



Master Plan Amendment #2017-0003

North Potomac Yard Small Area Plan Update

Issue:	Planning Commission Hearing:	June 6, 2017
Consideration of a request to amend the North Potomac Yard Chapter of the City's Master Plan	City Council Hearing:	June 13, 2017
Staff: <i>Planning and Zoning</i> : Karl Moritz, Director; Jeffrey Farnier, Deputy Director; Carrie Beach, Division Chief, Richard Lawrence, Urban Planner; Jose Ayala, Urban Planner; Ashley Labadie, Urban Planner; Katherine Carraway, Urban Planner; Mary Catherine Collins, Urban Planner; <i>Housing</i> : Helen McIlvaine, Director; Tamara Jovovic, Housing Analyst; <i>Project Implementation</i> : Jason Kacamburas, Potomac Yard Metro Coordinator; <i>Recreation, Parks and Cultural Activities</i> : Beth Znidersic, Principal Planner; <i>Transportation and Environmental Services</i> : Yon Lambert, Director; Carrie Sanders, Deputy Director; William Skrabak, Deputy Director; Steve Sindiong, Principal Planner; Lalit Sharma, Division Chief; Khoa Dinh Tran, Environmental Program Manager; Erin Bevis-Carver, Civil Engineer.		

PLANNING COMMISSION ACTION, JUNE 6, 2017:

On a motion by Commissioner Koenig, seconded by Commissioner McMahon, the Planning Commission voted to initiate Master Plan Amendment #2017-0003. The motion carried on a vote of 7 to 0.

On a motion by Commissioner Koenig, seconded by Commissioner McMahon, the Planning Commission voted to adopt the resolution and recommend approval of Master Plan Amendment #2017-0003 with the following amendments:

- 1) Modify Recommendation 2.1 in Chapter 2 to include “and strive to achieve carbon neutrality for buildings by 2030” as follows:

2.1. North Potomac Yard should strive to achieve carbon neutrality by 2040, and strive to achieve carbon neutral buildings by 2030.

- 2) Replace Recommendation 2.5 in Chapter 2 “Encourage the use of alternative energy sources, including but not limited to, solar and wind power throughout the Plan area” with proposed staff recommendation #2 found on page 3 of staff memo dated June 2, 2017, as follows:

2.5 Encourage onsite generation and storage of renewable electricity from solar photovoltaic (PV) and other available renewable resources.

- 3) Add proposed staff recommendation #1 found on page 3 of the staff memo dated June 2, 2017, as follows:

Explore the development of district energy systems for heating and cooling that take

advantage of local renewable energy sources, including but not limited to geothermal energy, sewage heat, anaerobic digestion, and waste heat from buildings.

The motion carried on a vote of 7 to 0.

Discussion:

The Commission agreed with the staff analysis and recommendation, and was supportive of the Master Plan Amendment. The Commission asserted that the items reflect the culmination of a positive community process representing a strong execution of the vision of the Plan.

Commissioner Koenig, as chair of the North Potomac Yard Advisory Group, provided a summary of the planning process highlighted by the following: an involved and effective community engagement process; the Advisory Group and community's input; and the developer team and staff management of the process. The Commissioner recommended approval of the Draft Plan to the Planning Commission.

Commissioner Wasowski expressed support for the Plan and the refinements that lend to the success of the redevelopment of the Plan area. The Commissioner emphasized the importance of North Potomac Yard as a major economic engine and the benefits it will provide for the City. The process of refining the Plan has provided more detail and creates a path forward for redevelopment.

Commissioner Macek expressed support for the work of the Advisory Group and the refinements to the Plan as proposed. Commissioner Macek discussed the transportation refinements, particularly to Potomac Avenue, were an improvement that would promote a more livable environment. The update provides a good blueprint for moving forward. The Commissioner was also supportive of the direction provided for the open space network that provides meaningful, functional, and useful public open spaces throughout the Plan area, while preserving contiguous open spaces along the perimeter.

