

CLIMATE CHANGE, ENERGY AND ENVIRONMENT COMMISSION

**c/o Department of Environmental Services
2100 Clarendon Blvd., Suite 705
Arlington, VA 22201**

October 29, 2024

Honorable Libby Garvey, Chair
Arlington County Board
2100 Clarendon Blvd., Suite 300
Arlington, VA 22201

Re: Crystal Houses 7 and 8 (1900 S. Eads Street)

Dear Chair Garvey:

The Climate Change, Energy and Environment Commission (C2E2) has reviewed the application for Crystal Houses 7 and 8 (1900 S. Eads St.). This project consists of 42 townhomes for sale to individual owners, part of the much larger project Crystal Houses 1-8, which otherwise consists of multifamily rental high-rise housing.

On balance, we score this project at 74%, a fairly strong score, and recommend approval of the project. Please note that this project is a bit different from those C2E2 generally reviews because each home will be separately owned and some sustainability decisions will be left to the individual homeowner. Thus, our score for this project is not strictly comparable to our scores for other projects on an apples-to-apples basis. The Appendix contains further detail on how C2E2 has assessed this project.

Overall, we applaud that the townhomes will be all-electric, including HVAC, hot water heating, cooking, and even fireplaces. Also, the parking for each townhome will be EV-ready and the wiring for solar panels will be available should the homeowner wish to apply for solar tax credits. We believe the increased density in this transit-rich area, as compared to the townhome project previously approved for this site in 2019, makes good sense from a sustainability perspective.

As areas where the project could have scored higher, the project is targeting an EarthCraft Gold certification, which will require many standards C2E2 looks for, such as reduction of embodied carbon during construction and energy efficiency achievements. However, to achieve the County's stated targets, C2E2 recommends that all projects strive to achieve a Platinum rating under the standards they choose (e.g., EarthCraft, LEED).

Further, we would like to see the tree canopy be greater, but recognize the limitations of the site, and note that the applicant states that it is currently updating its biophilia plan to include more plants that are native, avoid invasives, and seek plantings adapted to climate zones south of the mid-Atlantic to assure the plantings can survive as the climate warms, a sadly advisable forethought.

In sum, we appreciate the effort of the developer to bring forward all-electric homes with a HERS energy efficiency score of 62, which will benefit both the individual homeowners and the County as a whole, and we recommend approval of the project.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Cindy Lewin". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Cindy Lewin
Chair, Climate Change, Energy and Environment Commission

cc: Sara Steinberger, Chair, Planning Commission
Tenley Peterson, Vice Chair, Planning Commission and SPRC Chair
Anthony Fusarelli, CPHD Director
Emma Martin, CPHD Staff

