

1.0 INTRODUCTION

The Federal Transit Administration (FTA), as the federal lead agency, and the City of Alexandria, as the project sponsor and joint lead agency, in cooperation with the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA), and the National Park Service (NPS), is preparing an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS), under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), for the proposed Potomac Yard Metrorail Station (or “the project”).

The project consists of construction of a new Metrorail Station located at Potomac Yard within the City of Alexandria along the existing Metrorail Blue and Yellow line between the Ronald Reagan Washington National Airport Station and the Braddock Road Station. **Figure 1-1** shows the location of the project in north Alexandria and depicts the alternative station sites under consideration as part of this initial screening of alternatives. The project would serve existing neighborhoods and retail centers as well as high-density, transit-oriented development planned by the City of Alexandria. The project would provide access to the regional Metrorail system for the U.S. Route 1 corridor of north Alexandria, which is currently without direct access to the Metrorail system.

The planning process for the Potomac Yard Metrorail Station began with the *Potomac Yard Metrorail Station Concept Development Study*, which was completed in 2010. All of the alternatives considered in that study were advanced into the scoping phase of the EIS for consideration as part of the NEPA environmental review. During scoping, a number of additional alternatives were suggested by the public. All alternatives are described in detail in Section 1.3 of this report.

The scoping process resulted in a wide range of alternatives. To develop a reasonable range of alternatives to be fully evaluated in the EIS, these alternatives are being refined as part of a two-step process. This document outlines the first stage of the screening and refinement of alternatives process, which is a feasibility analysis of all alternatives suggested during the scoping phase. The results of this feasibility analysis are presented in **Table 3-1**.

This document is organized into four sections:

- **Introduction:** This section provides a description of the project, describes the alternatives screening process, and introduces the initial alternatives considered.
- **Initial Screening Criteria and Analysis:** This section describes the criteria used to screen the initial range of alternatives and evaluates each alternative based on the screening criteria.
- **Initial Screening Results:** This section presents the screening results for each of the alternatives in a matrix format. The section identifies the alternatives to be considered in the EIS, and those alternatives eliminated from further consideration.
- **Next Steps:** This section describes the next steps in the EIS process.

1.1 Screening and Refinement of Alternatives

The purpose of the screening and refinement of alternatives is to develop a reasonable range of alternatives to be fully evaluated in the EIS, including the size, location and configuration of the station and associated facilities.

This initial review assesses the feasibility of each alternative based on responsiveness to project purpose and need; consistency with land use and development plans; and technical feasibility. This evaluation results in “technically feasible zones,” which are generalized areas within which a station could be located successfully from a technical feasibility standpoint, based on current understandings.

After this screening, the project team will identify specific station design and configurations within each technically feasible zone that maximize the potential for project benefits while minimizing the potential for adverse environmental impacts based on regulatory, social, environmental and economic considerations.

The detailed station alternatives resulting from the second phase will be evaluated in detail as part of the Draft EIS. **Figure 1-2** shows the evaluation framework that will be used to refine the alternatives for the Potomac Yard Metrorail Station EIS.

1.2 Initial Alternatives Considered

The alternatives considered for the initial screening emerged from an earlier study or were suggested during the project scoping process. The *Potomac Yard Metrorail Station Concept Development Study* identified eight possible Metrorail Station locations (shown in **Figure 1-1**) referred to as Alternatives A, B1, B2, B3, C1, C2, D1, and D2. The study also identified a No Build Alternative. These alternatives were presented to governmental agencies and the general public for review and comment during the scoping process. The scoping participants suggested several new alternatives including: Metrorail Station Alternatives D3, E1, and E2; the Virginia Railway Express (VRE) Station Alternative; the Bus Alternative; and the Parking Garage Alternative. All of these alternatives were advanced for consideration in the initial screening. The alternatives reviewed are described in more detail in the following sections.