Commissioner Brown stated that the Plan provides thoughtful and skilled direction and supported the Plan.

Commissioner McMahon praised the thoughtful discussion of trade-offs by the AG, staff, and developers to create a feasible project that balances the various issues debated through the course of the process. The Commissioner expressed that the Plan pays particular attention to the safe flow of people as priority as well as the flow and accessibility of open space throughout the area. Commissioner McMahon stated that the Plan strikes an appropriate balance between detailed guidance and enough flexibility to accommodate future decisions. Commissioner McMahon reinforced elements of the Plan such as the Existing Neighborhoods Chapter and the historical narrative which lend to the context and importance of the site.

Commissioner Lyle expressed that the Plan is creative and forward thinking and provides flexibility to accommodate changes in technology and transit. Commissioner Lyle commended staff on the quality of the Plan and expressed support.

Commissioner Lyman stated that the Plan is forward thinking, especially in regards to sustainability. The Commissioner emphasized the successful management of a collaborative process and community engagement that produced the Plan.

The Commissioners discussed the June 2, 2017 staff memo in response to the Environmental Policy Commission's letter and recommended amending the plan as specified, as they are consistent with existing City policy and are appropriate for inclusion in the Small Area Plan.

Speakers:

Jeremy Fretts of Marris Avenue and member of the North Potomac Yard Advisory Group and member of the Potomac Yard Design Advisory Committee spoke in support of the master plan amendment and the 2040 environmental target as proposed in the recommendations. Mr. Fretts discussed the level of discourse that occurred over the community engagement process to vet the various elements of the Plan. Mr. Fretts highlighted two issues that were discussed at great length that the Plan recommendations have addressed; 1.) the character of Potomac Avenue, and 2.) the appropriate measures to inform the environmental sustainability recommendations of the Plan. Relative to environmental sustainability, Mr. Fretts supported the Plan recommendations as proposed, as well as the proposed additional recommendations, providing a balance between specific targets as well as existing City policy to guide requirements.

Cathy Puskar, attorney, representing the developer and property owner of North Potomac Yard, emphasized the importance of the site as an economic engine for the City, including the development of the new Metrorail station and the importance of the redevelopment of the adjacent area. She described how the first phase proposal balances the many City policies and creates a viable project that realizes the vision of the Plan. In regard to the staff memo dated June 2, 2017, Ms. Puskar was supportive of recommendation 2c. to replace recommendation 2.5. Relative to the two additional recommendations proposed, Ms. Puskar indicated that, if added by Planning Commission, the applicant would comply with the aspirational recommendations and strive to achieve them. Ms. Puskar emphasized the developer's commitment to sustainability as a core principle.

I. OVERVIEW

The [North Potomac Yard Small Area Plan](#), approved by City Council in 2010, established a long-term vision for the 70-acre site as a mixed use, transit oriented, sustainable community anchored by a new Potomac Yard Metrorail Station. It was recognized then, that with the Metrorail Station and the Plan's recommended density and land use mix, North Potomac Yard was poised to become a long-term economic engine for the City.

The 2017 update to the Plan brings the City one step closer to this reality. Now, with the Metrorail Station approved by City Council and WMATA preparing to select a contractor responsible for constructing the Metrorail Station, the 2017 Plan update adjusts the Plan framework to resolve phasing challenges posed by leases on the existing retail shopping center for redevelopment. While affirming the long-term vision, principles and goals of the 2010 Plan, the 2017 update enables redevelopment of the existing 25-acre theater site as Phase 1, which is anticipated to coincide with the Metrorail Station opening in the first phase, maintains a mix of office, hotel, and retail, a school reservation site, increases total open space, and creates a double-sided retail shopping street with an emphasis on a quality public realm (see Figure 1). The long-term opportunity for build out of the remaining 45 acres is maintained at 7.5 million square feet of mixed use. Further, with more stringent design standards in place, the area will promote a new standard in urban design and building design that will elevate the design of buildings, the public realm and open space in Potomac Yard.

