

# Livability 22202

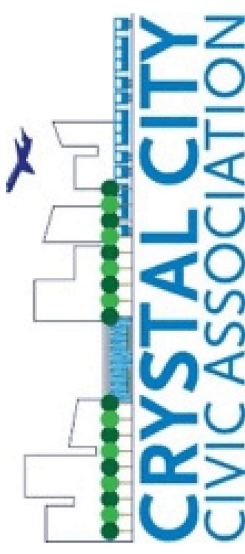
Developing better, more livable neighborhoods in and around Pentagon City and Crystal City.



<http://livability22202.org>



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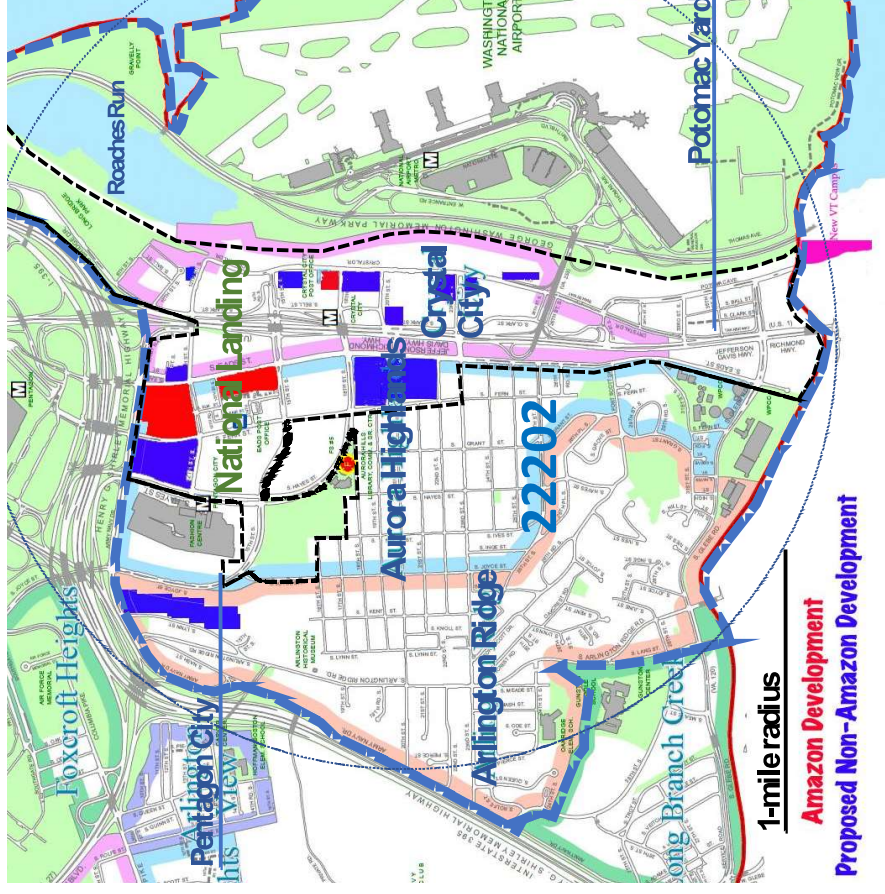


# Livability22202 Open Space Working Group

- Livability22202 is the work of the 3 civic associations of 22202 – Arlington Ridge, Aurora Highlands, and Crystal City.
  - Purpose: tackle the challenges facing our area with holistic strategies based on shared livability themes to create a better, more livable city.
  - Framework and Action Plan: designed to work within existing county plans and policies; aim to establish consensus-driven themes while allowing for creativity by residents, businesses, and developers.
- The Open Space Working Group began with a February 22, 2020, workshop attended by 65 community members and experts on 4 topics:
  - Connecting residents to the natural world and enhancing biodiversity throughout 22202
  - Re-envisioning Virginia Highlands Park as the backyard for the Pentagon City community

• Developing a holistic approach to planning Crystal City Parks

• Exploring the possibility for a nature trail extending from Roaches Run Waterfowl Sanctuary through the wooded parcel along the George Washington Parkway to the southern end of Crystal City