1.2.1 No Build Alternative

The No Build Alternative includes the existing transportation network, plus committed improvements included in the regional Constrained Long-Range Transportation Plan (CLRP). The No Build Alternative includes the planned Crystal City/Potomac Yard (CCPY) Transitway but does not include a Metrorail station at Potomac Yard. The CCPY Transitway will connect the Braddock Road and Crystal City Metrorail stations and will traverse the core of Potomac Yard, with an operating plan designed to match Metrorail service levels. Current and future year conditions for the No Build Alternative will be used as a basis for identifying the transportation, environmental, and community impacts of the proposed Potomac Yard Metrorail Station Build Alternatives and will be used as a baseline from which to compare each proposed action alternative. Therefore, the No Build Alternative was not evaluated as part of the initial screening.

1.2.2 Metrorail Station Location Alternatives

All Metrorail Station Location Alternatives include an underground, at-grade, and aerial option. Platform configurations will be determined at a later stage of design. The Metrorail Station Alternatives include:

- **Metrorail Station Location Alternative A** would be located between the CSXT Railroad tracks and the Potomac Greens neighborhood, at the north end of the neighborhood. This alternative was included in the 2010 *Potomac Yard Metrorail Concept Development Study*.
- **Metrorail Station Location Alternative B1** would be located between the George Washington Memorial Parkway and the CSXT Railroad, north of Alternative A. This alternative was included in the 2010 *Potomac Yard Metrorail Concept Development Study*.
- **Metrorail Station Location Alternative B2** would be located between the George Washington Memorial Parkway and the CSXT Railroad, north of Alternative A and south of Alternative B1. This alternative was included in the 2010 *Potomac Yard Metrorail Concept Development Study*.
- **Metrorail Station Location Alternative B3** would be located between the George Washington Memorial Parkway and the CSXT Railroad, east of Alternative B2. This alternative was included in the 2010 *Potomac Yard Metrorail Concept Development Study*.
- **Metrorail Station Location Alternative C1** would be located between the CSXT Railroad and U.S. Route 1. This alternative was included in the 2010 *Potomac Yard Metrorail Concept Development Study*.
- **Metrorail Station Location Alternative C2** would be located between the CSXT Railroad and U.S. Route 1, southeast of Alternative C1. This alternative was included in the 2010 *Potomac Yard Metrorail Concept Development Study*.
- **Metrorail Station Location Alternative D1** would be located between the CSXT Railroad and U.S. Route 1, east of Alternative C2. This alternative was included in the 2010 *Potomac Yard Metrorail Concept Development Study*.