Starting in April 2016, the North Potomac Yard Advisory Group established by City Council embarked on a planning process to evaluate potential Plan amendments. Over the course of the 13-month process, options for potential amendments to the 2010 Plan were debated, refined, and finalized. The proposed 2017 update to the Plan addresses and resolves key questions and at times competing interests raised during the process: street configuration, bike-pedestrian environment/public realm, open space, land use mix, neighborhood impacts, building heights, integrating the Metro Station into the design, affordable housing, and environmental sustainability.

II. DISCUSSION

The proposed plan update maintains the principles of the 2010 Plan to create an economically and environmentally sustainable community for living, working, shopping, recreation, culture, and civic uses for a wide range of incomes and ages. This urban community will be highly walkable, bike-able, and connected by transit, feature excellence in design and transitions appropriate to the character of surrounding neighborhoods, and provide landscaped streets and a network of usable open spaces.

Topics with a significant amount of discussion during the community planning process are described in further detail below with page numbers from the Plan and illustrative figures provided for additional information.

Street Framework (NPY Plan pages 16-25)

One of the fundamental changes to the Plan is to the street framework. The 2010 Plan recommended that Potomac Avenue be realigned from its current location to run adjacent to Potomac Yard Park as it does in South Potomac Yard. With this update to accommodate the fact that Target and the retail shopping center will remain, the proposed update retains Potomac Avenue in its current alignment, allowing development to occur east of the Avenue on the theater site (see Figure 2). The Advisory Group and community had extensive conversations about the concern that Potomac Avenue could act as a barrier to the Metrorail Station and Potomac Yard Park for pedestrians from the area west of Potomac Avenue. To minimize this potential impact and maximize pedestrian safety, the Plan includes new criteria for the pedestrian oriented design of Potomac Avenue in Phase 1: narrowing the width of the street and adding on-street parking. In future phases, the Plan recommends future analysis to determine appropriate design and provide flexibility to determine final location of the Metroway in future phases. (see Figure 3)

Another positive addition that the updated framework enables is a new “shared street” adjacent to Potomac Yard Park. Prioritizing pedestrians and cyclists, the “shared street” will have low vehicle speed and volume, on street parking, and paving materials and streetscaping that enhance walkability and safety (see Figure 4). In addition, the update creates a new double-sided retail street with an enhanced public realm connecting to the Metrorail Station, neighborhoods, community open spaces, and activities throughout the development (see Figure 5). Finally, the updated street framework allows the Metrorail Station entrance/exit to directly open out into the development (rather than crossing Potomac Avenue), creating a memorable civic plaza (see Figure 6). Each of these improvements to the public realm will be constructed as part of the first phase of development.

Open Space (NPY Plan pages 44-56)

The Plan creates an open space and trail network within Potomac Yard that completes a missing link in the City’s broader network, particularly with the completion of Potomac Yard Park. The proposed adjustment to the street framework described above enables net new public open space of more than one acre in Potomac Yard Park (for a total of approximately 4.5 acres), 0.2-acre for the new Market Lawn, and 0.3-acre for the new Metro Plaza, for a net-new total of approximately 1.5 acres. In all, five acres of new open space (or 20%) will be delivered as part of the first phase of development (see Figure 7). Many comments about the appropriate location, design and configuration of a future “Market Green” park on East Reed Avenue led to new language and graphics allowing flexibility for that park while establishing new parameters for minimum size and general location (see Figure 8). In addition, significant discussion about open space resulted in a careful review of the spaces being proposed, how they relate to one another, successful precedent open spaces, and the importance of connectivity to create a comprehensive and accessible open space network.

The Plan also allows for a necessary sanitary sewer pump station to be located within open space, specifically in the northern portion of Potomac Yard Park. The Plan specifies that the pump station be designed in such a way as to be integrated into and compatible with the open space uses, and located as close to the rail right of way as feasible. There was agreement among

the Advisory Group members that this necessary infrastructure should be designed in such a way as to be an amenity in the park, perhaps serving an educational purpose.