Area / Year	Population	Projected Population		Projected Change %	
		2010	2020	2010-2020	2020-2045
RB Corridor	47,000	59,100	78,700	26%	33%
RI 1 Corridor	17,400	21,200	32,100	22%	51%
Columbia Pike	36,000	42,200	68,700	17%	63%
Other areas	107,300	115,800	121,700	8%	5%
Arlington Cty	207,700	238,300	301,200	15%	26%

## *Open Space Challenges and Opportunities in 22202*

- **Challenges:**
  - Relying on acquisition of new parkland is unlikely to keep pace with the rate of population growth.
  - Existing County parks in 22202 are not well matched to the needs of a residential population that increasingly lives in high-density housing.
- **Solutions:**
  - Improving access to land that is currently inaccessible,
  - Squeezing usable square footage out of “wasted space”
  - Partnering with landowners for public use of private spaces
  - Promoting the evolution of existing parks to meet the needs of the present and future residents.
- **Requires an integrated holistic planning approach to strengthen connectivity, natural ecosystems, and community-building**



# *Open Space Report Recommendations*

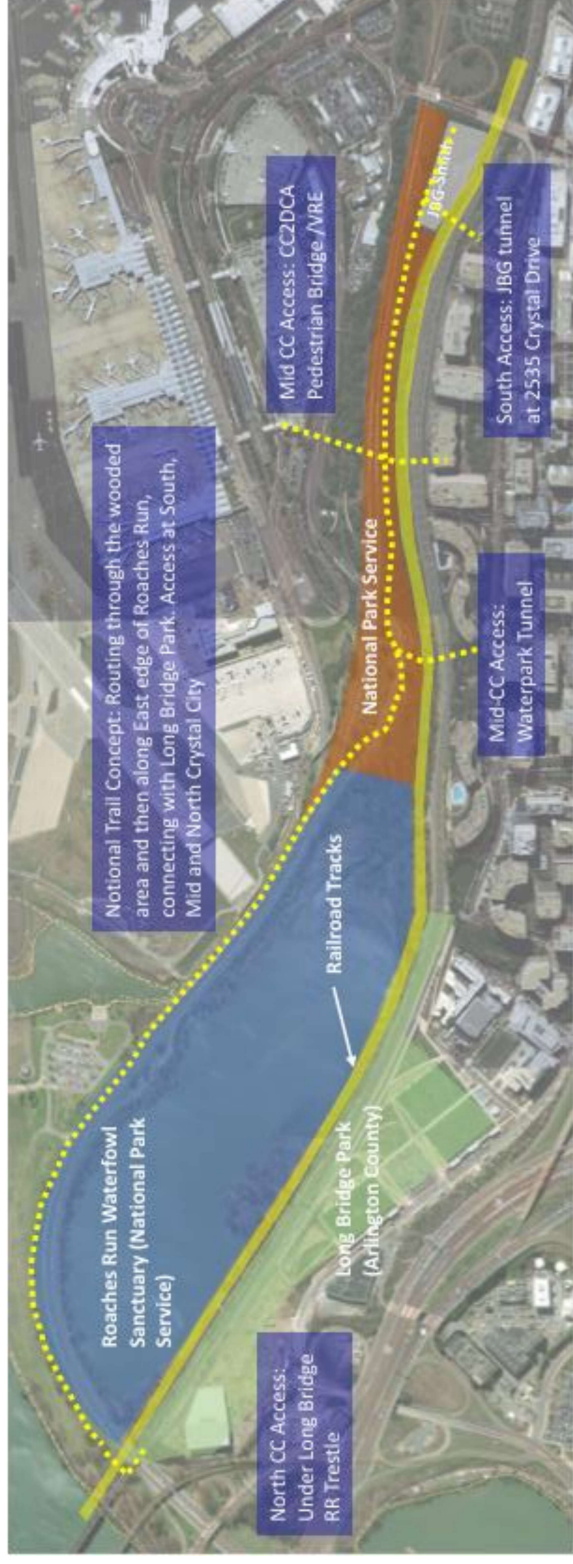
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- Improve hostile pedestrian environments and develop walking/biking loops throughout 22202
- Promote connectivity of open spaces from Arlington Ridge to Crystal City and Long Bridge Park
- Connect Crystal City to the natural areas of Roaches Run on the east side of the railroad right of way
- Identify goals for natural systems: reduce heat island effects, mitigate stormwater impacts, provide wildlife habitat, incorporate solar energy
- Increase shade trees, plant natives, and use plantings to provide seasonal color and interest year-round

