



Alexandria Transportation Commission
301 King Street
Alexandria, VA 22314

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May 9, 2017

The Honorable Mayor and Members of City Council
City Hall
301 King Street
Alexandria, VA 22314

Re: Transportation Elements of North Potomac Yard Small Area Plan Update

Dear Mayor Silberberg and Members of City Council:

At its April 19, 2017 meeting, the Alexandria Transportation Commission reviewed the draft North Potomac Yard Small Area Plan, including the Plan's transportation recommendations. The Commission moved to affirm that the transportation recommendations in the draft North Potomac Yard Small Area Plan are consistent with the goals outlined in the City's Transportation Master Plan, adopted in 2008, as shown in the attachment.

As such, the Transportation Commission recommends paying continued attention to the implementation of the transportation recommendations, especially the pedestrian and bicycle improvements, so that they meet the goals of both the plan and the Complete Streets Policy Hierarchy that ranks, in order of priority, pedestrian traffic and access, bicycle traffic and access, transit traffic and access, and personal vehicle traffic and access.

The Transportation Commission was created by Council to advocate and promote the development of balanced transportation systems in the City through oversight of the Transportation Master Plan. Our action on April 19th was conducted to fulfill that oversight obligation.

The Commission appreciates your consideration of its input on this project.

Sincerely,

Jerry King
Chair, Alexandria Transportation Commission

Attachment: North Potomac Yard Small Area Plan – Comparison to Transportation Master Plan

cc: Alexandria Transportation Commission
Mark Jinks, City Manager
Yon Lambert, Director, T&ES
Carrie Sanders, Deputy Director, Transportation/Transit, T&ES
Christopher Ziemann, Division Chief, Transportation Planning, T&ES

TRANSPORTATION MASTER PLAN GOALS:	WITH THE 2010 ADOPTED PLAN	WITH THE PLAN UPDATE
Transit		
<p>Ensure that people can travel into, within and out of the City of Alexandria by providing a mass transit system that combines different modes of travel into a seamless, comprehensive and coordinated effort.</p>	<p>With the 2010 Plan, the Route 1 Metroway would use the alignment currently planned, using E. Glebe Road and a realigned Potomac Avenue. This alignment requires that stations be at the far east side of the development, and creates a longer walking distance to Route 1 and areas west. The future Potomac Yard Metro station would be located on the east side of Potomac Avenue, requiring pedestrians and bicyclists to cross a major, wide arterial before accessing the development area. Connectivity between local transit service, Route 1 Metroway and the Potomac Yard Metrorail station would be accommodated through an intermodal facility.</p>	<p>The Plan Update keeps Potomac Avenue along its current alignment. The Metroway is anticipated to use Wesmond Drive instead of Evans, allowing for the Metroway stop to be closer to the future Potomac Yard Metrorail station entrance. Using the current alignment of Potomac Avenue also allows for Metroway stops to be more centrally located within the development, and closer to Route 1 and areas west. Keeping the current Potomac Avenue alignment also allows pedestrians and bicyclists to access greater areas of the development without having to immediately cross Potomac Avenue. Connectivity between local transit service, Route 1 Metroway and the Potomac Yard Metrorail station would be accommodated within the urban fabric of adjacent redevelopment.</p>
Pedestrian		
<p>Engineering: The City will provide a continuous, connected and accessible network that enables pedestrians - particularly children and those with mobility impairments - to move safely and comfortably between places and destinations.</p>	<p>The 2010 Plan provides for a good pedestrian network and street grid that facilitates good pedestrian connectivity, including connections to South Potomac Yard, and areas west of Route 1. A drawback of the 2010 Plan is that it requires pedestrians to cross a wide, busy Potomac Avenue to access the Potomac Yard Metrorail Station.</p>	<p>The Plan Update recommends an improved street grid that will facilitate better pedestrian connectivity, similar to the 2010 Plan. However, the Plan Update improves pedestrian connectivity from the Potomac Yard Metrorail station to the plan area, by dispersing pedestrians to activity centers prior to Potomac Avenue, and also includes specific parameters for the design of Potomac Avenue to minimize the width of pedestrian crossings, and includes regular signalized intersections along Potomac Avenue to better facilitate pedestrian crossings. The Plan Update also recommends separating pedestrians and bicycles on the trail network within the park in Landbay K. The Plan update also includes the requirement to follow the City's Complete Street design guidelines that include ways to improve pedestrian design and safety.</p>

