



June 3, 2016

The Honorable Allison Silberberg  
Mayor, City of Alexandria  
301 King Street  
Alexandria, VA 22314

Re: Support for the Timely Completion of Alexandria's Potomac Yard Metrorail Station

Dear Mayor Silberberg:

On behalf of the Alexandria Chamber of Commerce, we are once again writing to express our strong support for the timely completion of the Potomac Yard Metrorail station. We are aware of several impending benchmarks; we urge you to keep the project moving and adhere to the published timeline.

As you know, the Chamber has been outspoken in its support for this project due to the robust economic benefits it will bring the City. To refresh your memory, the Chamber has stated the following about the Metro:

*Alexandria's primary opportunity to realize economic development necessary to balance and grow our tax base lies within Potomac Yard. Redevelopment of Potomac Yard will create a vibrant mixed use community of residences, hotels and office, retail and open space -- all with significant economic benefit to the City. It will enable the City to compete for existing and future federal and other large commercial users. Their presence in Alexandria will help rebalance our tax base. The Potomac Yard and Potomac Yard North Coordinated Development District plans contemplate and depend upon Metro service. Constructing a new Metro station at Potomac Yard, is critical to successful redevelopment.*

If Alexandria is to continue to be the vibrant jewel of the National Capital region's economic success and compete for significant future commercial real estate opportunities, as well as attract the best and brightest workers, the Potomac Yard Metrorail station must be completed on schedule. Further delay will mean lost opportunities for the City.

You've got our wholehearted support for the timely completion of the Potomac Yard Metrorail Station. Thank you for giving us the opportunity to reinforce the message that the project will have an enormously positive impact on Alexandria's economic development.

Sincerely,



Robert Shea  
2016 Chamber Board Chairman  
Alexandria Chamber of Commerce



Joseph Haggerty  
President & CEO  
Alexandria Chamber of Commerce

CC

Members of the Alexandria City Council

Mary Lyman, Chair, Alexandria Planning Commission

Members of the Alexandria Planning Commission

Mark Jinks, City Manager

Emily Baker, Deputy City Manager

Karl Moritz, Director, Department of Planning & Zoning

Yon Lambert, Director, Department of Transportation & Environmental Services



June 2, 2016

Chairman Martin E. Nohe  
Northern Virginia Transportation Authority  
3040 Williams Drive  
Fairfax, VA 22031

Re: Letter of Support for NVTA 70% Funding for Alexandria's Potomac Yard Metrorail Station and West End Transitway

Dear Chairman Nohe:

On behalf of the Alexandria Chamber of Commerce, we write to express support for two projects vying for NVTA 70% funding – the Potomac Yard Metrorail station and West End Transitway – both of which are vital not only to Alexandria's but also the region's future economic viability.

In 2015, the Chamber identified the Potomac Yard Metrorail Station as its top legislative priority and we continue to advocate for its development. The following statement captures the Chamber's official view on the Potomac Yard Metrorail Station:

*Alexandria's primary opportunity to realize economic development necessary to balance and grow our tax base lies within Potomac Yard. Redevelopment of Potomac Yard will create a vibrant mixed use community of residences, hotels and office, retail and open space -- all with significant economic benefit to the City. It will enable the City to compete for existing and future federal and other large commercial users. Their presence in Alexandria will help rebalance our tax base. The Potomac Yard and Potomac Yard North Coordinated Development District plans contemplate and depend upon Metro service. Constructing a new Metro station at Potomac Yard, is critical to successful redevelopment.*

Alexandria has always played a major role in the National Capital Region's commerce, from its early days two centuries ago as a port city to its role today as home to major government agencies, large corporations, international nonprofits, and scores of small businesses that make up the backbone of the country's economy.

Reports indicate that a staggering 86% of new commercial development in the Washington, DC region is occurring within ¼ mile of a Metro station.<sup>1</sup> If Alexandria is to

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<sup>1</sup> <http://planitmetro.com/2015/04/22/vast-majority-of-new-office-in-region-near-metro/>

continue to be a vibrant contributor to the National Capital Region's success and compete for significant future commercial real estate opportunities, building the Potomac Yard Metrorail station is crucial.

On the opposite side of the City is another project of great importance to moving people not only around the City but the region, as well: the West End Transitway.

The Chamber is committed to developing a safe and efficient multi-modal transportation system that moves people throughout Alexandria and the region, makes the City more than just a commuter pass-through, and helps to manage our growth and economic expansion. As noted in the City's application, "The West End Transitway is an important Bus Rapid Transit for the region," which will connect Alexandria to major transportation hubs in Arlington, Washington, DC, and Fairfax County, as well as provide additional multi-modal (pedestrian and bike friendly) options that will help in the mitigation of traffic. Anyone who has spent a day commuting in this region knows that if we are to attract and retain the most qualified workers, we must make it easier for people to travel to and from their places of employment. The West End Transitway will facilitate the type of 21<sup>st</sup> century multimodal transportation needed to foster increased economic development along the Alexandria/Arlington County/Fairfax County borders.