Metrorail Station Funding (NPY Plan pages 118-120)

While Metrorail Station funding was not within the scope of this planning effort, the question was raised. The Plan does not amend developer funding obligations nor the Special Tax District, both of which will be addressed by City Council after final cost information for the Metrorail Station is available. After the Metrorail Station was approved, a Potomac Yard Metrorail Station Fund was established, the proceeds of which are to be used solely for the design, construction, and financing of the station and will be segregated from other revenues. The Fund will accumulate revenue from the following sources: Net New Tax Revenue; Special Tax Districts; Developer Contributions; and Federal-State Grant funding.

Sustainability (NPY Plan pages 8-13)

The North Potomac Yard Plan demonstrates environmental leadership through multiple strategies to ensure that the redevelopment of the Plan area enhances the natural environment, quality of life, and improves environmental performance with new development. The Plan recommends the submission of an Environmental Sustainability Master Plan (ESMP) as part of the submission of the first development special use permit (DSUP) to identify strategies to implement the phased recommendations on a plan-area wide basis. Additionally, the Plan requires area-wide achievement of LEED for Neighborhood Development (LEED ND) and a comprehensive/site-wide Water Management Plan that is comprised of a Stormwater Management Plan incorporating innovative stormwater practices and a Sanitary Sewer Master Plan. The Plan also recommends performance standards and compliance with targets aligned with the Environmental Action Plan (EAP) as implemented through City policies.

The Advisory Group extensively discussed the Plan's sustainability recommendations and ultimately came to agreement on the recommendations summarized above. A significant amount of the discussion centered on the green building and carbon neutrality recommendations and whether the Plan should exceed those already in place citywide. Staff recommends that new policy be considered and implemented on a citywide basis, rather than having different policy requirements within individual Small Area Plans. When the EAP and associated Green Building Policy are updated in Fiscal Year 2019, all new development will be expected to comply at a consistent level.

Land Uses (NPY Plan page 32-66)

From a land use perspective, the objective of the update was to ensure that the land use mix and the amount of development would maintain the anticipated positive impact on both economic sustainability and community placemaking in the short and long term. The proposal for the development of blocks as part of Phase 1 does include a significant amount of residential and more retail uses than previously envisioned. Anchored by a hotel and an office building adjacent to the Metrorail Station, Phase 1 will feature a double loaded shopping and dining retail street with residential uses above. It was acknowledged that this approach is not only responsive to

current market demand, but also helps to create amenities, retail and a critical mass of residents and visitors to catalyze development and attract office uses in future phases. It is important to note that while there is a higher proportion of residential uses in Phase 1, the land use mix and total build-out for the entire site is maintained at 7.5M square feet as envisioned in the 2010 Plan (see Figure 9). In addition, new provisions were added to build in flexibility to locate office uses on any block within a ¼ mile watershed of the Metrorail Station. Further, new language allows flexibility for vertical mixed use office-residential buildings, responding to current trends in the market.

Building Heights (NPY Plan page 40) and Urban Design (NPY Plan page 25)

Building heights in the Plan were updated to reflect the updated flight path requirements with the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), and to comply with National Park Service and Historic District height limits. Beyond that, the Plan update generally maintains the maximum heights established in the 2010 Plan, although lower heights are allowed on some of the blocks in Phase 1. While it was a goal of the 2010 Plan to maximize heights at the Metrorail Station, there are several reasons why somewhat lower height on some of the blocks in Phase 1 are recommended. First, the priority was on creating a successful Phase 1 that would serve as a catalyst for Phase 2. Without a near term “place” created by the shopping street and residential uses, it will be very difficult to attract the higher density commercial development envisioned for future phases. In an increasingly competitive regional office market, having the amenities in place has become even more critical. One of the benefits of the slightly lower scale buildings in Phase 1 is that it tends to be more conducive to creating a successful shopping street – one that feels more human scaled. While some of the building heights are lower, the amount of development is generally consistent with the amount of development in the 2010 Plan.