***Open Space Report available at [Livability22202.org](http://Livability22202.org)***



# Open Space: Roaches Run



- Roaches Run Waterfowl Sanctuary and adjacent wooded area form a long linear contiguous natural space
- Recommendation: Develop a greenway between the GW Memorial Parkway and the railroad tracks from the south end of Crystal City to Roaches Run
  - Walking trail loop with multiple access points from Crystal City
  - Integrated into an overall system of pedestrian greenways in 22202
  - An extension of a 2012 NPS plan for Roaches Run
  - Multiple custodians and owners: CSX, JBG Smith and National Park Service



# Open Space: Virginia Highlands Park (VHP)

“The traditional parks of the past do not serve the needs of the present or future.”

--- Trust for Public Land in its 2017 *Field guide for Placemaking in Public Parks*,



- One of the largest public parks in Arlington (18 acres)
- Traditional park with underutilized and wasted space;
- Long-standing local (AHCA) efforts to improve VHP
- County VHP Master Planning on hold (removed from FY21 CIP)
- Working group brainstormed programming and project recommendations in interim



- Naming Map conceptualized to start thinking about the park differently
- Piloting new programming ideas in the park
- AHCA Community Engagement on Softball fields
- Friend of Urban Agriculture Highlands Urban Garden (HUG)

# Open Space: Crystal City Parks

The Arlington County Crystal City Sector Plan, adopted in September 2010, identified 26 urban parks, all private.

## **Five Crystal City parks discussed in the workshop**

*[to be considered with upcoming site plan applications for potential transfer of ownership from JBG Smith to the County]*

- 1. Center Park**
  - (1900 Crystal Drive/S Bell Street) - 74,200 sf/1.7 acres
- 2. Gateway Park**
  - (12<sup>th</sup> and Crystal Drive) - 54,500 sf/1.25 acres
- 3. Metro Market Square**
  - 18<sup>th</sup> Street, 43,900 sf/1.0 acre
- 4. Crystal Park**
  - (2525 Crystal Drive) - 38,000 sf/0.87 acres
- 5. 23<sup>rd</sup> Street Plaza**
  - 15,000 sf/0.34 acres

## *Open Space: Crystal City Parks Outcomes of group's discussion and walking tour:*

- Metro Entrance Plaza
  - Could be made more attractive with a wall mural, trees, and plants.
- Dog Park
  - A temporary dog park above the Metro Entrance Plaza down the slope where the vehicle ramp to Route 1 has been removed.
- 15th Street Garden Park (33,500 sf/0.77 acres)
  - Under consideration by the County for redevelopment on north side of street
- Parks feel isolated and unconnected;
  - Important goals are to link pedestrian circulation between the parks and create a sense that the parks form an overall network of open spaces in Crystal City