The Chamber wholeheartedly supports NVTA 70% funds for the Potomac Yard Metrorail Station and the West End Transitway. We thank NVTA for recognizing the significance of these two projects and for providing us an opportunity to endorse the positive impact they will have on Alexandria's and the region's economic development.

Sincerely,



Robert Shea  
2016 Chamber Board Chairman  
Alexandria Chamber of Commerce



Joseph Haggerty  
President & CEO  
Alexandria Chamber of Commerce



MPA2016-0001, REZ2016,0001,  
DSUP2016-0004  
Additional Materials

**DEPARTMENT OF RECREATION, PARKS  
AND CULTURAL ACTIVITIES**

1108 Jefferson Street  
Alexandria, Virginia 22314

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Director

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June 6, 2016

Mayor Allison Silberberg  
Vice Mayor Justin M. Wilson  
Councilman Willie F. Bailey, Sr.  
Councilman John Taylor Chapman  
Councilman Timothy B. Lovain  
Councilwoman Redella S. Pepper  
Councilman Paul C. Smedberg

Re: Potomac Yard Metro

CC: City of Alexandria Planning Commission

Dear Mayor Silberberg, City Council Members, Members of the Planning Commission:

The Park and Recreation Commission writes in support of the Special Use Permit applications related to the Potomac Yard Metro Station.

The Commission has had monthly updates throughout the planning process from the Department of Recreation, Parks, and Cultural Activities (RPCA). In May, the Commission held an additional public hearing on the Metro project specific to the SUPs and voted unanimously to support the applications.

Actively participating in the design process, the Commission raised several issues with that we believe are adequately addressed by the plans and the SUP conditions.

First, the Commission made clear that parkland should not be used for parking, bus stops, or kiss and ride features. We are pleased to see provisions to this effect remain in the SUP conditions. Potomac Yard Park is a well-loved and active park and should remain so.

Second, the Commission believes the Potomac Yard bicycle and pedestrian trail is a key element for the success of the Metro station. It is critical that residents and visitors be able to safely walk and bike to and from the station. To that end, the Commission consistently called for adequate bicycle parking. We are pleased that the design provides for significant bicycle parking. Although not in the current plans, the Commission expects to see bicycle share stations in the future as the city continues to work with Capital Bike Share. We do have some concern about the regulation of bicycle and pedestrian cross-traffic where the metro entrance and the trail intersect but have confidence that any issues will be worked out as the project moves forward.

Third, the Commission requested that entrances to the station be designed so that they are consistent with and seamless with the character and use of the surrounding park. We believe that the design process resulted in appropriately designed entrances that mesh well with the two parks: Potomac Yard Park and Potomac Greens Park.

Fourth, the Commission asked that every effort be made to ensure that both Potomac Greens Park and Potomac Yard Park remain safe and accessible throughout the construction phase to the extent possible. We asked that if areas of the parks must be made inaccessible for safety reasons, the time of inaccessibility should be as limited as possible and adequate communication regarding alternatives be made to the public. We are satisfied that these concerns are addressed by the SUP conditions. We are pleased that the Potomac Greens playground will be relocated so those who wish to use it may do so. We are also pleased that to the extent the pedestrian and bicycle trail becomes unusable, well-communicated detours will be provided.

Finally, we note that we have consistently expressed concern about park maintenance both during construction and once the metro is open. We are pleased to see maintenance addressed in the SUP conditions. The increased use of park facilities that come with the metro station will result in the need for significant additional maintenance including the need for additional trash pick-up, among other things, and trust that you are aware of this issue in your consideration of the project.

We applaud RPCA and all who participated in the design and planning process for this project. We urge you to approve the Special Use Permits so that this worthy project may go forward.

Sincerely yours,

Jennifer Atkins, Chair, on behalf of the

Park and Recreation Commission

To Chairman Lyman and Members of the Planning Commission:

The current proposal to build a Metro Station at Potomac Yard should be rejected because it is incongruent and destructive to the memorial character of the George Washington Memorial Parkway. Three critical issues are:

- The project is literally on the George Washington Memorial Parkway, which is a Federal Park that was created for the purpose of enhancing and maintaining a historical heritage.
- The Metro Station will be clearly visible from the George Washington Memorial Parkway.
- The architecture is an absolute abandonment of that historical heritage and stands in opposition to the memorial character of the George Washington Memorial Parkway.

