December 15, 2015

Ms. Andrea Burke
Division of Resource Services and Review
Virginia Department of Historic Resources
2801 Kensington Avenue
Richmond, Virginia 23221

RE: Section 106 Determination of Effect for the Potomac Yard Metro Station Project - VDHR File No.: 2010-0219

Dear Ms. Burke:

The Federal Transit Administration (FTA), in coordination with the National Park Service (NPS), the City of Alexandria, and the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA), is submitting to the Virginia Department of Historic Resources (VDHR) reports summarizing the effects to historic resources associated with the proposed metrorail station at Potomac Yard (project), within the City of Alexandria. This letter is being provided pursuant to FTA’s responsibilities under Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) as amended (36 CFR 800).

The Area of Potential Effects (APE) for archaeological resources was previously defined as the area of the limits of disturbance for the project. By this letter, FTA proposes to amend the APE for archaeological resources to include the highlighted areas shown on Figure 9 of the Addendum Phase I Archaeological Survey Report, enclosed with this letter.

The archaeological resources survey concludes the project will have no adverse impacts to the documented archaeological sites in the project APE. FTA recommends that steps be taken to protect adjacent archaeological sites during construction and that an unanticipated discovery plan be developed to assure protection of any resources that may be encountered during construction. Stipulations for these protective measures will be included in the Memorandum of Agreement (MOA), but no further archaeological investigation should be required at this time to satisfy Section 106 review of the project. As a result, FTA proposes that a “no adverse effect” finding is appropriate for this property.

Within the historic/architectural APE, five historic resources eligible or listed on the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) were evaluated. The investigation determined three transportation-related historic resources listed in the NRHP located in the APE: Mount Vernon Memorial Highway (MVMH), George Washington Memorial Parkway (GWMP), and Parkways of the National Capital Region, 1913–1965 (PNCR). These three resources are significant in the areas of landscape architecture, engineering, commemoration, sculpture, and transportation. Two additional resources over 50 years of age that were not previously identified were later identified
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during the intensive-level identification and consultation phase: the Greens Scenic Area Easement was determined eligible by the Keeper of the NRHP as a contributing resource to the MVMH/GWMP. For purposes of this consultation effort under Section 106, the Abingdon Apartments are treated as eligible for listing in the NRHP.

The effects assessment determined that the Preferred Alternative would result in an “adverse effect” to the MVMH, GWMP, and PNCR. Abingdon Apartments would not be adversely affected. FTA has prepared a draft MOA to resolve the adverse effects on this building that we invite comment on.

FTA seeks your concurrence on the determination of effect for the project, eligibility recommendations, a revised APE for archaeological resources, and preparation of an MOA to address adverse effects. Copies of the enclosed reports, as appropriate, are being provided via carbon copy to the listed consulted parties for a concurrent 30-day review period. Per 36 CFR 800, Comments received from consulting parties will be provided to VDHR for consideration.

A meeting of the consulting parties was held on Thursday, November 19, 2015 at the City of Alexandria City Hall to review these documents and invite comments from consulting parties. Upon receipt of this letter, the formal 30-day comment period will begin for consulting parties to provide comments. If you have any questions or concerns, please contact Mr. Daniel Koenig, Environmental Protection Specialist, at 202-219-3528 or daniel.koenig@dot.gov.

Sincerely,

Terry Garcia Crews
Regional Administrator

cc: Lee Farmer, City of Alexandria
Tammy Stidham, NPS
Katy Cannady, Alexandria Historical Society
Carol Supplee, Old Town Business and Professional Association
Poul Hortel, Northeast Citizens Association
Jack Sullivan, Alexandria Federation of Civic Associations
Joe Bondi Lynnhaven Civic Association
Theresita Crocket-Augustine, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers

Enclosure:
Historic Architectural Effects Assessment Report
Addendum Phase I Archaeological Survey Report
Figure 9. Proposed APE: original (yellow) and revised (blue) APEs; (ESRI 2015), 1:11,500