the bridge from the George Washington Parkway seamlessly integrates the connector's piers with soft and elegant design features. Its prominent girder bridge columns anchor the bridge while lush, mature greenery from the Parkway surrounds the bridge. CC2DCA will be monumental and context-enhancing like the many bridges that span National Park Service property in the DC region. CC2DCA should create a meaningful relationship between the bridge and the parkland context by employing biophilic design with plantings along the deck and opportunities to take in views of the Parkway itself.



DESIGN PRIORITIES:

- 1 Inviting Entry Design and Sense of Arrival
- 2 Inclusion of Escalator Set
- 3 Secondary Elevator
- 4 Articulated Canopy Tied into Bridge Design
- 5 Lighting, Signage, and Greenery

PRINCIPLE 4

CC2DCA connects to Crystal Drive through a highly accessible, well-designed entrance with escalator and elevator access.

This “west landing” for the bridge is technically under VRE’s purview as part of their National Landing Station project and is envisioned to function as the main entry point for the bridge’s users. Its design must be an architecturally significant arrival for users—expressive canopy, street activated retail fronts, lighting, wayfinding signage, and dynamic greenery – while embracing a consistent design aesthetic with the rest of the bridge. To ensure accessibility and meet industry best-practices, CC2DCA should include a set of escalators and a second elevator for redundancy.



CONCLUSION

The CC2DCA bridge is set to become a key piece of infrastructure that enhances connectivity and the user experience in the National Landing area. By incorporating these critical design priorities, supported by National Landing's business stakeholders, the BID expects this project will not only serve its practical purpose but also contribute to the area's identity as a vibrant and accessible urban hub. CC2DCA will stand as a testament to thoughtful, user-centered design, fostering seamless integration between National Landing and DCA.



**VISIT nationallanding.org/cc2dca
for more information**

The information contained within this document is neither a work product of Arlington County nor VDOT. This document is the result of work by the National Landing BID and its consultant, funded solely by the BID. As Arlington County commences its public engagement to inform the design of CC2DCA, this report will be one of numerous inputs for consideration and evaluation.