Across the site, the Plan maintains flexibility and variety of building height across blocks/buildings to create a dynamic and interesting urban experience, architectural features, and a human scale public realm. It also maintains height transitions to lower scale existing residential neighborhoods west of Route 1. The developer has agreed to utilize different architects for different blocks within the site in order to achieve the goals established in the Plan, contributing significantly to the richer visual interest and character of North Potomac Yard. In addition, all buildings will be required to comply with the *North Potomac Yard Design Standards and Guidelines (Design Guidelines)* as part of the Development Special Use Permit (DSUP) review.

Affordable Housing (NPY Plan page 57)

With regard to affordable housing, there was widespread support for amending the Plan to allow the use of the 30% bonus density provision in the zoning ordinance to gain more potential affordable housing units within walking distance of the Metrorail Station. In addition, the Plan encourages collocation of affordable housing with other uses, public private partnerships, and the use of microunits, which by virtue of their smaller size can offer some affordability. As in 2010, it envisions a range of potential housing affordability, from replacement public housing to workforce housing.

Transportation - Neighborhood Impacts (NPY Plan pages 111-112)

The Plan recommends a number of bicycle and pedestrian improvements that enhance the options for non-vehicle travel and language addressing the City's Vision Zero goals. First, in Phase 1, the multi-use path within the extended Potomac Yard Park will be constructed to complete trail connectivity from Braddock Road Metro to Potomac Yard Metro to Crystal City; addition to the existing trail on the west side of Potomac Avenue; and three on-street east-west bike connections.

An updated transportation analysis was conducted to understand potential traffic impacts as a result of changes in the framework streets, improvements to the bicycle and pedestrian network, access to the Metrorail Station, as well as recent and planned development and transit/infrastructure improvements within Potomac Yard South and Oakville Triangle. The results of the analysis, posted to the project web page and shared with the Advisory Group, indicated a minor increase in traffic volume through the corridor. Some mitigation measures related to signal optimization and intersection improvements are recommended in the Plan to coordinate with improvements recommended as part of the Oakville Triangle Plan. In addition, the Plan recommends that the developer be required to provide a monetary contribution for a comprehensive traffic calming strategy for the neighborhoods west of the Plan area appropriately phased with development to mitigate potential increases in traffic. The Plan also builds in flexibility to accommodate future technological advances, including electric and automated vehicles.

Schools (NPY Plan page 70)

Student forecast estimates for the Plan area were updated based on 2017 student generation rates. According to the estimates, between 60 and 90 elementary, 20 and 30 middle, and 25 and 40 high school students will be generated by the projected residential uses for North Potomac Yard. The southern portion of Potomac Yard (including Landbays G, H, I, J, and L and Potomac Greens) has generated a total of 84 students enrolled in ACPS during the 2016-2017 academic year. Of those students, 3 were enrolled in pre-k, 37 elementary, 22 middle, and 22 in high school.

If elementary school student generation rates continue to increase, the City will need additional capacity to support elementary school students. If determined to be needed within Potomac Yard, block 4 has been reserved for a possible urban multi-level school site (see Figure 10). If Block 4 is not used for a school, the City reserves the right to use the site for other purposes such as open space and/or a community facility/public building with potential colocation uses, such as affordable housing, above.

III. COMMUNITY

The Plan update was led by a 12-member Ad Hoc North Potomac Yard Advisory Group to review potential amendments to the 2010 Plan and serve as the community forum for the planning process. Guided by the City's civic engagement policy established during the What's Next Alexandria initiative, the Advisory Group convened in April 2016. Over the course of the

13-month process, there were 13 Advisory Group meetings, three open houses, three workshops, and three work sessions with Planning Commission and City Council. Detailed information on the community's involvement and the work of the Advisory Group can be found in Appendix A.2 of the Plan.

Draft chapters of the updated Plan were posted to the project webpage in February, and community members were invited to review and provide feedback on the draft document at the February, March and April Advisory Group Meetings, the April Open House, and through the North Potomac Yard SAP Comment Board. A compiled list of comments received on the draft is provided as Attachment 3 and 4.

