# NEPA PROCESS

## Why NEPA?

The National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA) process is required for the Potomac Yard Metrorail Station in order for the project to be eligible for federal funding. NEPA is also required because some of the alternatives may affect the federally owned George Washington Memorial Parkway, which is administered by the National Park Service (NPS).

## What is NEPA?

NEPA requires federal agencies to undertake an assessment of the environmental effects of their proposed actions and reasonable alternatives to those actions. The NEPA process is meant to help public officials make better informed decisions, and to enable community involvement in those decisions.

## Who's Involved?

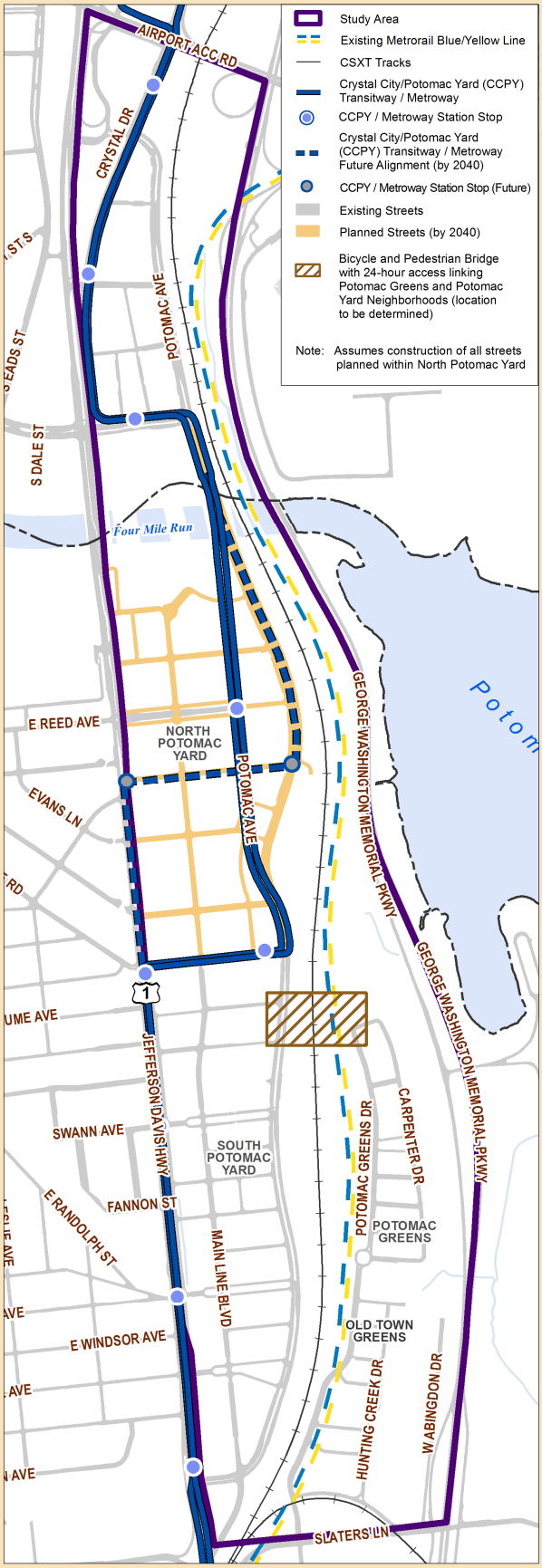
The City of Alexandria is the project sponsor and joint lead agency.

The National Park Service (NPS) is a cooperating agency because of its role in administering the George Washington Memorial Parkway.

The Federal Transit Administration (FTA) is the lead federal agency, because the City will be seeking federal funding for a portion of the project.

The Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA) is a cooperating agency because it would build and operate the station.

# NO BUILD ALTERNATIVE

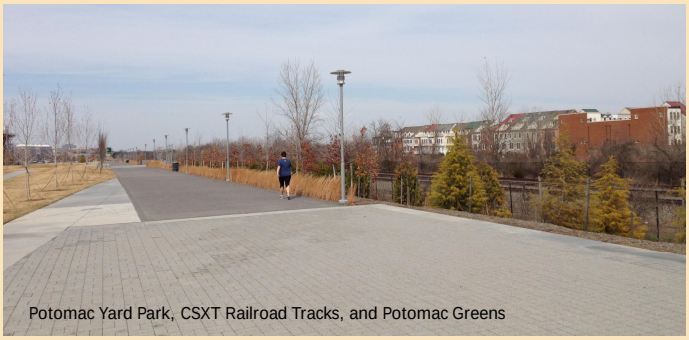



The No Build Alternative includes all planned transportation projects expected to be finished by 2040, except the Metrorail station. The alternative includes:

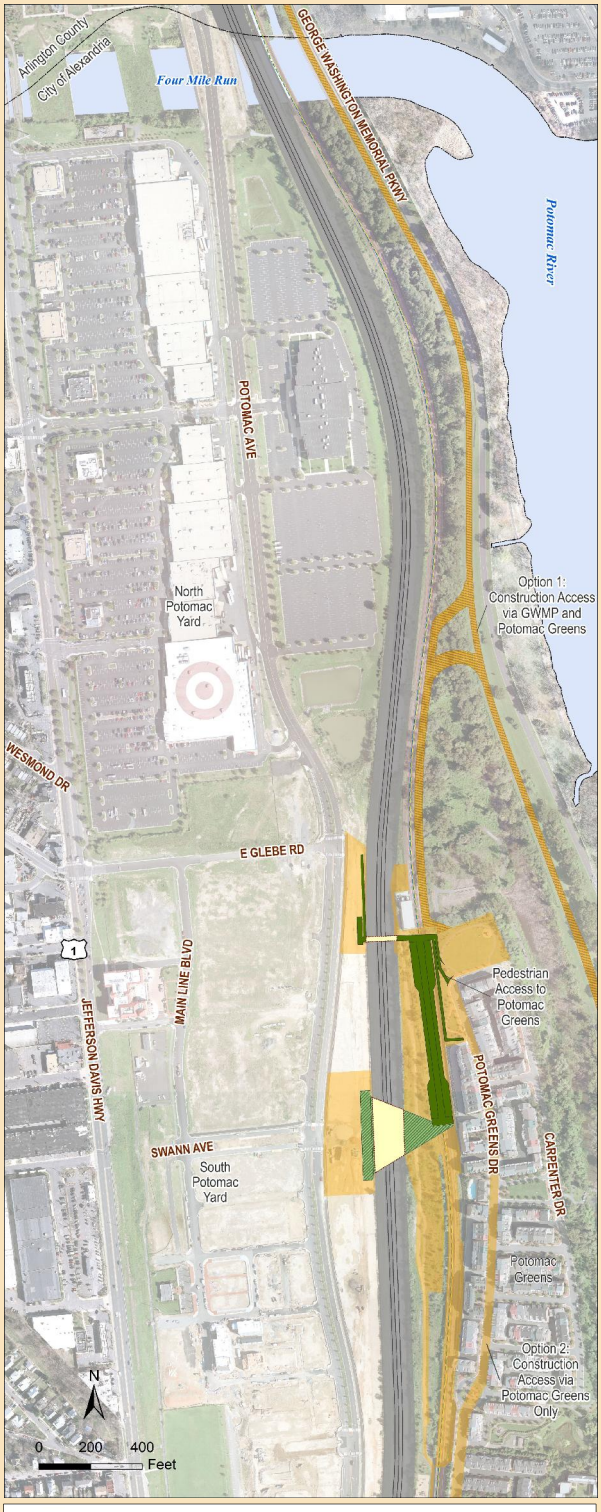
- Build-out of the Potomac Yard street network,
- Crystal City/Potomac Yard (CCPY) Transitway
- Expansion of local bus service
- Off-street multi-use trail from Four Mile Run to Braddock Road
- Pedestrian/bicycle bridge over the tracks between Potomac Yard and the Potomac Greens neighborhood