# *Open Space: Connecting Residents to Nature Findings and Recommendations*

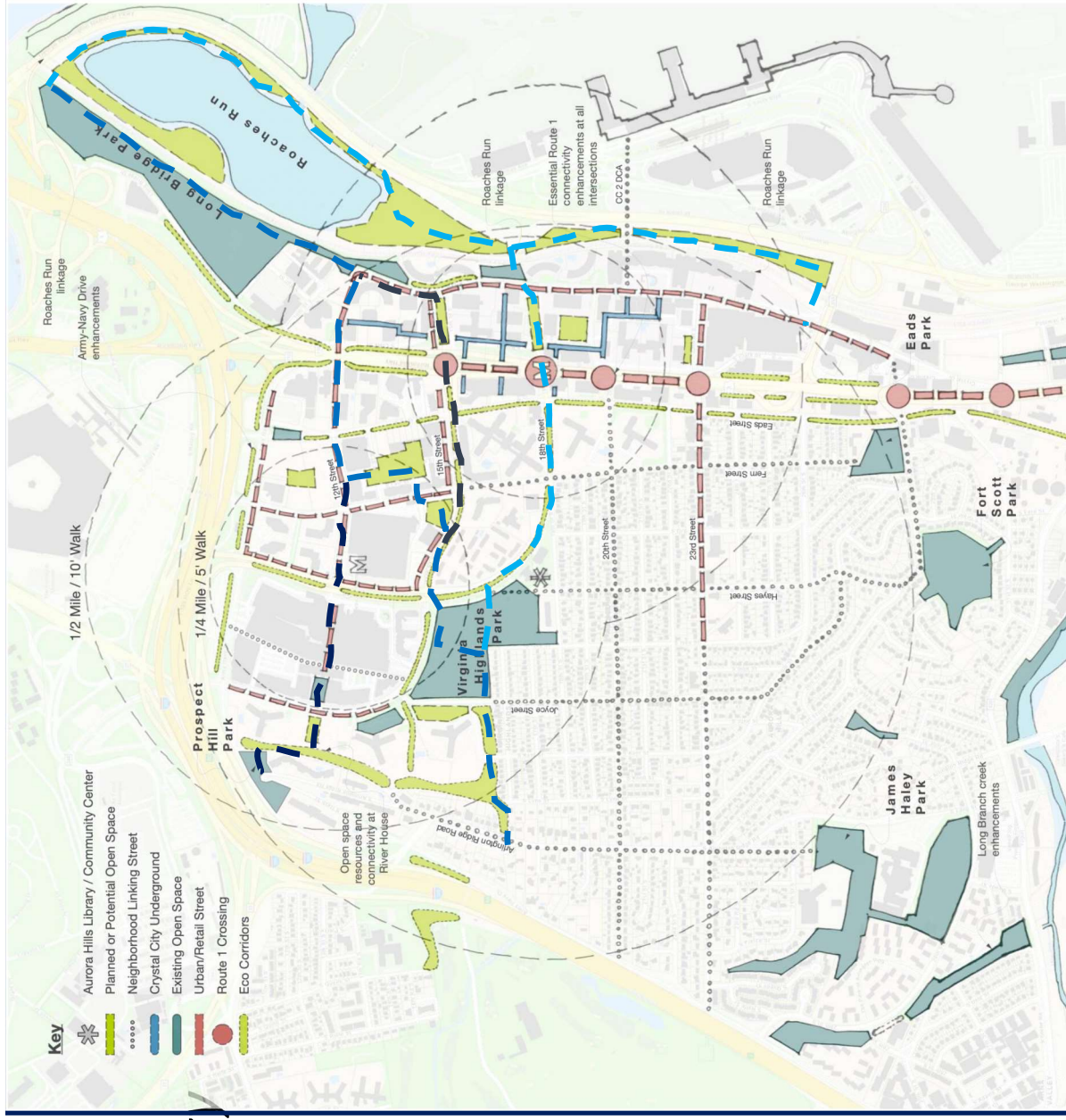
- Develop walking/biking loops around the entire area, and within neighborhoods in 22202
- Connect PenPlace to Long Bridge Park
- Connect Crystal City to the natural areas on the east side of the railroad
- Identify goals for natural systems: pollinators, tree cover/heat island reduction, storm water/drainage, solar access
- Add plantings to provide seasonal color and interest year-round
- Connect various green spaces together
- Increase shade trees
- Improve hostile pedestrian environments



# Livability2202 Connectivity Map

• Need for better connectivity was emphasized by community in Livability2202 Workshops in 2019-2020

- Connect the neighborhoods
- Initiate and sustain community
- Reduce reliance on car
- Increase pedestrian safety
- Better connection with nature
- Connectivity among open spaces, residences, community facilities, transit nodes, and retail high streets
- Create connectivity with biophilic characteristics
  - Extend a park-like feel along the connections
  - Not always aligned with the street grid
  - Increase opportunities for engagement with nature
  - Consider ecological characteristics as well