The Advisory Group unanimously supported the Plan, as described in their attached letter of endorsement. In addition, the Plan was supported by the Transportation Commission, the Alexandria Housing Affordability Advisory Committee, the Parks and Recreation Commission, and the Environmental Policy Commission (EPC), provided as attachments.

IV. IMPLEMENTATION

After adoption of the Plan, the Coordinated Development District (CDD) Concept Plan will be updated to be consistent with the Plan updates. Following approval of the Plan amendment, it is anticipated that Special Use Permit (DSUP) applications will be submitted for Phase 1. It is anticipated that Phase I of redevelopment will be constructed within the next three years, with future phases in approximately +/- 10 years. A key element of the Plan's successful implementation will be construction of the Potomac Yard Metrorail Station, for which it is anticipated that the design-build contract will be awarded in 2017 and construction will begin in 2019, roughly the same anticipated start time for construction to begin on Phase 1.

The Planning Commission will oversee, advise on, and provide a public forum for implementation of the Plan as carried out by City staff from various departments. The Commission's knowledge of and experience with North Potomac Yard will ensure that projects meet the intent of the Plan. Implementation updates and refinements will be provided to the Planning Commission at regular intervals for review and guidance. The Potomac Yard Design Advisory Committee (PYDAC) will continue to provide comment and guidance to applicants and staff on development proposals for the area to ensure compliance with the *North Potomac Yard Urban Design Standards*.

The Plan provides a framework and recommendations to guide implementation. In order to ensure that the intent of the Plan is met, some topics raised during the planning process by the Advisory Group and community merit additional highlight here as well as additional attention during implementation. This will occur through the process for updating the CDD zoning conditions and *North Potomac Yard Urban Design Standards*, and review of development applications.

- Open space design and programming: The Plan area should have quality, usable, open space that provides a variety of experiences and connects to the City's larger network of open spaces.

- Affordable housing: Locating affordable housing near transit is a high priority and the City and developer should seek out all feasible opportunities to increase the number of affordable units within the Plan area, including colocation with other uses, public private partnerships, and the use of bonus density.
- Potomac Avenue Phase 1 and 2: Ensure that Potomac Avenue adheres to the new criteria established in the Plan for both Phase 1 and 2 of development, promoting a safe and comfortable pedestrian environment. In addition, many members of the community have suggested that the City study options for improving Potomac Avenue in the southern portion of Potomac Yard to reduce vehicle speed and enhance pedestrian safety and comfort.
- Environmental sustainability and performance: New development should integrate meaningful environmental benefits into the built environment and public realm.
- Architecture and building materials: North Potomac Yard should exhibit excellence in design and materials. In accordance with the *North Potomac Yard Urban Design Standards*, new projects should provide a variety of height and massing and be well executed to be an asset to the community.
- Transportation improvements and traffic calming: Recommended transportation improvements and traffic calming in the adjoining neighborhoods should be completed to coordinate with development.

V. STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the Planning Commission, on its own motion, initiate an amendment to the North Potomac Yard Small Area Plan Chapter of the Master Plan and adopt Resolution MPA 2017-0003 recommending approval of an amendment to the Master Plan to replace the North Potomac Yard Small Area Plan Chapter approved in 2010 with the Updated Small Area Plan.

Attachments:

1. [North Potomac Yard Small Area Plan](http://www.alexandriava.gov/potomacyardplan) (2017) (www.alexandriava.gov/potomacyardplan)
2. North Potomac Yard Small Area Plan Update Summary
3. Advisory Group/Public Comments and Revisions on Preliminary Draft
4. Web Comments and Responses on Preliminary Draft
5. Letter from Ad Hoc North Potomac Yard Plan Advisory Group
6. Letter from Alexandria Affordable Housing Advisory Committee
7. Letter from Environmental Policy Commission
8. Letter from Parks and Recreation Commission
9. Letter from Transportation Commission

