

May 15, 2015

Honorable Mayor William D. Euille and Members of City Council
City of Alexandria
Suite 2300, City Hall
301 King St
Alexandria, VA 22314

Re: Potomac Yard Metrorail Station Preferred Alternative Endorsement

Dear Mayor Euille and Members of Council:

On behalf of the Alexandria Environmental Policy Commission (EPC), I am writing to urge your approval of the City staff's recommendation of "Alternative B" for the location of the future Potomac Yard Metrorail Station.

The EPC believes the proposed Station provides much needed increased access to public transportation along a rapidly growing corridor in the City of Alexandria. The new station supports the overall intent of Alexandria's Environmental Action Plan (EAP), and several key goals within it. With a focus on climate change and sustainability, the EAP calls for substantial reductions in emissions from daily vehicle miles traveled, and increased access to integrated transit.

The EAP sets a target, by 2020, of increasing the number of commuters who use public transportation by 25% over 2000 census data. It also specifically calls for a Potomac Yard Metrorail Station to be operational before the occupancy rate of the Potomac Yard development area reaches 70%. In addition to meeting specific goals of the EAP under transportation, the new station will also support objectives in air quality improvement, energy conservation, and climate change mitigation. Proposed Alternative B, as presented to EPC, supports the goals of the EAP outlined above by maximizing service to residents within the critical half-mile walking radius.

Alternative B will result in a net loss of wetlands. While EPC is reluctant to reduce any wetlands acreage, the mitigation framework drafted with the National Park Service (NPS) will result in higher quality wetlands and improved storm water management along a crucial riparian corridor in Alexandria. We understand there will also be opportunities for improvements to Daingerfield Island and the heavily used Mt Vernon trail. Additionally, we note that high density development at public transit sites has much less aggregate impact on wetlands and other natural resource areas than low density, single-occupancy vehicle oriented development in outer suburbs.

We look forward to working with Council and staff as the City develops designs for the new station, and begins making detailed planning decisions. To cite one important design component, we will advocate for the incorporation of bike share stations, bicycle parking facilities, and pedestrian and bicycle trail access to create a truly multi-modal transportation hub.

For the reasons stated above, we urge your endorsement of preferred Alternative B. Should you have any questions or be in need of our assistance, please do not hesitate to contact me at the email address below.

Sincerely,



Jim Kapsis
Chair, Environmental Policy Commission
kapsisje@gmail.com