

North Potomac Yard Small Area Plan Update Advisory Group
Meeting #5 – July 25, 2016
Framework; Streets, blocks, connectivity, circulation

Dear All:

I apologize for not making it to last night's meeting. I had an unavoidable conflict that came up, but my absence does not single any less interest/focus on the issues at hand. That being said, I would like to offer my comments on the topic of last night: streets, blocks, connectivity, and circulation.

As the representative from the Parks and Recreation Commission, I continue to focus on this development with an eye to ensuring access to appropriate open spaces, options for outdoor activity, and general safety for those on bikes and those walking, along with a pleasant experience for both.

I have reviewed the staff presentation and cross-referenced with the 2010 plan and you will find below my responses to the questions posed in the matrix.

1. Which framework achieves the best pedestrian access to open spaces, transit modes, and destinations?

As I said at the last meeting when we were focusing on the north pavilion for Metro, I think we have a unique opportunity to locate in a way that integrates Metro, the development, and the park when we focused on the location that would place the pavilion and plaza just north of the stormwater pond, with an extension of the plaza across the road.

This is translated best in the July 25 exercise with Option 2. Metro, connected to the park, and the development, with a minor road to cross is the ideal proposition to achieve best pedestrian access.

Option 1 eliminates most of the pedestrian positives by placing the Metro station, with its foot at a major road. This road would cut off integration of the Metro pavilion with the rest of the development and would isolate the park in this section as well.

2. Which framework best achieves an integrated transit network (Metro, BRT, and local bus circulation)?

Option 1 gets BRT closer to the Metro station, but I do not see this as a guiding force here since, as I understand it, the purpose of BRT is to get from point to point and not necessarily to get to a Metro station for further transit. Option 1 also gets local bus circulation a bit closer, but, again, I think pedestrian safety and walkability trumps both BRT and local bus circulation.

Option 2 sets the standard for this area and defines the importance of pedestrian and bike access. Even if BRT and buses are a bit further west, we are only talking two blocks away. Even if Option 1 may score higher here, my vote is still for Option 2 on this issue as well.

3. Which framework best accomplishes the 2010 Plan and Transportation Master Plan goal of accommodating pedestrians, bicycles, transit, and cars, prioritized in that order?

I have been studying the 2010 plan quite a bit to understand the guiding principles and blank canvas that was the subject at the time. Now that we have lived into the south portion of Potomac Yards being (mostly) developed, we have a good understanding of what needs to be changed in this

section. The perfect example of this is Potomac Avenue. It is wide and barely cross-able in several parts of the existing layout close to the playground. The goal was to make all of the area comfortable for pedestrians, bicycles, transit, and cars. In trying to do that in the existing area, I think cars have taken over and use Potomac Avenue as a speeding thoroughfare.

That being said, I think Potomac Avenue should continue on its current course (Option 2). Once the full buildout on both sides of Potomac Avenue occurs, I think this effect will necessarily slow down traffic and make it less of a dividing line when we look at North Phase I and the future phases. If Potomac Avenue were curved to hug the park, this sort of calming down would never occur. The park and the metro station would be divorced from the rest of the development.

I feel strongly that Option 2 is the best option to achieve the stated goals of the 2010 plan. Option 2 moves the potential dividing line to where it can be integrated into the overall design, as opposed to acting as a boundary.

Thank you all for your time and patience,

Michael Peter