Potomac Avenue

Crystal City/Potomac Yard Transitway
Photo credit: BeyondDC


Potomac Yard Park, CSXT Railroad Tracks, and Potomac Greens

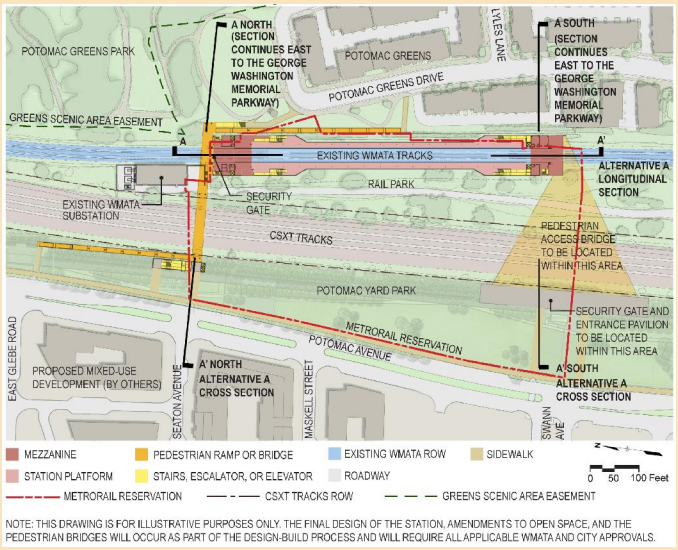
# BUILD ALTERNATIVE A



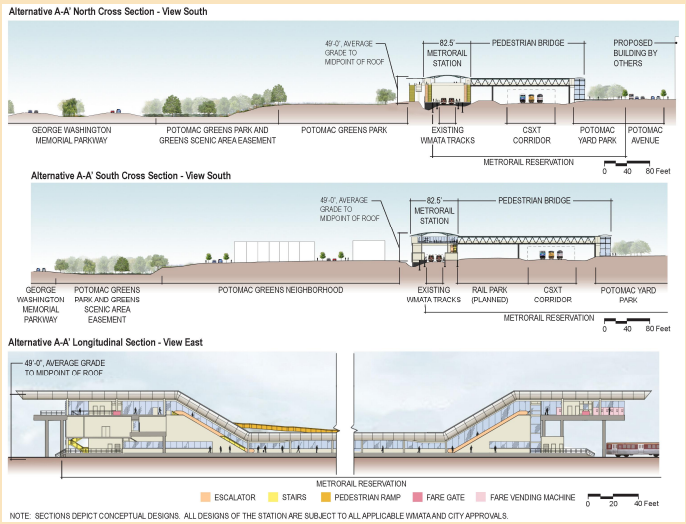

Build Alternative A would be located along the existing Metrorail tracks between the CSX Transportation (CSXT) railroad tracks and the northern end of the Potomac Greens neighborhood, generally within the "Metrorail Reservation" identified as part of the Potomac Yard/Potomac Greens Small Area Plan (1999).

Key features include:

- Same level as the existing Metrorail tracks
- Side platform layout
- Two pedestrian bridges from the station over the CSXT railroad tracks to Potomac Yard
- Northern bridge would provide 24-hour pedestrian/bicycle access between Potomac Yard and Potomac Greens.




NOTE: THIS DRAWING IS FOR ILLUSTRATIVE PURPOSES ONLY. THE FINAL DESIGN OF THE STATION, AMENDMENTS TO OPEN SPACE, AND THE PEDESTRIAN BRIDGES WILL OCCUR AS PART OF THE DESIGN-BUILD PROCESS AND WILL REQUIRE ALL APPLICABLE WMATA AND CITY APPROVALS.



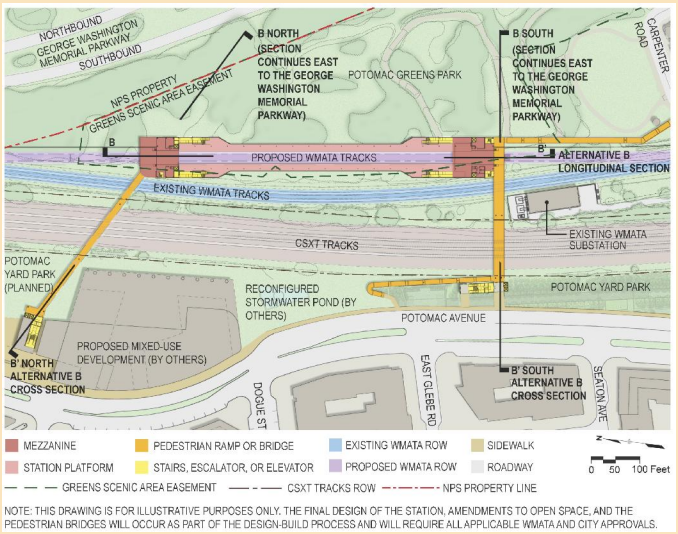

NOTE: SECTIONS DEPICT CONCEPTUAL DESIGNS. ALL DESIGNS OF THE STATION ARE SUBJECT TO ALL APPLICABLE WMATA AND CITY APPROVALS.

# BUILD ALTERNATIVE B

Build Alternative B would be located between the George Washington Memorial Parkway and the CSXT railroad tracks north of the Potomac Greens neighborhood, and east of the existing Potomac Yard Shopping Center.

Key features include:

- Same level as the existing Metrorail tracks
- Side platform layout
- Two pedestrian bridges from the station over the CSXT tracks to Potomac Yard
- Southern bridge would provide 24-hour pedestrian/bicycle access between Potomac Yard and Potomac Greens.

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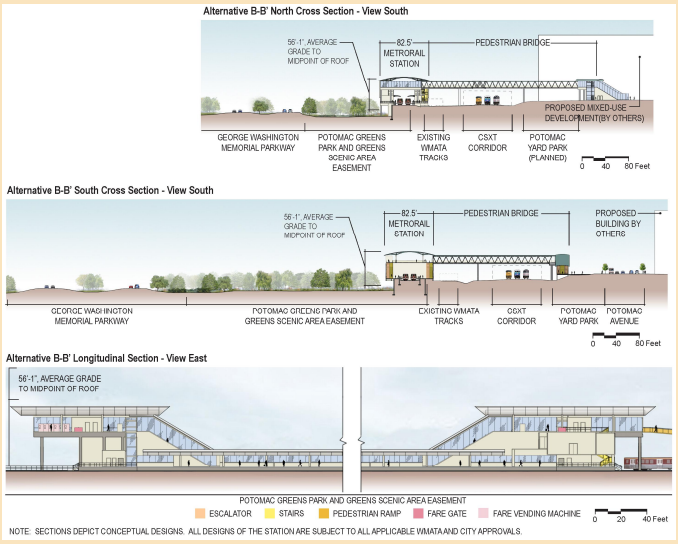