Figure 1-1: Potomac Yard Metrorail Station EIS Initial Alternatives

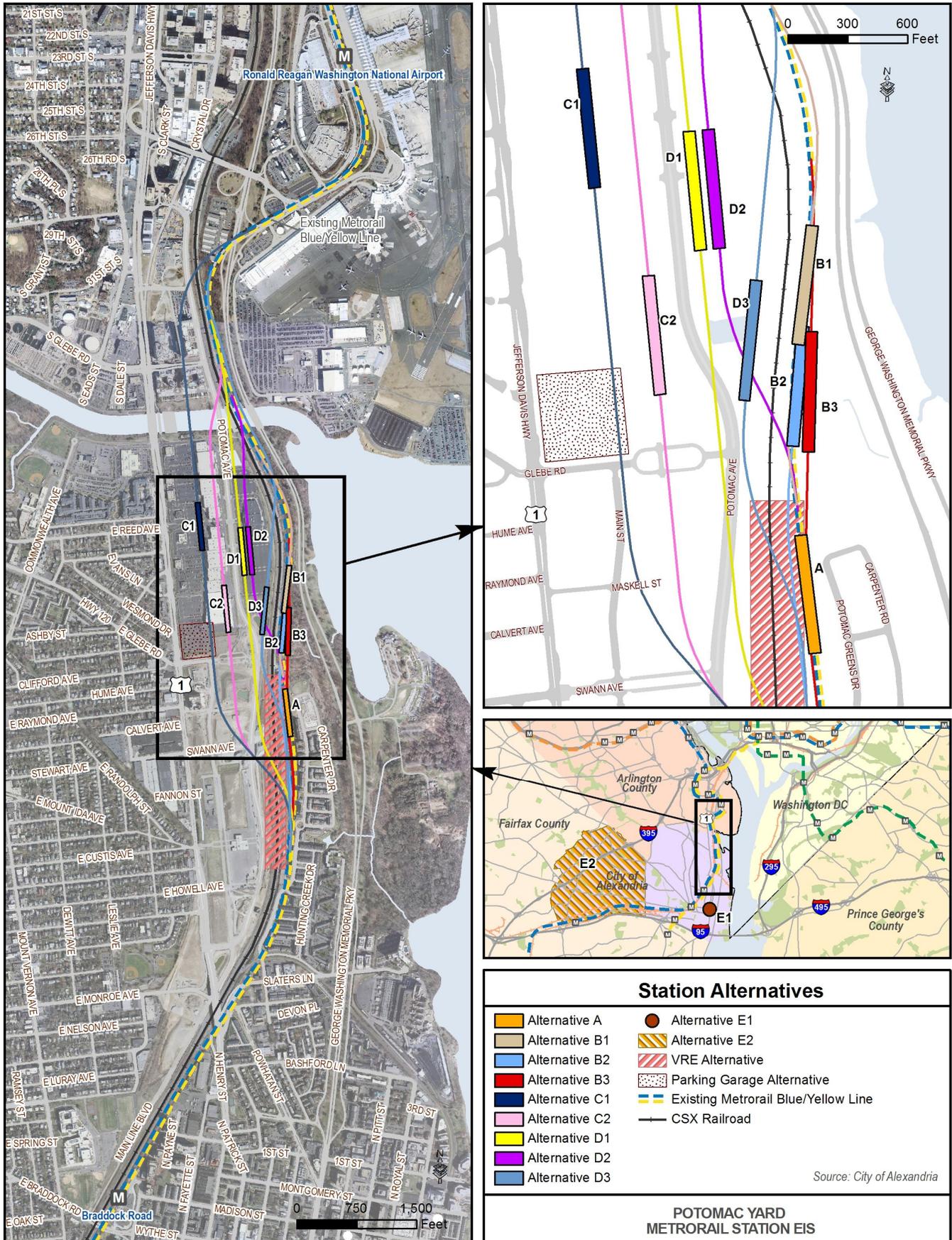
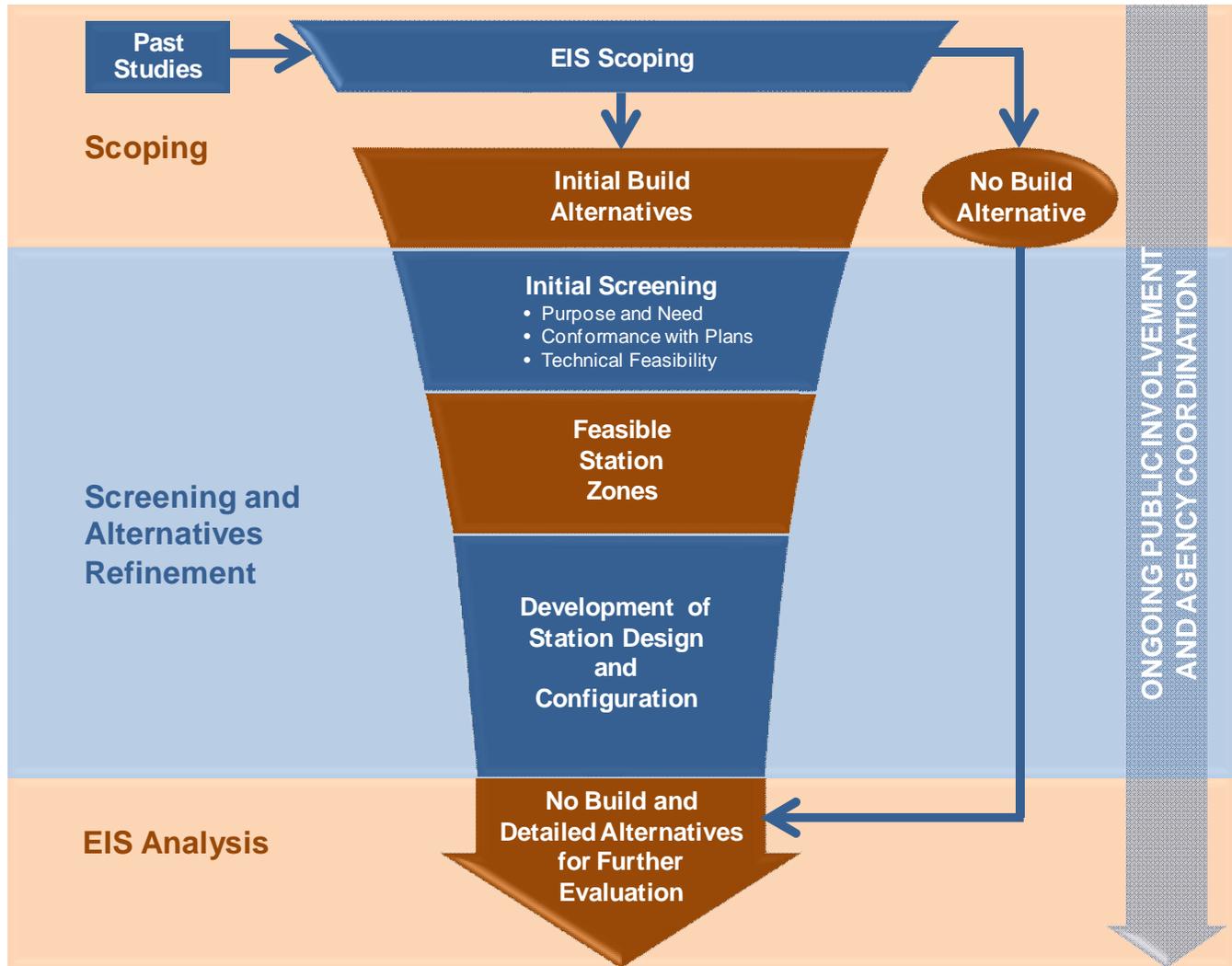