<p>Encouragement: The City will encourage mobility for all pedestrians, regardless of age or ability, by promoting walking as a means of improving health and increasing transit usage.</p>	<p>The 2010 Plan includes an improved street grid and associated pedestrian facilities will help to encourage walking between uses and to transit. The Plan also requires an extension of Four Mile Run trail to improve access to the Mt. Vernon Trail. The new facilities will be constructed to be ADA accessible, attractive, and convenient, and therefore encourage users of all ages and abilities to access uses. A drawback is that the plan requires pedestrians to cross a wide, busy Potomac Avenue to access the Metrorail station and park, which could discourage use of these facilities.</p>	<p>The Plan Update also maintains the improved street grid and trail system and associated pedestrian facilities will help to encourage walking between uses and to transit. The new facilities will be constructed to be ADA accessible, attractive, and convenient, and therefore encourage users of all ages and abilities to access uses. In addition, the proposed design for Potomac Avenue, allows for easier access to the Metrorail station, and recommendations for safer pedestrian design will further encourage and promote transit use as well as encourage healthy activities.</p>
<p>Education: The City will develop a Safe Routes to School Program and awareness initiatives that address pedestrian safety, rights and responsibilities.</p>	<p>The 2010 Plan includes improved pedestrian facilities that are ADA accessible, separated from autos and have an improved streetscape. In addition, the Plan includes improved connections to the future potential school within the plan area. These recommended improvements are compatible with a Safe Routes to School program.</p>	<p>The Plan Update includes improved pedestrian facilities that are ADA accessible, separated from autos and have an improved streetscape. In addition, the Plan includes improved connections to the future potential school within the plan area. These recommended improvements are compatible with a Safe Routes to School program.</p>
<p>Safety: The City will create a safe pedestrian environment through effective law enforcement and implementation of pedestrian safety countermeasures.</p>	<p>The 2010 Plan recommends a compact layout with a mixture of land uses and improved road grids that will result in direct, visible pedestrian zones with additional crosswalks. It recommends widened sidewalks and trails that are ADA accessible, and buffered from vehicles. The 2010 Plan also requires funding for traffic calming in neighborhoods west of Route 1, that will improve safety for pedestrians. One drawback of the 2010 Plan is that it realigns Potomac Avenue along the eastern edge, where the east-west streets terminate onto a wide street. This requires pedestrians to cross a wide street to access the metrorail station, and park within Landbay K. These improvements will encourage pedestrian activity, improve pedestrian visibility, and help to reduce auto speeds, thereby improving overall pedestrian safety.</p>	<p>The Plan Update is consistent in developing a compact layout with a mixture of land uses, improved road grid, wide, accessible sidewalks and trails. The Plan Update also requires the funding for traffic calming improvements west of Route 1. In addition, the Plan Update improves pedestrian connectivity from the Potomac Yard Metrorail station to the plan area, by dispersing pedestrians to activity centers prior to Potomac Avenue, and also includes specific parameters for the design of Potomac Avenue to minimize pedestrian crossing width, and regular signalized intersections along Potomac Avenue to better facilitate pedestrian crossings. The Plan Update also recommends separating pedestrians and bicycles on the trail network within the park in Landbay K. also requires funding for traffic calming in neighborhoods west of Route 1, that will improve safety for pedestrians. Finally, the Plan update recommends a shared street separating the park from the development, designed to slow down vehicles and act as a front door to the park. These improvements will encourage pedestrian activity, improve pedestrian visibility, and help to reduce auto speeds, thereby improving overall pedestrian safety.</p>