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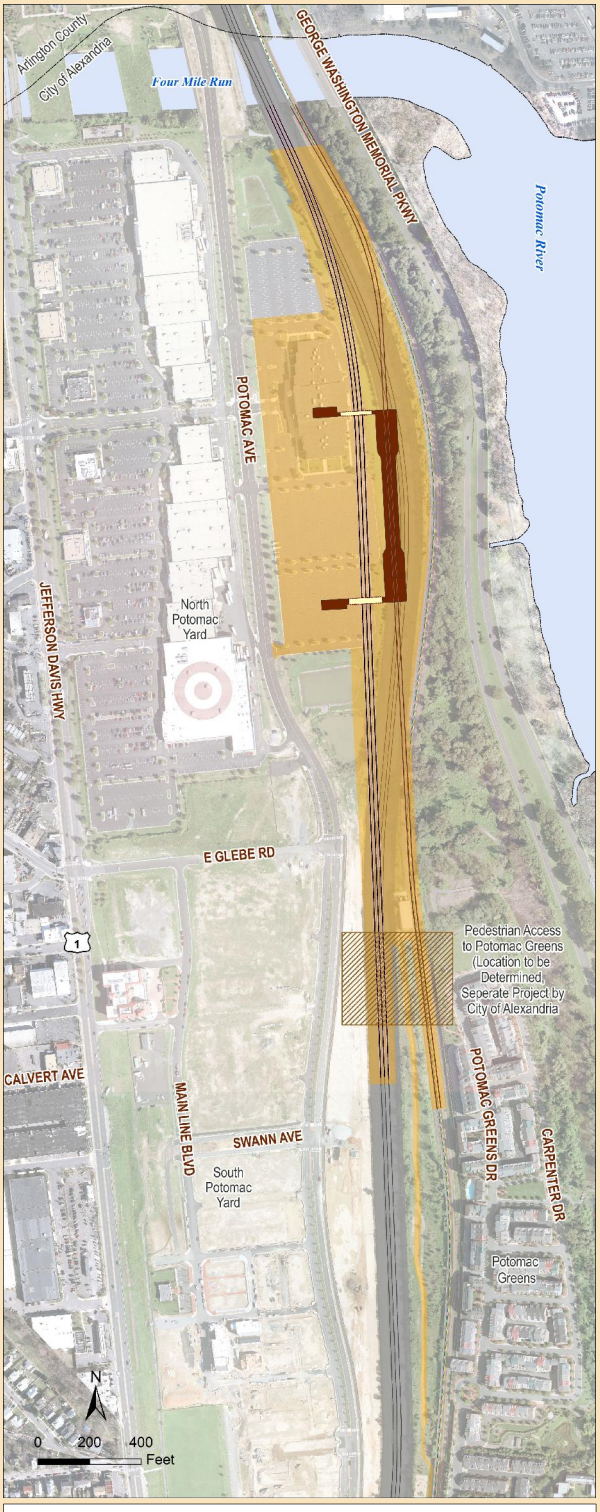
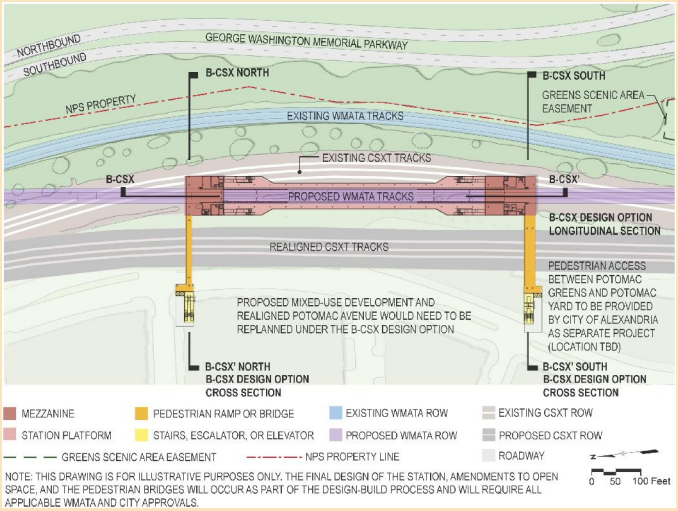
# B-CSX DESIGN OPTION

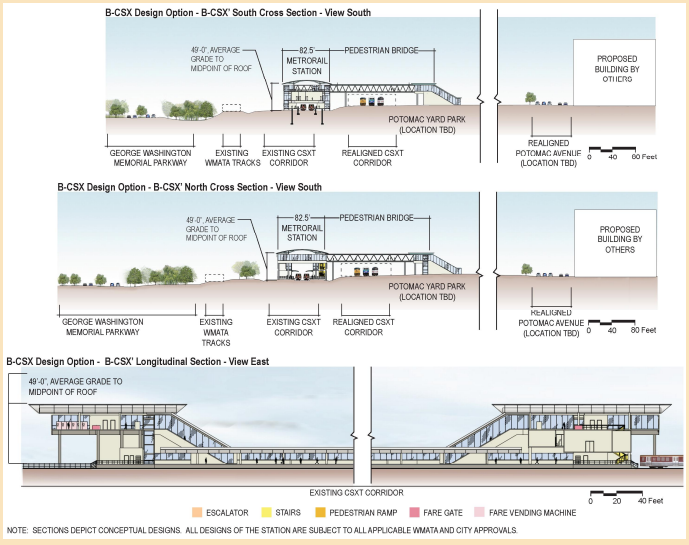



B-CSX Design Option would be located on land currently occupied by CSXT railroad tracks to the east of the existing movie theater. This design option would require construction of new CSXT tracks to the west of their current location.

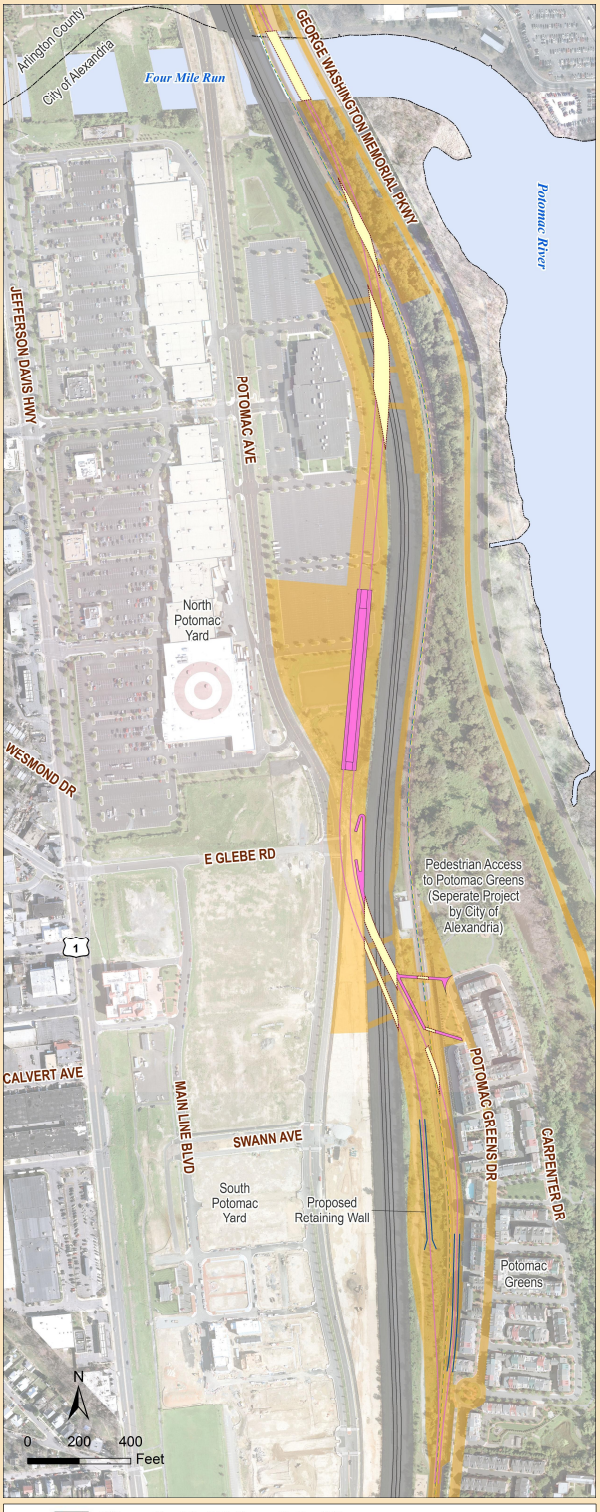
Key features include:

- Same level as the existing Metrorail tracks
- Side platform layout
- Two pedestrian bridges from the station over the CSXT tracks to Potomac Yard
- One 24-hour pedestrian/bicycle bridge over the CSXT tracks to connect Potomac Yard and the Potomac Greens neighborhood would be constructed as a separate project.



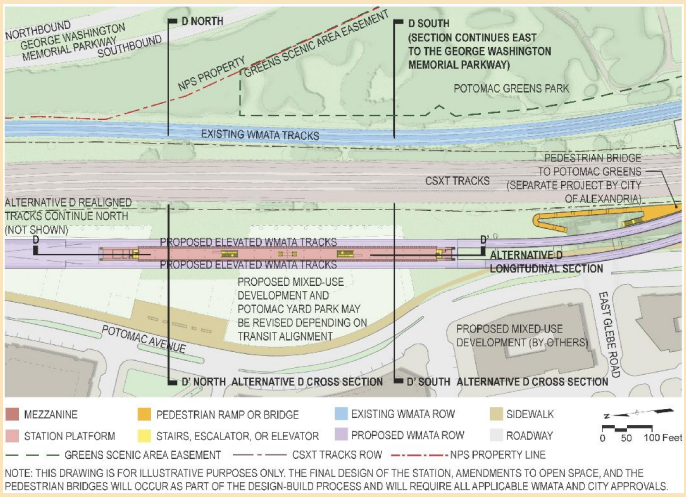
# BUILD ALTERNATIVE D

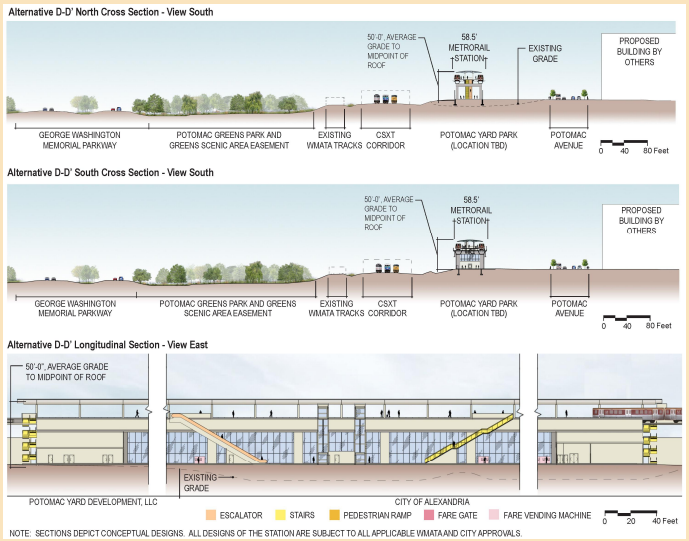



Build Alternative D would be located west of the CSXT railroad tracks near the existing Potomac Yard Shopping Center.

Key features include:

- Elevated tracks starting north of Four Mile Run, crossing the CSXT tracks into Potomac Yard, and then crossing the CSXT tracks again to reconnect to the existing Metrorail line behind Potomac Greens.
- Elevated station
- Center platform layout
- Ground floor entrance mezzanine
- One 24-hour pedestrian/bicycle bridge over the CSXT tracks to connect Potomac Yard and the Potomac Greens neighborhood would be constructed as a separate project.

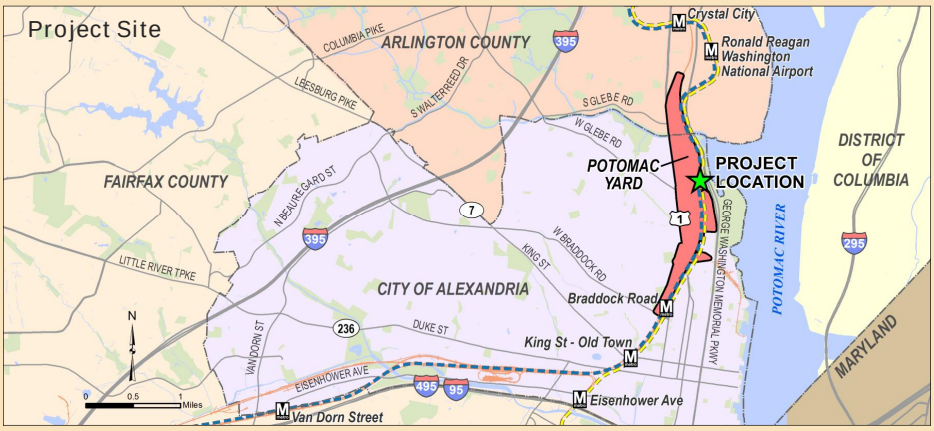


## Purpose and Need Statement

The purpose of the project is to improve local and regional transit accessibility to and from the Potomac Yard area adjacent to the U.S. Route 1 corridor for current and future residents, employees and businesses.

- Currently, the area is not served by direct access to regional transit services, such as Metrorail. Direct access to the Metrorail system will facilitate regional transit trips.
- Traffic congestion will increase on U.S. Route 1 even without the proposed development in Potomac Yard. Increasing the share of transit trips would help manage congestion, reduce auto trips, and make efficient use of existing infrastructure.
- Due to the constrained capacity of the existing roadway network, additional transportation options are needed to support redevelopment plans by accommodating travel demand through transit and other non-auto modes.



Potomac Yard Park

Existing Metrorail Blue/Yellow Line between Potomac Greens and Potomac Yard

U.S. Route 1 at Potomac Yard

Find Out More

Section 2.5.3 of the Draft EIS

# HISTORY AND PLANNING

## 1906

- Opening of Potomac Yard, which grew to become the largest yard for freight-switching operations on the east coast.

## 1968/1975

- Metrorail system plans identified Potomac Yard as a site for a future Metrorail station that could benefit new development.

## Mid-1980s

- Alexandria 2020 plan proposed a mixed-use, neighborhood development with a Metrorail station.

## Late-1980s

- Operations of the rail yard began to be phased out.