In 1929, the City of Alexandria reached an agreement with the Federal Government to have the George Washington Memorial Parkway (GWMP), a Federal Park, run through the City of Alexandria by guaranteeing “to restrict the said street to residential and business development of such character and of such types of building as will be in keeping with the dignity, purpose and memorial character of said highway,” and that “it enact no ordinance or take any other action which will be in conflict herewith or contrary to the purpose and Intent hereof.”

Having this Federal Park run through the city proved to be very beneficial, and it is responsible for the creation of the Historic District in a quid pro quo situation. The Parkway was originally created to enhance the historical heritage and was intended for “recreation rather than movement; restricted to pleasure vehicles, and arranged with regard for scenery, topography and similar features rather than for directness.” In one fell swoop, it is all being jeopardized for the sake of a location and architecture that is not necessary.

The current proposal would build the Metro Station on U.S. Government parkland, and the easement that was originally created to protect the view of that park. According to a previous Alexandria City Staff Report, the Metro Station “would be clearly visible from the GWMP.” The following rendition is a realistic, and to scale, view of the metro station from the George Washington Memorial Parkway.



The current Staff Report now indicates that the architecture can be hidden by vegetation, which is a dubious statement, given that (a) nothing is growing there, and (b) this would be an implicit condemnation of the very architecture.

## History of the George Washington Memorial Parkway

No words can adequately express just how important the first president was in uniting a young nation. George Washington's residence at Mount Vernon and the city that bore his name could be dismissed as cultural icons, if it were not for his importance to the American heritage. The two became intertwined through not only George Washington, but also by the road connecting the two. This connection was so great, that in "Historic Buildings of America as Seen and Described by Famous Writers", Arthur Shadwell Martin relates how "every patriotic American who visits Washington makes a pious pilgrimage to the home and tomb of the Father of his Country. " But, haste was out of the question," the Family Magazine related in 1837, "for never was worse road extant than that to Mount Vernon." Departing from Alexandria, the road to Mount Vernon went inland, rather than along the river as it does today. There was scarcely a glimpse of the scenic Potomac. Instead, one was required to traverse two large hills on an inland road in various state of disrepair that sometimes was more like a wooded trail.

Caroline Gilman described it in her book, "the Poetry of Travelling" as being "intolerably bad," and that "no one probably passes it without thinking before he arrives at Mount Vernon, that he has paid too dear for his whistle."The City of Alexandria fared no better than the road, having also fallen on hard times. Many authors described it as a dilapidated little town where "no one wishes to linger." Nevertheless, the importance of Mount Vernon was growing in the national conscience, even bringing forth calls for the government to take it over. While the family of George Washington had graciously accepted visitors for many years, they eventually could not manage the upkeep of the Mansion.

To save this landmark, the Mount Vernon Ladies Association was created in 1856 as the first historic preservation effort in America. It raised enough money to purchase the property two years later. Although, roads existed to Mount Vernon, they were neither the original one, nor ones that lent themselves to contemplative or pleasurable drives. Consequently, in 1887, in an article he wrote for the National Republican (a DC paper), Edward Fox came up with the idea to create a National Highway from Washington DC to Mount Vernon. Fox called for the "making of a splendid drive, a grand avenue and 100 feet wide that was properly graded and shaded between the capital city of the nation and the tomb of its great founder."

Building on the enthusiasm of the Fox article, in 1888, Mayor John B. Smoot of Alexandria founded the Mount Vernon Avenue Association in Alexandria to promulgate the creation of a national road to George Washington's home. The road would travel through Alexandria on the basis that many existing establishments were there when George Washington walked these streets. Since fortune had bypassed Alexandria, the buildings were still there. The Mount Vernon Avenue Association appealed to Congress the following year, which then really got started with trying to design this. They appropriated money for a Colonel Haines to come up with three routes (one of which came through Alexandria). No matter which route was selected along the Potomac, Haines intended it always to be in the process of development and embellishment. Envisioned as having a monumental character, the proposed

“National Road”, was a symbolic link between Mount Vernon Estate, the site so closely associated with George Washington, and the city that bore his name. Congress, unfortunately allocated no further money.

By 1898, the Centennial of the Nation’s Capital was impending, so a group of citizens approached President McKinley about a plan for celebrating the event. This eventually resulted in the creation of the McMillan Senate Park Committee in 1901-1902, which was one of the most important committees in the nation’s history, and which was named for Senator James McMillan of Michigan, Chairman of the Senate Committee on the District of Columbia. Park enthusiasts, historians, and planners in Washington, DC, often invoke the great and expansive vision of the McMillan Plan as the conceptual underpinnings of today's National Mall and Washington, D.C.'s Park System.