# *Open Space Engagements and Issues 2021*

- Pentagon City Phased Development Site Plan Update
  - Design guidelines – upcoming Phase 3
  - Amazon HQ and Riverhouse: Initial design implementations of principles and design guidelines
- Crystal City
  - Definition of Open space: the need for open space dedicated to casual use, nature walks, and connected trails.
  - Water Park
  - 2000/2001 pedestrian walkway
  - CCSP open space implementation
- Route 1 Feasibility Study
  - Improving the safety and quality of pedestrian and bicycle east-west connectivity across Route 1
- Virginia Highlands
  - Community activation of softball fields (AHCA)
  - Friends of Urban Agriculture Demonstration Garden (HUG)

***Livability is a collaborative effort among residents, developers, county staff and commissions***



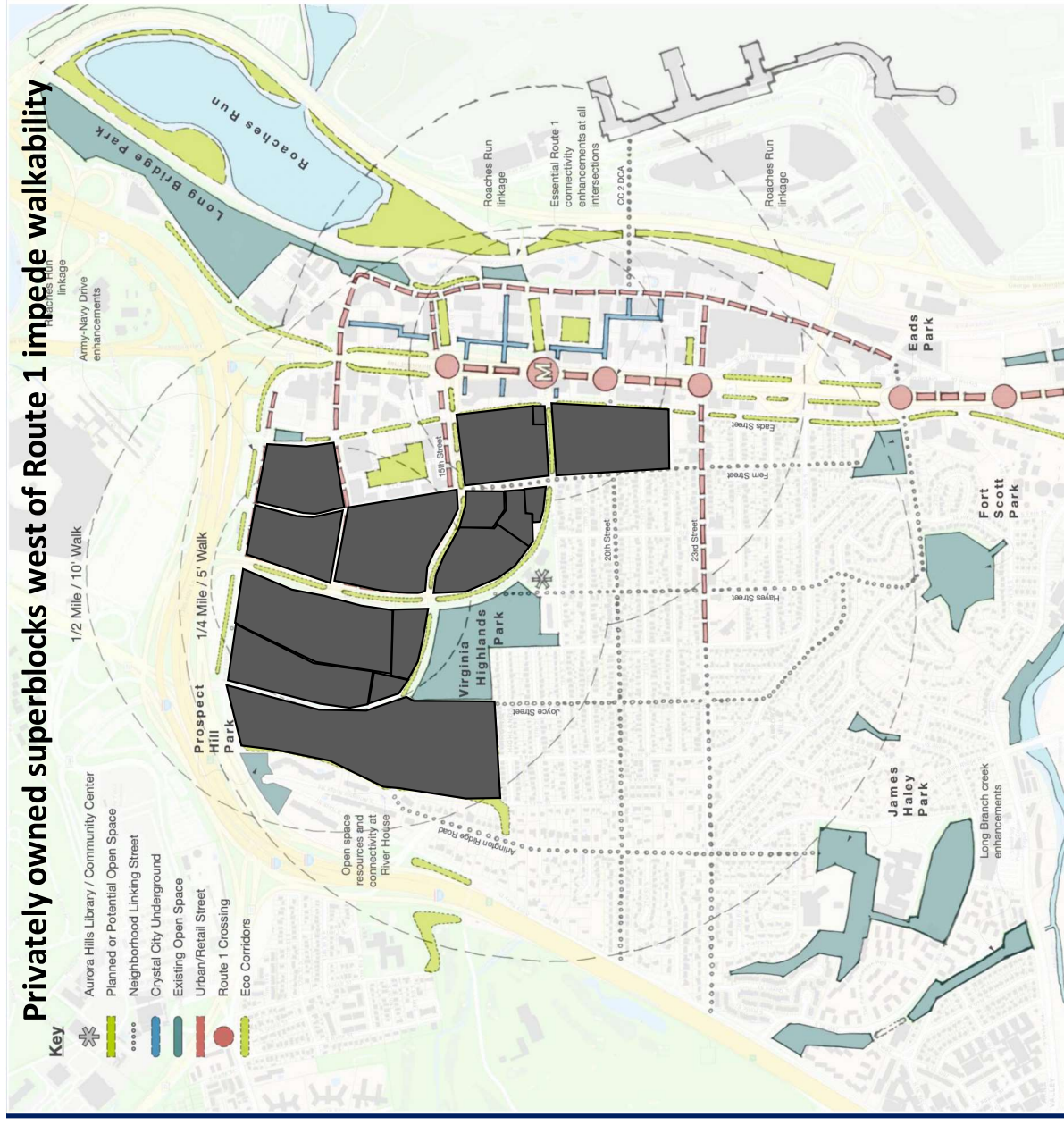
*Extra slides – if we have 15 minutes, ~ probably need <8 slides of content*