## 1992/1999

- *The Potomac Yard/Potomac Greens Small Area Plan* identified the potential for a Metrorail station. A 2009 revision included approval for an urban, mixed-use Town Center along East Glebe Road.

## 2010

- The *Potomac Yard Concept Development Study* analyzed eight potential Metrorail station locations; recommended further examination of three locations.
- The *North Potomac Yard Small Area Plan* envisioned replacing the existing shopping center with a high-density, transit-oriented neighborhood anchored by a Metrorail Station

## 2011

- The current EIS study began by gathering public and agency input on the scope of the environmental study and the alternatives to be evaluated.

Historic Potomac Yard

Metrorail System

Potomac Yard Small Area Plan

View showing planned development in North Potomac Yard

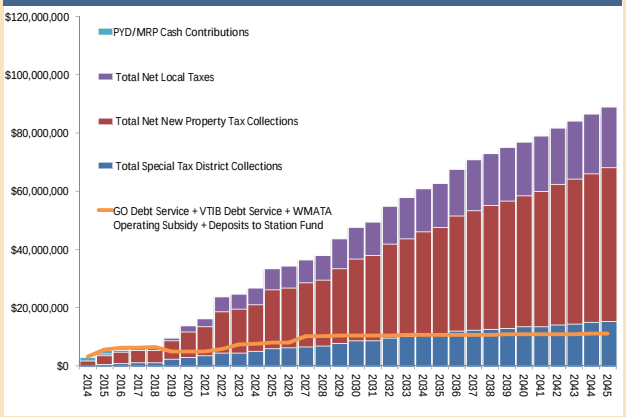
# FINANCIAL FEASIBILITY

## Conceptual Capital Costs
(2018 Dollars)

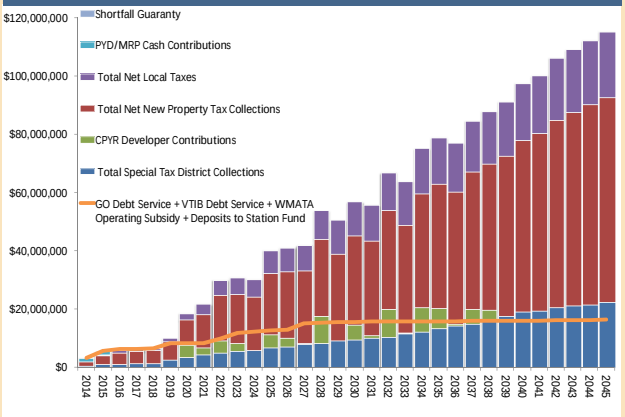
| Alternative | Costs |
|---|---|
| Alternative A | $209 M |
| Alternative B | $268 M |
| B-CSX Design Option | $351 M |
| Alternative D | $493 M |

## Funding Sources

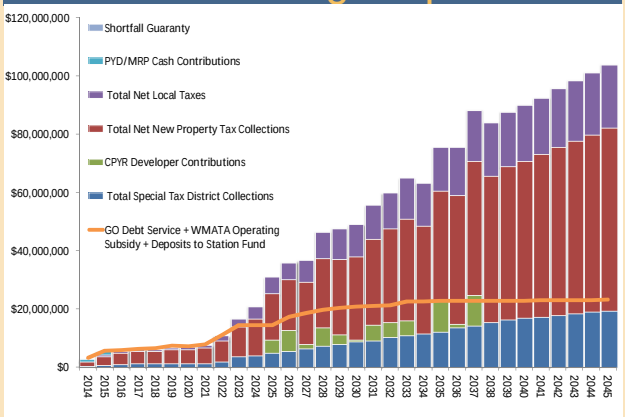
## Cash Flow – Alternative A



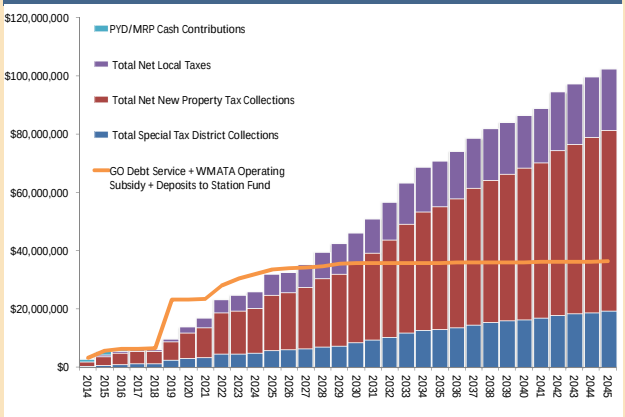

## Cash Flow – Alternative B



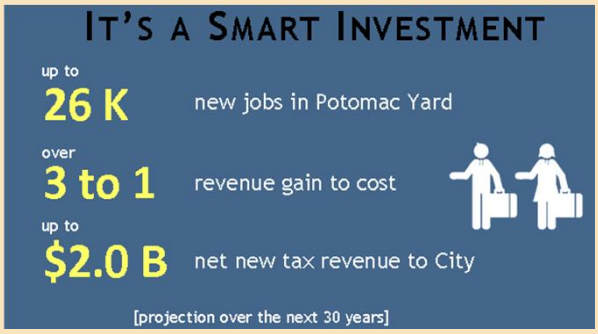

## Cash Flow – B-CSX Design Option

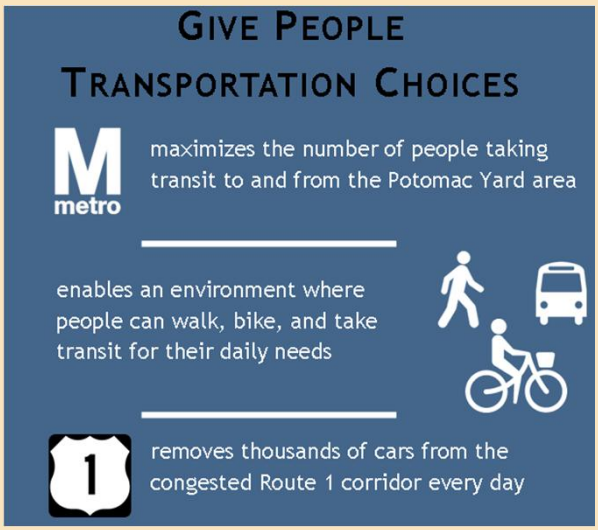



## Cash Flow – Alternative D



# WHY DO WE NEED A METRO STATION?






The redevelopment of Potomac Yard presents an opportunity to create a vibrant new community within Alexandria, one that is known throughout the region for its desirable neighborhoods, outstanding waterfront, public parks, and access to public transportation. The construction of a Metrorail station in the Potomac Yard area is central to this vision.

