

Potomac Yard Metrorail Implementation Work Group
Alexandria, Virginia

Mayor Allison Silberberg and Members of City Council
City Hall
301 King Street
Alexandria, VA 22314

November 16, 2018

Re: Potomac Yard Metrorail Station

Dear Mayor Silberberg and Members of City Council:

In the Fall of 2018, the Potomac Yard Metrorail Implementation Work Group (PYMIG) held five meetings to receive updates on the project status from City staff and the Contractor, provide feedback on station access design, and facilitate discussion of construction mitigation for community impacts during construction. After considerable discussion, the PYMIG recommended a lengthened ramp that leads directly to E. Glebe Road.

During these meetings, the PYMIG members provided the following feedback:

- 1) Staff presented two station access options at East Glebe Road, including 1) an at grade path leading to a ramp; and 2), an at-grade path leading to an elevator. Based on these two concepts, PYMIG advised staff to consider two additional concepts, including a lengthened ramp that would land at East Glebe Road; and an elevator at a pavilion building at East Glebe Road leading to a pedestrian bridge connecting to the CSX crossing. PYMIG provided input toward project design principles which are further described in Attachment 1.

After extensive review, PYMIG recommended the lengthened ramp concept. While several of the PYMIG members supported the option with a pavilion building to a pedestrian bridge, the cost of this option is prohibitive due to its cost of \$25 million more than the original two options (See Attachment 2). The members determined the lengthened ramp option met the majority of the design principles (sense of place, accessibility, and consistency within the Metrorail system) that the members felt should be incorporated into the design of an entrance at this location.

- 2) Amenities at the East Glebe Road entrance should include:
 - a. Lighting that is attractive and provides for adequate safety near the entry and beneath the ramp, and complements the proposed lighting features on the north pavilion entrance;
 - b. An entry structure that is attractive and acts as a visible entry to the station
 - c. Interpretive signage near the entry that promotes the historic nature of the Potomac Yard site;
 - d. A design that minimizes conflicts between pedestrians entering / exiting the station and bicyclists that will be using the Potomac Avenue trail.
- 3) Amenities along the east side of the station should include:
 - a. Lighting that is attractive and provides for adequate safety and minimizes impacts to the adjacent park and wetlands, and view shed from the GW Parkway;
 - b. An area at the north end of the trail at the station entrance that provides for amenities such as seating and bike parking;

- c. Interpretive signage along the trail that may focus on the adjacent wetlands and National Parks system.
 - d. A path design that minimizes conflicts between pedestrians and bicyclists;
- 4) Stairs into the eastern station entrance in addition to the elevators.
 - 5) The project must be designed and constructed to accommodate future project(s) that may be developed to further enhance access to the station from Potomac Avenue at East Glebe Road.

The members recognize that all design choices along the east side of the station must be developed in coordination with the National Park Service and are subject to Board of Architectural Review approval.

PYMIG restated their support of the project and acknowledged the building of a new Metrorail station is central to the vision for the redevelopment of Potomac Yard as a smart-growth, walkable mixed-use community, with access to high-quality retail, entertainment, office, residential and parks. A new Metrorail station will help to accommodate the growing transportation demand in the Route 1 corridor, and complement existing transit services including the Route 1 Metroway, as well as other multimodal transportation facilities.

The PYMIG recommends that due to the nature of the project and pending the concurrence of the Planning Commission and City Council, further refinements to minor design elements be allowed with community input after the approval of the amendment to the Development Special Use Permit (DSUP).

Further, as a matter of policy, we request that the National Parks Service (NPS) wetland mitigation measures be sited within the Washington D.C. area, preferably close to the project in keeping with past federal practice.

Finally, based on input received through the PYMIG meetings, the PYMIG members recommend that PYMIG meetings continue to be held regularly throughout construction to further discuss design refinements, as well as construction mitigation opportunities for the affected communities.

The PYMIG members appreciate the opportunity to provide input on the Potomac Yard Metrorail Station Project, as well as the consideration of its input by the Planning Commission and City Council.

Sincerely,



Justin M. Wilson
Co-Chair



Paul Smedberg
Co-Chair

Attachments:

- 1) Potomac Yard Metrorail Station Design Criteria
- 2) East Glebe Road Entry option costs

cc: Potomac Yard Metrorail Implementation Work Group (PYMIG)
Mark Jinks, City Manager
Emily Baker, Deputy City Manager
Yon Lambert, Director, T&ES
Mitchell Bernstein, Director, DPI

Attachment #1:

Potomac Yard Metrorail Station Design Criteria

- **Access Proximity**
 - Existing pedestrian path to the pond
 - Access could start further north.
 - East & West have different priorities
- **Budget constraint**
 - Need to improve design within budget
- **Access Quality**
 - Enhanced ADA Accessibility
 - Shade & Rain protection
 - Lighting & Even paving treatments
 - Direct, non-meandering path of travel
 - Pedestrian Aesthetic experience
- **Connectivity & Multimodal functionality**
 - Map out path of travel
 - Bike & Bus accessibility
- **Safety**
 - Lighting – Even lighting, not just minimum
 - Ease of exit – no dead ends.
- **Sustainability**
 - Stormwater vs. aesthetic experience
 - LEED compliance
 - Easy access for Maintenance
- **Design**
 - “Cohesive” design/architecture
 - Prioritize pedestrian experience,
 - Design can differ from other parts of the station
 - Draw people towards the south end
 - Doesn’t feel like an after thought
 - Sense of equilibrium
 - Experience at grade VS ramp
 - What is the experience like under the ramp?
 - Lighting

Attachment #2:
East Glebe Road Entry Option Costs
(Rough Order of Magnitude)

Alternatives	Full Station Cost	Net Difference
An at grade path leading to a ramp (Part of Original Contract)	\$213.7m	\$0
An at grade path leading to an elevator	\$214.7 – \$215.7m	\$1m - \$2m
A lengthened ramp that would land at E. Glebe Rd	\$223m - \$225m	\$10m - \$12m
Elevator at a pavilion building at E. Glebe Rd. leading to a pedestrian bridge connecting to the CSX crossing bridge	\$238m	\$25m+