## *Connecting residents to the natural world and enhancing biodiversity throughout 22202*

- Pedestrian routes should have biophilic characteristics and support the local ecology.
- Eco-corridors would have a particular focus on these qualities.
- The following characteristics might be considered:
  - Provides physical, visual, and acoustic separation from the road and built environment; one should hear birdsong on a biophilic walking path
  - Dispenses with rectilinear and uniform spacing characteristics – paths meander and trees are irregularly spaced to provide a more natural aesthetic
  - Consists of native trees and plantings, with county arborist support to ensure long, healthy life span
  - Supports native wildlife, including butterflies, bees, birds, and other animals
  - Highlights seasonality in the design and selection of the trail elements

## Connectivity Challenges and Opportunities

- Challenges:
  - Privately owned superblocks impede walkability
  - Impedes access to public infrastructure such as Pentagon City Metro
  - Legal protection for public access is not well-codified
  - Access, through superblocks, when provided, is often grudging and not coordinated
  - Difficult to acquire additional open space in 22202
  - Land is expensive and not available
- Opportunities
  - Existing county owned open spaces and existing trails network among them provide the critical nodes
  - Improving access to open spaces and providing park-like connectivity among them will enhance the open spaces
  - DPR expertise in forestry, ecological sustainability and growing expertise in biophilia is key to achieving high quality connectivity beyond the formal county park boundaries





**Naming map of potential  
utilization areas and amenities**



## *Specific Projects Considered*

- An urban agriculture demonstration garden in collaboration with Friends Of Urban Agriculture (Highlands Urban Garden or HUG) (in progress)
- Improvements to the SW corner of Hayes and 15th St to create a welcoming gateway to the park and for temporary events (proposed)
- Temporary use of soccer field for events (approved by County) with a power source, possibly with a festival tent and overhead lights and movable chairs, benches, and tables (both partially funded by JBG)
- Signage and wayfinding (proposed)
- Temporary dog park (aka “The Dog House”)
  - *Already in progress through Pentagon City Dogs and funded by Amazon.*



# Open Space: Roaches Run

- **Status**
  - JBG Roaches Run offer tied to 2525 Crystal Drive Site Plan
    - *On hold pending outcome of building height study*
- **Possible Next Steps**
  - Community clean up day next March or April (Annual Potomac River Clean-Up)
  - Community outreach to determine the balance between community access and support for eco-system
  - Engage Arlington County, Commissions, Property Owners to bring their technical expertise to the development of this open space
- **Other activities to consider are:**
  - Seeding wild rice for birds may be supportive of the migrating and overwintering birds
  - A survey of the flora and fauna
  - An invasive species removal activity



# Open Space: Connecting Residents to Nature

What distinguishes a biophilic walking path from a standard sidewalk streetscape? There is no standard, nor it is in the biophilic ethos to prescribe one because these must be attentive to the specific local environment. For the 22202 community, we might consider the following characteristics:

1. Provides physical, visual and acoustic separation from the road and built environment - one should hear birdsong on a biophilic walking path
2. Achieves connectivity among open spaces
3. Dispenses with rectilinear and uniform spacing characteristics - paths meander and trees are irregularly spaced to provide a more natural aesthetic
4. Consists of native trees and plantings, with county arborist support to ensure long, healthy life span
5. Supports native wildlife, including butterflies, bees, birds and other animals.
6. Highlights seasonality in the design and selection of the trail elements.
7. Promotes accessibility
8. Provides a common design characteristic that ties the network together

