Attachment #5

October 20, 2015

Mrs. Mary Lyman, Chair
City of Alexandria Planning Commission
301 King Street, Room 2100
Alexandria, VA 22314

Re: *Eisenhower West Small Area Plan*

Dear Chairwoman Lyman,

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on *Eisenhower West Small Area Plan* ("Plan"). Metro is supportive of the Plan's transportation and connectivity goals that promote transit oriented development (TOD) by linking transit and land uses resulting in better connectivity between Van Dorn Metro station and the surrounding communities.

The major node designation at Van Dorn Metrorail Station will create the synergy needed to stimulate TOD activities that serve the west end of the plan area, as well as encourage station development and transit infrastructure improvements. Like the City, Metro envisions vibrant TOD at the Van Dorn Station where multimodal transit and development (i.e., residential, office and retail) exist harmoniously.

In the Plan, much attention has been dedicated to the role that transportation improvements will play in supporting the growth envisioned in the study area. Metro's current Station Planning work includes the *Van Dorn Access Improvement Study* which aligns seamlessly with the Eisenhower West SMA Plan recommendations for improved pedestrian and bicycle access and future transit links. Metro's study analyzed the existing bicycle and pedestrian conditions and developed alternatives for enhanced bicycle and pedestrian access to provide a safe, convenient, and functional connection to the station.

Metro wants to ensure that people are able to walk and bicycle safely and conveniently within 3-5 miles of their homes or work, and to make connections to well designed "pedestrian and bicycle friendly" roadways that accommodate multimodal transportation. Critical to increasing accessibility is having transit-supportive infrastructure which guarantees Metro's ability to provide efficient and cost-effective transit service, thereby ensuring Metro's transit operations continue to function well now and in the future.

Eisenhower West Plan recommendations to redesign Van Dorn Street as an attractive green boulevard with dedicated transit lanes for the West End Transitway and the proposed new pedestrian and bicycle facilities, locating bike lanes along roadways, possible linkages including trails and other transportation improvements would be extremely beneficial in the Metro station area. Therefore, we are supportive of the Plan's transportation strategies that provide better connectivity to Metro's transit network and improve the function and aesthetics of transit infrastructure within the Metro node, most notably is the City's proposed multimodal bridge connecting to the station.

Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority

600 Fifth Street, NW
Washington, DC 20001
202/962-1234

www.metroopensdoors.com

A District of Columbia, Maryland and Virginia Transit Partnership

The Plan includes straightening Eisenhower Avenue as part of redeveloping Metro's property which would impact Metro's existing Kiss & Ride and Park & Ride facilities. The Kiss & Ride facility is well utilized and provides pick-up and drop-off for private shuttles, automobiles and taxis. It also includes spaces for short-term parking and car sharing. This station has the second highest private shuttle activity in the Metrorail station with 40 shuttles per hour in the AM peak hours on an average weekday. The Park & Ride has 361 spaces which fill up on an average weekday. A strategy for replacement of these facilities would need to be part of any redevelopment plan for Metro's property.

During this planning initiative in the City, Metro staff worked with the Planning Department to shape future land use at and around the Metro stations. We have expressed the need for zoning flexibility that would respond to market conditions and promote future development opportunities to maximize the highest and best use development. Flexibility is critical to advance Metro's role in facilitating joint development on Metro property and supporting the City to meet its development objectives. It is also equally important that other landowners and developers also have the flexibility to promote TOD in the area that is needed as a compliment to the Plan's vision for the City of Alexandria.

In closing, we appreciate the opportunity to offer our support for *the Eisenhower West Small Area Plan.* Metro continues its commitment to working with the City of Alexandria on this important initiative that will promote ongoing economic investment and stimulate TOD, improve the transportation infrastructure for the future, support sustainable growth, maintain the quality of life and get people where they need and want to go.

If we can provide additional information, please do not hesitate to contact me at 202-962-1504 or Ms. Catherine Jones at 202-962-2866.

Best regards,

E Robin McKechnie for

Andy Scott,
Acting Director
Office of Real Estate and Station Area Planning

cc: City of Alexandria Planning Board
Radhika Mohan, City of Alexandria, Principal Planner