

City of Alexandria, Virginia

MEMORANDUM

DATE: FEBRUARY 15, 2017

TO: MEMBERS OF THE TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION

FROM: CARRIE SANDERS, DEPUTY DIRECTOR, T&ES

SUBJECT: AGENDA ITEM #5 – NORTH POTOMAC YARD SMALL AREA PLAN

ISSUE: Receive an update on the North Potomac Yard Small Area Plan.

RECOMMENDATION: That the Transportation Commission receive the update on the North Potomac Yard Small Area Plan.

BACKGROUND: The North Potomac Yard Small Area Plan (SAP) was approved in 2010. The SAP provides a planning blueprint to guide public and private investment and development decisions in the northern portion of Potomac Yard (also called Landbay F). As written in 2010, *“The Plan focuses on the creation of dynamic urban forms, a complementary mix of land uses, community amenities, and a range of housing opportunities. The Plan is a framework to create one of the most sustainable series of neighborhoods within the region, known for its outstanding Four Mile Run waterfront, parks, public transportation, innovative architecture, environmentally sustainable design and practices, and incorporation of Alexandria’s rich history and culture.”*

In 2015, the North Potomac Yard developer representative indicated a desire to begin the process for redevelopment of the North Potomac Yard, which may necessitate amendments to the 2010 North Potomac Yard Small Area Plan and Design Standards. A North Potomac Yard Advisory Group was established by Council in February 2016. The Advisory Group serves as the community engagement forum to review the Plan and proposed amendments. The Advisory Group began meeting in April 2016, and has held a total of 11 meetings.

The original SAP as adopted in 2010 includes approximately 7.5 million square feet of mixed use development east of Route 1, between Arlington County and E. Glebe Road. The original plan envisioned a realigned Potomac Avenue that would run parallel to the rail tracks, separating a linear park from the development west of Potomac Avenue within. The transportation strategy was designed to facilitate a significant mode shift – from private autos to alternative, more sustainable means of transportation, consistent with the City’s Transportation Master Plan. Recommendations include strategies to manage transportation demand, expand the street grid and multimodal connectivity, provide additional transit capacity, incorporate an expansive bicycle and pedestrian network.

The transportation network includes a future Potomac Yard Metrorail station, a dedicated high-capacity transit corridor (Metroway) along Route 1, Silver Meteor Avenue and Potomac Avenue, and improved north-south and east-west pedestrian and bicycle facilities with improved connectivity to the regional trail system.

Throughout the SAP Update process, a number of scenarios have been developed and reviewed by the Advisory Committee. The Advisory Committee recommended a street alignment that positions Potomac Avenue through the center of the development on its current alignment. This provides an additional 1.5 acres of open space, creates a more active and pedestrian friendly space at the future Potomac Yard Metro station (north entrance), allows for a phased development of the Potomac Avenue and Transitway, maximizes ridership for the Metroway, and provides flexibility of for continued study of the design and character of Potomac Avenue.

The proposed total land use numbers under full buildout is similar to the 2010 adopted plan (7.5 million square feet), however, the proposed plan amendment includes nearly double the amount of office space, a reduced amount of retail space, less residential use, and more specificity with certain land uses including a gym, and restaurant uses.

A first phase of development, anticipated to be completed by 2021, will be located to the east of Potomac Avenue that includes a mixture of retail, office, hotel and residential uses. The transitway will operate along Route 1, Evans Lane and Potomac Avenue in mixed traffic, and an intermodal transit stop will be located within proximity to the future Potomac Yard Metrorail station. Phase 2 will include additional development between Route 1 and Potomac Avenue, and is anticipated to be fully built out by 2040. The full buildout assumes that the transitway will be built to accommodate transit in dedicated lanes.

The planning effort is anticipated to conclude in June 2017 with the Plan's adoption by Council, after endorsement by the Transportation Commission on May 17, and approval by the Planning Commission in June. More information on the plan can be found at:

<https://www.alexandriava.gov/PotomacYardPlan>

DISCUSSION: The transportation analysis for the plan amendment is currently underway, and an update will be provided to the North Potomac Yard Advisory Committee on February 28, 2017. The transportation analysis is examining the impacts of the changes in land use, the new roadway network, but also builds in background and approved development that has changed since the 2010 adopted plan, including South Potomac Yard, the approved land uses and transportation network from the Route 1 / Oakville Triangle Corridor Plan. In addition, the updated transportation analysis also takes into consideration the Metroway service that has been operational since 2014.

A key consideration that has been raised by the Advisory Committee is the character of Potomac Avenue both during the interim Phase 1 condition, and the full buildout condition. Criteria for the design of Potomac Avenue for the first and second phases of development will be included in the small area plan amendment. It will include that Potomac Avenue be designed to be a north-south multimodal urban street that prioritizes pedestrians, bikes, transit and cars in that order. The future design considerations will include a generous (20-25') streetscape on each side, facilitation of safe pedestrian crossings, on-street parking where feasible, a street design that facilitates neighborhood connectivity on each side of the street, and Metroway service that maximizes accessibility and ridership.