Bicycle		
<p>Engineering: The City will complete a connected system of primary and secondary bikeways with ample bicycle parking to serve bicyclists needs.</p>	<p>The 2010 Plan recommends a comprehensive network of bicycle facilities, including an extended Potomac Avenue trail linking Braddock Road Metro area to North Potomac Yard, an extended Four Mile Run Trail to connect to the Mt. Vernon Trail, and improved on- and off-street bicycle facilities to provide good east-west and north-south bicycle connectivity.</p>	<p>The Plan Update also includes the extended Potomac Avenue trail, extended Four Mile Run Trail, and improved east-west and north-south bicycle connectivity. The Plan Update has identified the east-west streets of Tide Lock Street, Silver Meteor, and Wesmond Street to have bicycle facilities. It recommends north-south bicycle facilities on Route 1 and along Potomac Avenue. The Plan Update requires new streets to follow the Complete Street design guidelines, includes the addition of shared streets, such as along the linear park, and reinforces the separation of pedestrian and bicycles on trails. The Plan also recommends bicycle parking at major activity centers, including Bike Share stations located at major activity centers within each neighborhood in the Plan area.</p>
<p>Encouragement: The City will seek to increase bicycle usage and bicycle-transit connections through targeted outreach and encouragement.</p>	<p>The City's Transportation Master Plan includes objectives such as integration of bicycles with transit, and providing bicycle accommodations through development review, as well as targeted outreach. The 2010 plan includes improved connectivity between bikes and other uses, including transit, bike parking, and the requirement for a Transportation Management Plan that would include strategies to encourage and increase bicycle usage.</p>	<p>The Plan Update is consistent with the 2010 plan, but includes additional recommendations that encourage bicycle usage. The Plan Update requires new streets to follow the Complete Street design guidelines, includes the addition of shared streets, such as along the park, reinforces the separation of pedestrian and bicycles on trails, and also includes the requirement of bikeshare stations that will encourage bicycle use.</p>
<p>Education: The City will develop and implement targeted Safe Routes to School programs as well as additional programs for adult cyclists, and motorists.</p>	<p>The City's Transportation Master Plan includes objectives such as education, bicycle registration and outreach. The 2010 Plan recommends improved bicycle facilities throughout the Plan area, that are compatible with a Safe Routes to School program. Other recommended programs in the City's Transportation Master Plan, such as education, providing bicycle maps, and outreach would continue to be implemented.</p>	<p>The Plan Update is consistent with the 2010 plan. In addition, the improved bicycle connectivity, complete street design guideline requirements, and bikeshare stations will be beneficial toward a Safe Routes to School program.</p>

<p>Safety: The City will create a safe bicycle environment and reduce user conflict on shared-use paths through effective law enforcement, detailed crash analysis and implementation of bicycle safety countermeasures.</p>	<p>The objectives identified in the City's Transportation Master Plan to meet this goal would continue to be implemented. The 2010 Plan improves on the street grid, and provides dedicated bicycle facilities throughout the plan area to improve bicycle safety, resulting in greater awareness of bicycles by motorists, and overall improved safety for bicyclists.</p>	<p>The Plan Update is consistent with the 2010 Plan, but improves safety by requiring use of the Complete Street design guidelines, separating pedestrians from bicycles on the trail within Landbay K, and recommending a more pedestrian and bicycle friendly design of Potomac Avenue, with a grid that crosses the street through signalized intersections.</p>
<p><i>Streets and Neighborhood Protection (Traffic Calming)</i></p>		
<p>Provide protection to residential neighborhoods from traffic operating at excessive speeds and excessive volumes of traffic.</p>	<p>The 2010 Plan recommends a street grid that will include traffic control at intersections. The grid and streets will be designed in a manner to reduce vehicular speeds, especially on residential streets, and will be consistent with the Complete Streets design guidelines. Features include narrowed lanes, wide sidewalks and non-motorized paths, pedestrian crosswalks, bulbouts, on-street parking, and varying pavement materials. These features will provide greater emphasis toward pedestrians, thereby reducing conflicts with autos and improving overall pedestrian safety. The Plan also includes funding toward traffic calming improvements for neighborhoods west of Route 1.</p>	<p>The Plan Update is consistent with the 2010 Plan. However, it also builds on the 2010 plan through the addition of the shared street along the park, which will be designed to slow vehicles. The plan also keeps Potomac Avenue on its current alignment, but requires it to be designed in a manner to better control traffic and improve pedestrian safety.</p>
<p>Keep neighborhood street use, to the greatest extent possible, within the classification defined in the transportation chapter of the Master Plan.</p>	<p>The 2010 Plan recommends an improved street grid that results in an addition of local streets where traffic would travel at a slower speed. Arterials such as Route 1 and Potomac Avenue are redesigned in a manner to improve connectivity and safety for all modes, including improved pedestrian crossings, and improved transit connectivity.</p>	<p>The Plan Update is consistent with the 2010 Plan. However, it also builds on the 2010 plan through the addition of the shared street along the park that will be designed to slow vehicles. The plan also keeps Potomac Avenue on its current alignment, but requires it to be designed in a manner to better control traffic and improve pedestrian safety, which is an improvement over the 2010 plan.</p>
<p>Increase access, safety, comfort and convenience for pedestrians and bicyclists by changing the culture of neighborhood street use from "cars first" to "people first".</p>	<p>The 2010 Plan recommends a compact layout with a mixture of land uses, and improved street grid, and safe, accessible, attractive and safe pedestrian and bicycle facilities. A key feature of the plan is to provide a more human scaled, memorable place that focuses on people, and neighborhood nodes. These features will encourage more walking and biking between uses, and to transit, improve pedestrian visibility, and help to reduce auto speeds, thereby creating a culture of "people first".</p>	<p>The Plan Update is consistent with the 2010 Plan. However, it also builds on the 2010 plan through the requirement to use the City's Complete Street design guidelines that prioritize pedestrians and bicyclists. The plan update also includes the addition of the shared street along the park that will be designed to slow vehicles and give greater priority to pedestrians and bicyclists. The plan also keeps Potomac Avenue on its current alignment, but requires it to be designed in a manner to better control traffic and improve pedestrian and bicycle safety, which is an improvement over the 2010 plan.</p>