Figure 1-2: Refinement of Alternatives



Source: AECOM

- **Metrorail Station Location Alternative D2** would be located between the CSXT Railroad and U.S. Route 1, east of Alternative D1. This alternative was included in the 2010 *Potomac Yard Metrorail Concept Development Study*.
- **Metrorail Station Location Alternative D3** would be located between the CSXT Railroad and the existing movie theater. This alternative was suggested during scoping.
- **Metrorail Station Location Alternative E1** would be located in Old Town Alexandria. This alternative was suggested during scoping.
- **Metrorail Station Location Alternative E2** would be located in the West End of Alexandria. This alternative was suggested during scoping.

1.2.3 VRE Station Alternative

The VRE Station Alternative would involve construction of a new VRE station at Potomac Yard. The alternative resulted from the scoping process. The station would be located at-grade along the existing CSXT tracks. VRE is a commuter rail service that operates almost exclusively during peak periods and in the peak direction. Unlike Metrorail, it does not provide service during the midday (except for a single midday departure on each line), after 7:00 pm, holidays, or weekends. The VRE system has two lines that extend further into suburban Virginia than Metrorail but with fewer stations than Metrorail. Transfer service

between Metrorail and VRE is available at the King Street, Crystal City, L'Enfant Plaza, and Union Station Metrorail stations.

1.2.4 Bus Alternative

The Bus Alternative, which resulted from suggestions by participants during the scoping process, is a non-Metrorail alternative including changes to area bus routes and improvements to the transportation network intended to support increased trips within the corridor and provide direct access to the regional Metrorail system. This alternative would include enhancements beyond those included in the No Build Alternative. The alternative would provide enhanced transit service from the Potomac Yard area to the Crystal City and Braddock Road Metrorail stations. It would supplement the planned CCPY Transitway service by increasing the overall service frequency along the U.S. Route 1 Corridor and would provide direct service between the Metrorail stations and multiple points within Potomac Yard. The operations would correspond to Metrorail frequencies and hours of service.

1.2.5 Parking Garage Alternative

The Parking Garage Alternative would include construction of a parking deck located off of U.S. Route 1 and is intended to accommodate trips with a destination in Potomac Yard. The alternative resulted from the scoping process.

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