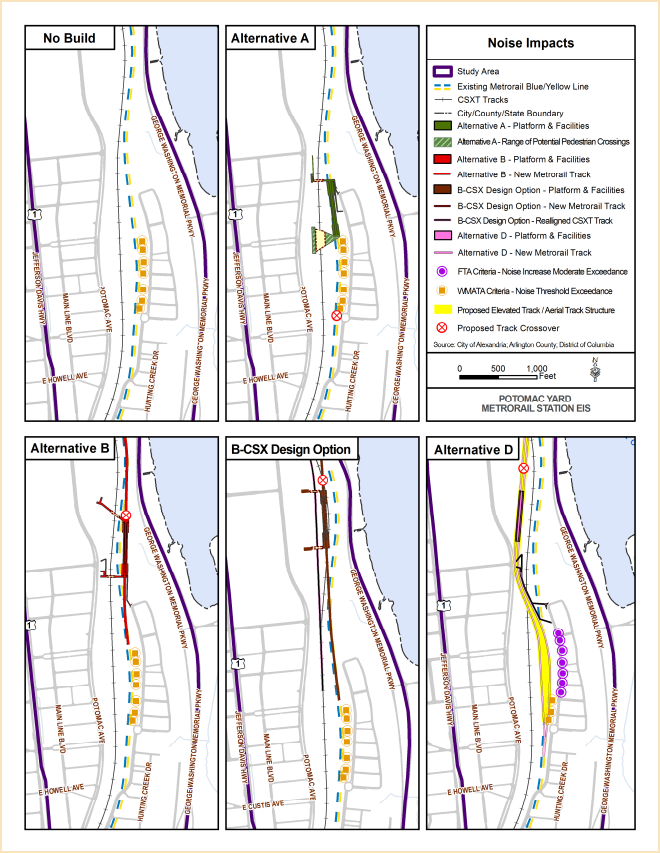
## Community Benefits of a Potomac Yard Metro Station

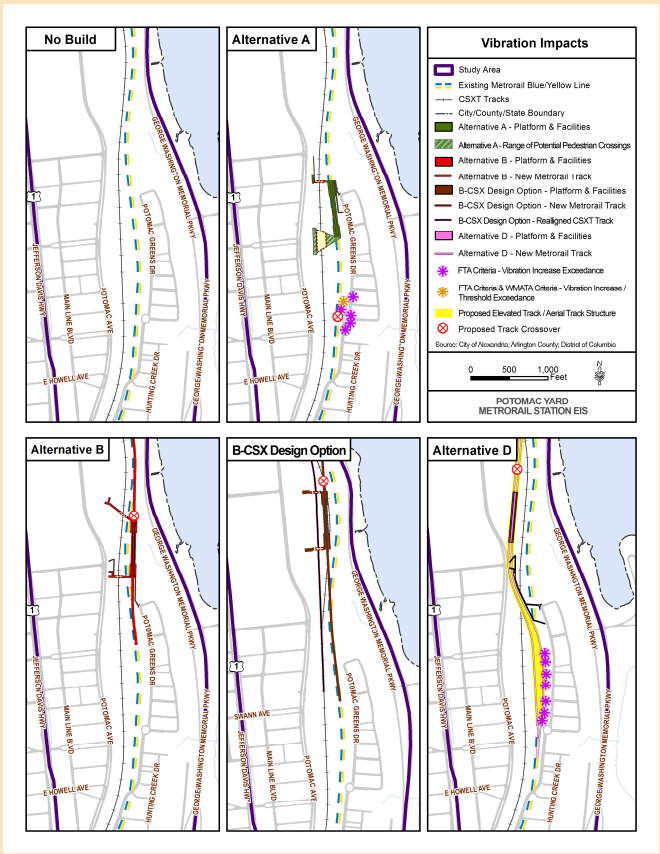
- New tax revenues and developer contributions pay for public amenities such as parks, schools, and affordable housing in Potomac Yard and citywide.
- More housing options near transit enable people at a range of income levels and times of life (including empty-nesters and young professionals) to live in Alexandria and contribute to civic life.
- A mix of uses, including significant shopping and public open space, provides a vibrant, fun destination for all Alexandrians.
- A mix of uses in a high-density environment, supported by Metrorail, means thousands of trips not taken by car. Many people will walk or bike to destinations in Potomac Yard to take care of their daily needs.

## Transportation Benefits of a Potomac Yard Metrorail Station

| | |
|---|---|
| 10,000 – 11,300 | Daily boardings at a Potomac Yard Metrorail Station |
| 34% | Daily trips taken by transit, walking, or bike |
| 5,000 | Daily auto trips removed from the road |

# NOISE & VIBRATION IMPACTS




## Background

Noise and vibration impacts were assessed based on Federal Transit Administration and WMATA guidelines.

Noise levels today are dominated by roadway and rail noise, as well as airplane take-offs and landings at the airport.

## Evaluation of Alternatives

Existing noise conditions would remain under the No Build Alternative, Build Alternative A, Build Alternative B, and B-CSX Design Option. Build Alternative D would reduce noise impacts at four residences, but would result in new noise impacts based on FTA criteria at seven residences due to the elevated tracks.

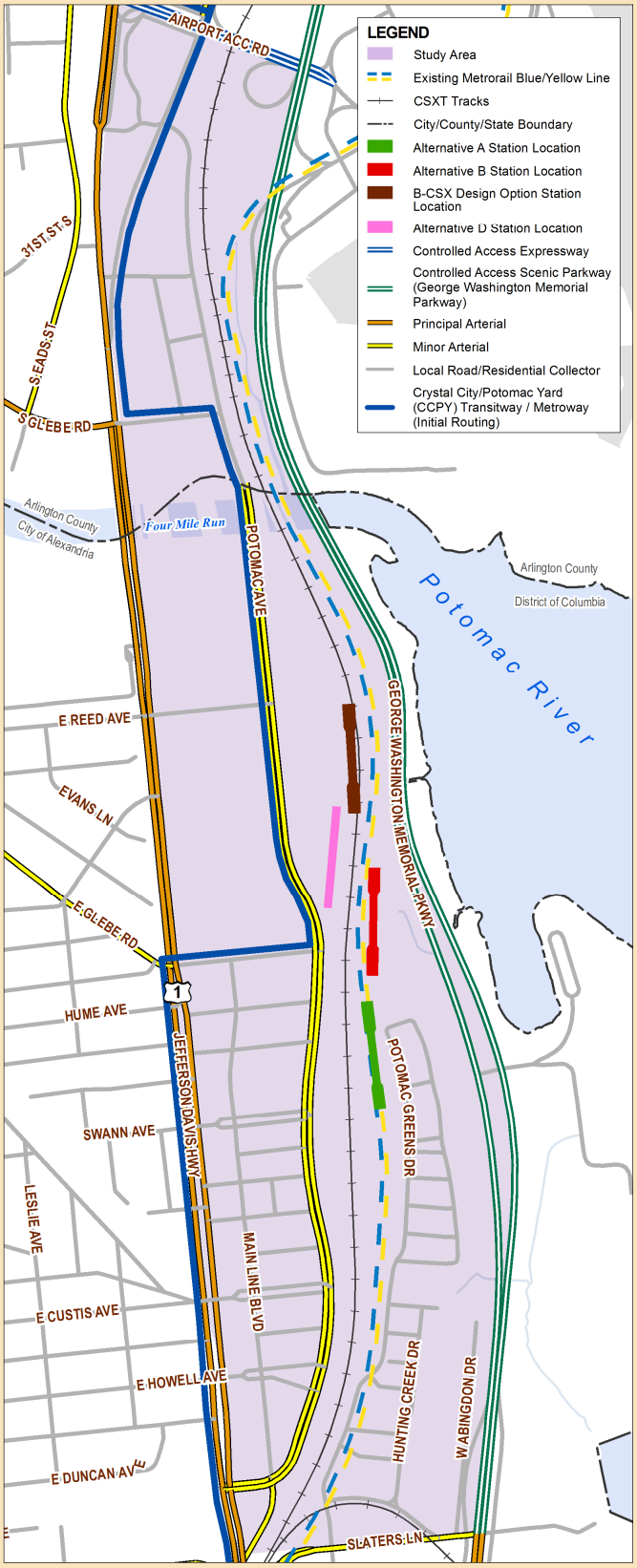
Build Alternative B and B-CSX Design Option would not exceed criteria for vibration impacts. Based on FTA criteria, Build Alternatives A and D would result in increased vibration impacts to residences in Potomac Greens due to Metrorail trains passing over new switches.