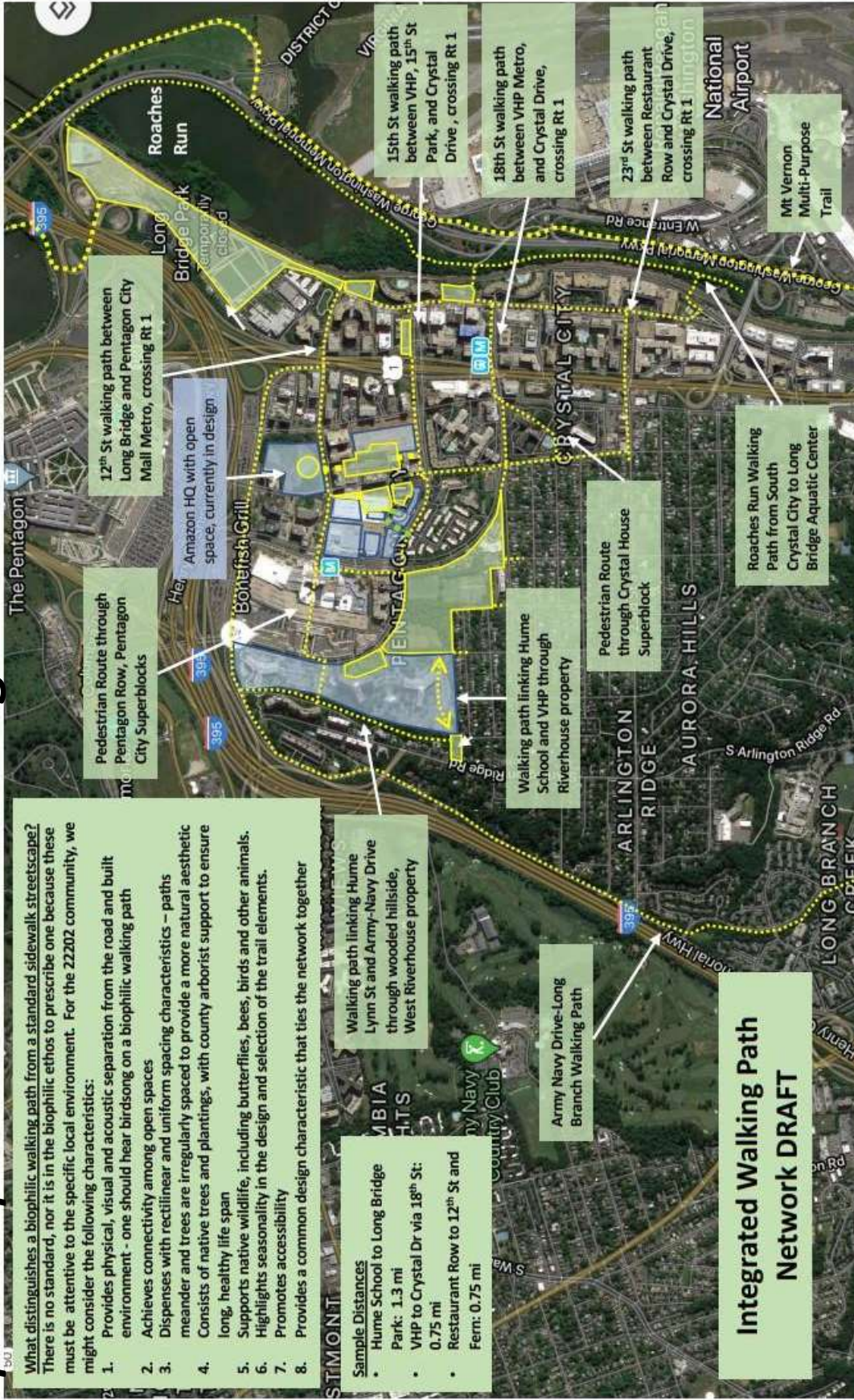
**Sample Distances**

- Hume School to Long Bridge Park: 1.3 mi
- VHP to Crystal Dr via 18<sup>th</sup> St: 0.75 mi
- Restaurant Row to 12<sup>th</sup> St and Fern: 0.75 mi

Walking path linking Hume Lynn St and Army-Navy Drive through wooded hillside, West Riverhouse property

Army Navy Drive-Long Branch Walking Path

**Integrated Walking Path Network DRAFT**



# *Issues*

- Definition of Open space: the need for open space dedicated to casual use, nature walks, and connected trails.
- Water Park
- 2000/2001 pedestrian walkway
- CCSP open space