Base the expenditure of public resources on need.	The 2010 Plan anticipates the redevelopment of most of the area within the Plan area. The expense attributed toward the development of the majority of streets / blocks, pedestrian and bicycle facilities would primarily be born by the developer, and developer contributions were also required for some improvements such as Metroway, the Potomac Yard Metrorail station, traffic calming west of Route 1, intersection improvements on Route 1, and improvements along Four Mile Run.	The Plan Update is consistent with the 2010 Plan. However, it also builds on the 2010 plan through the requirement of developer contributions toward bikeshare stations at key activity centers.
Foster a collaborative working relationship between the City staff and neighborhood residents in the development of traffic calming measures.	The Complete Streets program includes funding for traffic calming projects. As part of the program, staff identifies projects based on citizen requests and if the street warrants traffic calming measures. Staff conducts outreach with area residents for input prior to project implementation. The 2010 Plan requires a monetary contribution of approximately \$1 million (in 2010 dollars, and increased annually for inflation) from the developer toward traffic calming improvements on streets west of Route 1.	The Plan Update is consistent with the 2010 Plan. City staff would conduct outreach with residents in neighborhoods west of Route 1 for specific traffic calming improvements, prior to the occupancy of development within North Potomac Yard.
Parking		
A comprehensive parking management strategy that is fully integrated with the City's plans for transit, streets, bicycles and pedestrians and functions in coordination with these plans - furthering the City's overall goals and wider transportation vision.	Today, the area is dominated by a commercial shopping center with big box retail, which results in the need to provide extensive surface parking. The 2010 Plan recommended a mixture of uses near high capacity transit, such as the Metroway and the future Potomac Yard Metrorail station. The proposed multi-modal transportation system and higher density mixed land uses will result in a greater share of persons who will walk, bike or ride transit. These characteristics thus allow for lower parking requirements (per the City's recently amended residential parking requirements), and opportunities for shared parking. The Plan recommends that parking spaces be efficiently managed to maximize turnover of spaces, and include smart parking technologies and shared parking. A parking management plan will be required for developments as they occur, which could include measures such as unbundled residential / mixed-use parking. On-street spaces may be metered and be part of a performance parking program.	The Plan Update is consistent with the 2010 Plan. In addition, the Plan Update includes short term drop off parking near the future Metrorail station. Also, the Plan Update recommends on-street parking along Potomac Avenue during Phase 1. On-street parking would be allowed during non-peak periods, and during the peak period on street parking would be provided in the non-peak travel direction. As part of the full buildout, the design of Potomac Avenue would include on-street parking where feasible.