Other noise sources associated with the proposed station are not expected to contribute towards any exceedance or noise impact based on FTA or WMATA criteria. These sources would be evaluated more closely during final design when the station features are finalized and would be mitigated as appropriate.

## Find Out More

- Section 3.12, Noise and Vibration
- Noise and Vibration Technical Memorandum, Volume II

# TRANSPORTATION IMPACTS




## Background

All Build Alternatives are planned as urban stations. Most users are expected to access the station on foot or bike. There will be no bus bays or parking lots for Kiss & Ride or Park & Ride.

All buses will access the station from Potomac Yard, along Potomac Avenue.

## Evaluation of Alternatives

### 2040 Daily Station Boardings

| Alternative A | Alternative B | B-CSX Design Option | Alternative D |
|---|---|---|---|
| 10,000 | 11,300 | 10,000 | 10,000 |

All Build Alternatives are expected to generate low levels of vehicular trips similar to other urban stations. No effect is shown on overall intersection delays compared to the No Build Alternative.

Some Metrorail passengers may attempt to drive and park in adjoining neighborhoods. The introduction and enforcement of parking restrictions would largely avoid and minimize potential impacts to neighborhoods.

All alternatives will improve bicycle and pedestrian access from Potomac Yard to Potomac Greens.

## Find Out More

- Section 3.2, Transportation
- Transportation Technical Memorandum, Volume II

# SECONDARY & CUMULATIVE EFFECTS

## Background

The analysis of secondary effects evaluated the project's potential to induce land development, and the potential effects of that development.

The cumulative effects analysis evaluated the potential combined impact of the various projects planned in the study area. The cumulative effects assessment also addressed the potential effects of climate change on the project.

## Development Assumptions

Recent and planned development includes the Old Town Greens and Potomac Greens neighborhoods, as well as the existing and planned development in Potomac Yard.

Assumptions for Build Alternative B include the full development density allowed under current plans in North Potomac Yard. Total permitted development would be reduced under any of the other alternatives.

## Evaluation of Alternatives

Secondary Effects: The increased development in Potomac Yard for all alternatives would provide opportunities for housing and commercial uses close to the region's core in a location with Metrorail access, resulting in fewer and shorter automobile trips regionally. The higher level of density permitted with Alternative B would amplify this effect.

Red Line train pulling into NoMA-Gallaudet Station

Cumulative Effects: Cumulative effects are not expected for most of the resources analyzed in the Draft EIS, either because no effects are expected from this project or because no effects are expected from other projects.

For each of the alternatives, there would be a slight increase in automobile traffic by 2040 due to planned development. The planned development would be expected to support the transit network through urban densities and transit-friendly urban design. The cumulative effect, therefore, would be improved mobility and accessibility to accommodate the City's projected growth.

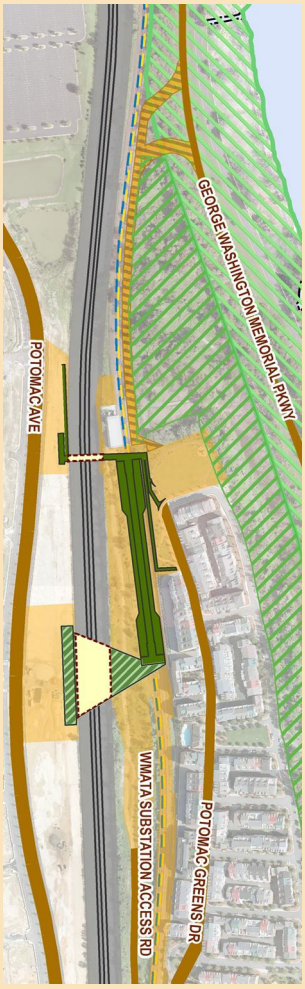
## Find Out More

- Section 3.23, Secondary & Cumulative Effects
- Secondary & Cumulative Effects Technical Memorandum, Volume II

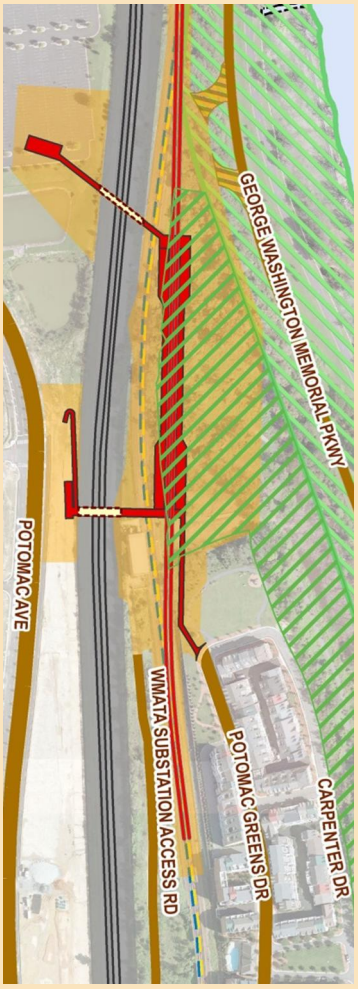
# CONSTRUCTION ACCESS: BUILD ALTERNATIVES A & B

## Option 1: Access from the GWMP, Potomac Greens Drive, and Potomac Yard

Alternative A

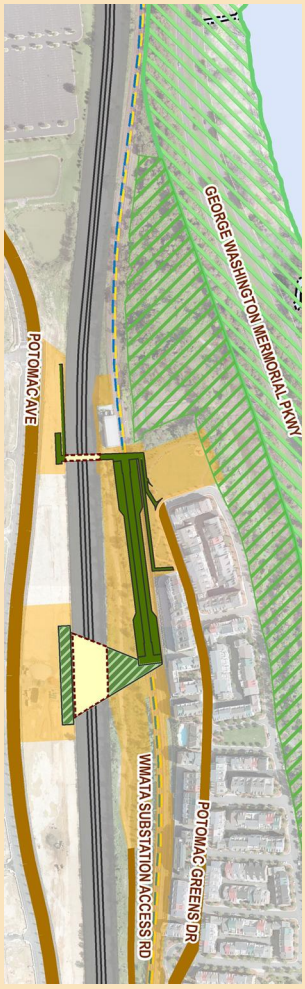



Alternative B

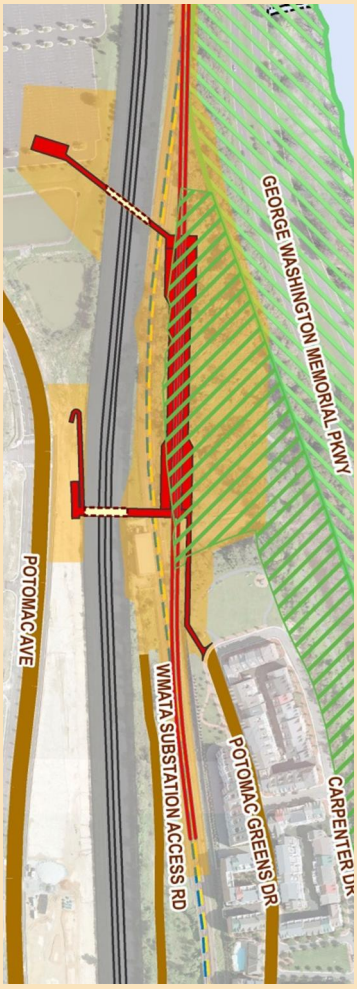



## Option 2: Access from Potomac Greens Drive and Potomac Yard (no access from GWMP)

Alternative A




Alternative B




**Construction Access and Impact Area**

- Staging Area
- Access Route
- Staging Access Driveway
- Existing Metrorail Blue/Yellow Line
- Existing CSXT Tracks
- Existing CSXT Right-of-Way
- Greens Scenic Area Easement
- George Washington Memorial Parkway