Although the McMillan Commission did not directly deal with it, they very specifically addressed the need for and importance of having a road leading to the home of the father of our nation. The McMillan Senate Park Committee had clearly been influenced by landscape architect pioneers Olmstead, Vaux, Cleveland, and Eliot, who are credited with creating the term "Parkway." **The McMillan Committee envisioned that “these drives had certain definitions: Parkways or ways through or between parks; distinguished from highways or ordinary streets by the dominant purpose of recreation rather than movement; restricted to pleasure vehicles, and arranged with regard for scenery, topography and similar features rather than for directness”.**

Although WWI had taken its toll, interest in history (particularly Colonial and early American history) remained strong. The Bicentennial of George Washington’s birth was the impetus for a 1924 committee formed by Congress, and in 1932, the road was constructed. The road did travel through Alexandria on what is now known as "Washington Street." In doing so, the City of Alexandria entered into a 1929 agreement with the Federal Government promising to keep the memorial character of the Parkway. However, by 1946, Alexandria had fallen off the memorial wagon (so to speak), so the Federal Government indicated that the Parkway was to be moved away from Alexandria. At this point, the City of Alexandria offered to create a historic district to protect the Parkway, which would then remain in Alexandria. That is the genesis of Alexandria's historic district. Over the years, there have been numerous battles back and forth between Alexandria and the Federal Government.

In 1999, Alexandria requested that the National Park Service provide a clarification as to the memorial nature of the Parkway. Many of the features from the National Park Service's response to the City of Alexandria were incorporated into the Washington Street Standards as we know them today. The George Washington Memorial Parkway is therefore the genesis of the Alexandria Historic District, which, in turn, has generated a significant tourism response. The George Washington Memorial Parkway (and the City of Alexandria) thus shares this heritage with the world, as people from all nations and walks of life pass through Alexandria to make a pilgrimage to Mount Vernon to pay their respects to the "Father of Our Country." The George Washington Memorial Parkway also represents a trust placed on the City

by the Federal Government that Alexandria would maintain the highway for the purpose and dignity it that was envisioned to convey, and that the Historic District created as a quid pro quo would continue to protect this singular heritage.

To conclude, the George Washington Memorial Parkway, is not a neglected stepchild, but rather the impetus for the entire Historic District, and by inference, it is responsible for Alexandria's place on the tourist maps. It inculcates a heritage that warrants sharing with the world, as people from all over the globe make a pilgrimage from Washington D.C. to Mount Vernon to pay their respects to the Father of this Country. The Parkway also represents a trust placed on the City by the Federal Government that it would maintain the highway for the purpose and dignity it that was envisioned to convey. No person states this as well as did Caroline Oilman in 1838: "indeed, it is a curious step from Alexandria to Mount Vernon; the one teeming with the most worldly associations, and the other sacred to the highest feelings of our nature".

### Architecture is incongruent with the memorial Character of the Parkway

Thorncrown Chapel is a chapel designed by E. Fay Jones and ostensibly, the genesis of the metro design. The design recalls the Prairie School of architecture popularized by Frank Lloyd Wright, with whom Jones had apprenticed.

The chapel rises 48 feet into the sky with over 6,000 square feet of glass and 425 windows. Its dimensions are 24 feet by 60 feet. The chapel is made with all organic materials to fit its natural setting. The only steel in the structure forms a diamond shaped pattern in its wooden trusses.

Constructed mostly of wood and other materials indigenous to northwestern Arkansas, the design minimized material transportation costs. They used materials no bigger than what two people could carry. Though it looks like an open-air structure, the chapel is a glass-enclosed, conditioned space. They enlarged the skylight to have a natural ornamentation lighting effect throughout the chapel.

Visitors to Thorncrown Chapel will probably be struck by two things: the immense glass walls and ceiling and the dense forest visible all around. ..in which it is nestled into.



The style, size material and harmonious integration, subservience to the trees, are not options, but quite integral to the entire presentation.



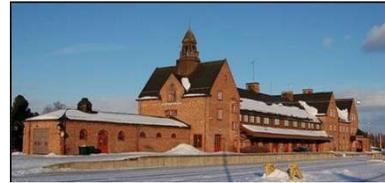
The metro station obeys none of these. It is a towering structure, which bears none of Frank Lloyds's Wrights DNA or Fay Jones sensitivity and is subservient to no other element.



**Elevation view looking west**

In so doing it creates the opposite effect of Thorncrown. By building a large scale, and accentuated by the metal, the design becomes industrial inharmonious and very unfriendly and unsympathetic structure to the George Washington Memorial Highway. Far cry from the spiritual sense of Thorncrown.

I cannot but wonder why it is so different. **Ambiance**, that seems to be the difference. It is the glue that brings forth a sense of harmony and tranquility that helps to hold the community together. Which is why I you reject the proposal and revert to a more traditionalist style as seen here.



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