The Draft EIS evaluates two construction access options for Build Alternatives A and B: access primarily via the George Washington Memorial Parkway (GWMP) or via Potomac Greens Drive. Both options were evaluated in order to understand the potential impacts. However, park policy and federal regulations prohibit commercial vehicles on the GWMP if another option is available.

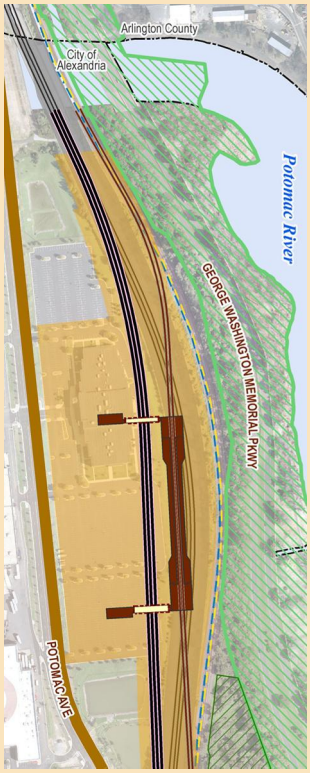
## Find Out More

- Section 3.24, Construction Impacts
- Construction Impacts Technical Memorandum, Volume II

# CONSTRUCTION ACCESS: B-CSX DESIGN OPTION & BUILD ALTERNATIVE D

## B-CSX Design Option

North




South

**Construction Access and Impact Area**

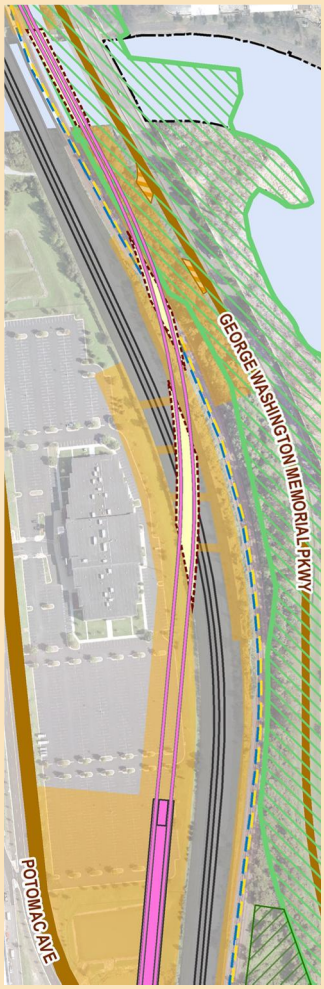
- Staging Area
- Access Route
- B-CSX Design Option - Realigned CSXT Track
- Aerial Structure over Railroad
- Existing Metrorail Blue/Yellow Line
- Existing CSXT Tracks
- Existing CSXT Right-of-Way
- Greens Scenic Area Easement
- George Washington Memorial Parkway (NPS Property)

Construction access for B-CSX Design Option would be primarily from Potomac Yard, with additional access via the traction power substation access road.

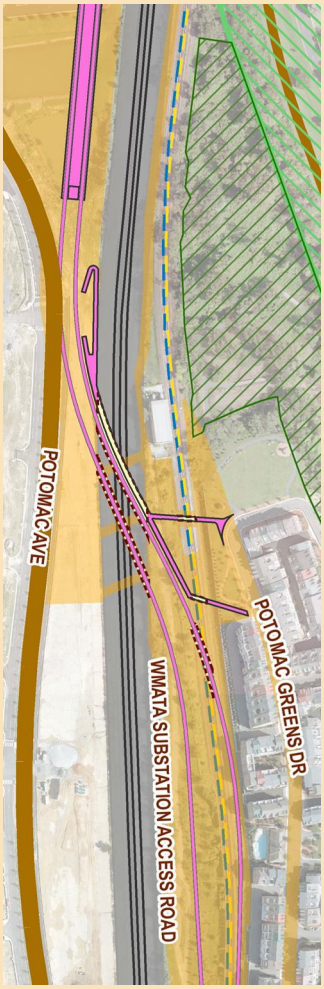
Construction for the B-CSX Design Option requires first constructing the new CSX Transportation (CSXT) alignment, so the new Metrorail tracks and station can be built within the existing CSXT right-of-way.

## Build Alternative D

North




South




Construction access for Build Alternative D would be from the George Washington Memorial Parkway, from Potomac Yard, and from Potomac Greens Drive.

Build Alternative D would require construction of a new bridge across Four Mile Run.

## Find Out More

- Section 3.24, Construction Impacts
- Construction Impacts Technical Memorandum, Volume II

# OPPORTUNITIES FOR COMMENTS

## How Can I Submit Comments?

### Comment on the Draft EIS to WMATA

Submit written comments by May 18, 2015:
comments@potomacyardmetro.com
or
Potomac Yard Metrorail Station EIS
P.O. Box 16531
Alexandria, VA 22302

The WMATA public hearing part of the NEPA process will be held on:

Thursday, April 30, 2015 at 6:30 p.m.
Cora Kelly Recreation Center
25 W. Reed Avenue
Alexandria, VA 22305

## What Happens with My Comments?

### Comments on the Draft EIS

Comments will be responded to in the Final EIS. Comments from the public that identify specific objectionable elements or effects of an alternative can influence the selection and refinement of the preferred alternative.

### Comments on the Staff Recommendation

A summary of comments on the staff recommendation will be provided as an addendum to City Council before the vote on the preferred alternative.

### Comments to the City of Alexandria on the Preferred Alternative

The staff recommendation for the preferred alternative will be released on about April 24, 2015. A public hearing will be held before the Alexandria City Council on:

Saturday, May 16, 2015 at 9:30 a.m.
City Council Chambers
Alexandria City Hall
301 King Street
Alexandria, VA 22314

The staff recommendation will also be discussed at the following board, commission, and committee meetings in May:

- Planning Commission
- Transportation Commission
- Board of Architectural Review (Old and Historic District)
- Parks and Recreation Commission
- Environmental Policy Commission
- Potomac Yard Metrorail Station Implementation Work Group

Public comment at board, commission, or committee meetings should be specific to the issues within that board, commission, or committee's purview. See alexandriava.gov/PotomacYard for the schedule of board, commission, and committee meetings.