Figure 1

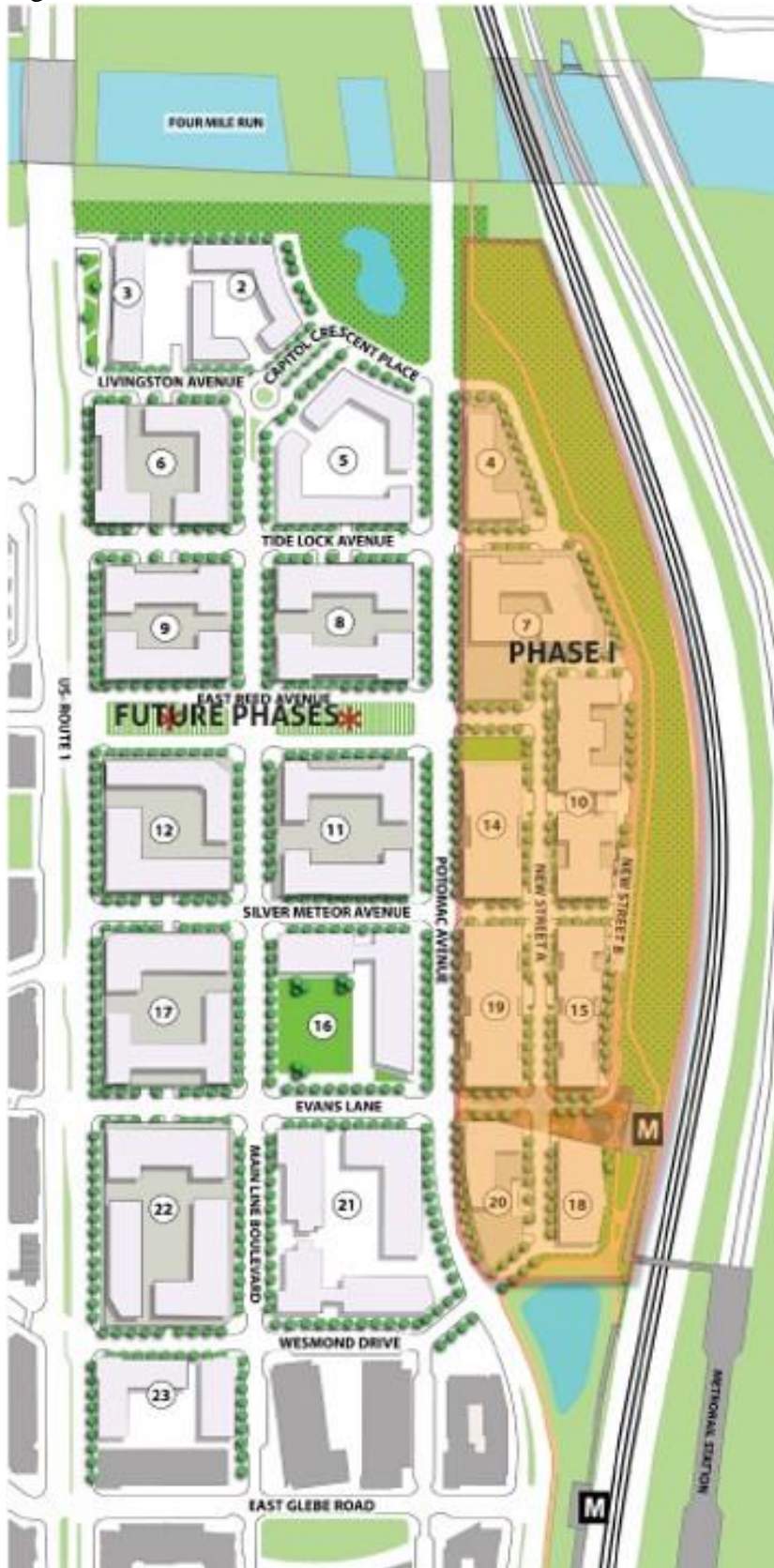


Figure 2 (2010 Plan Street Network)



Figure 2 (Plan Update Street Network)

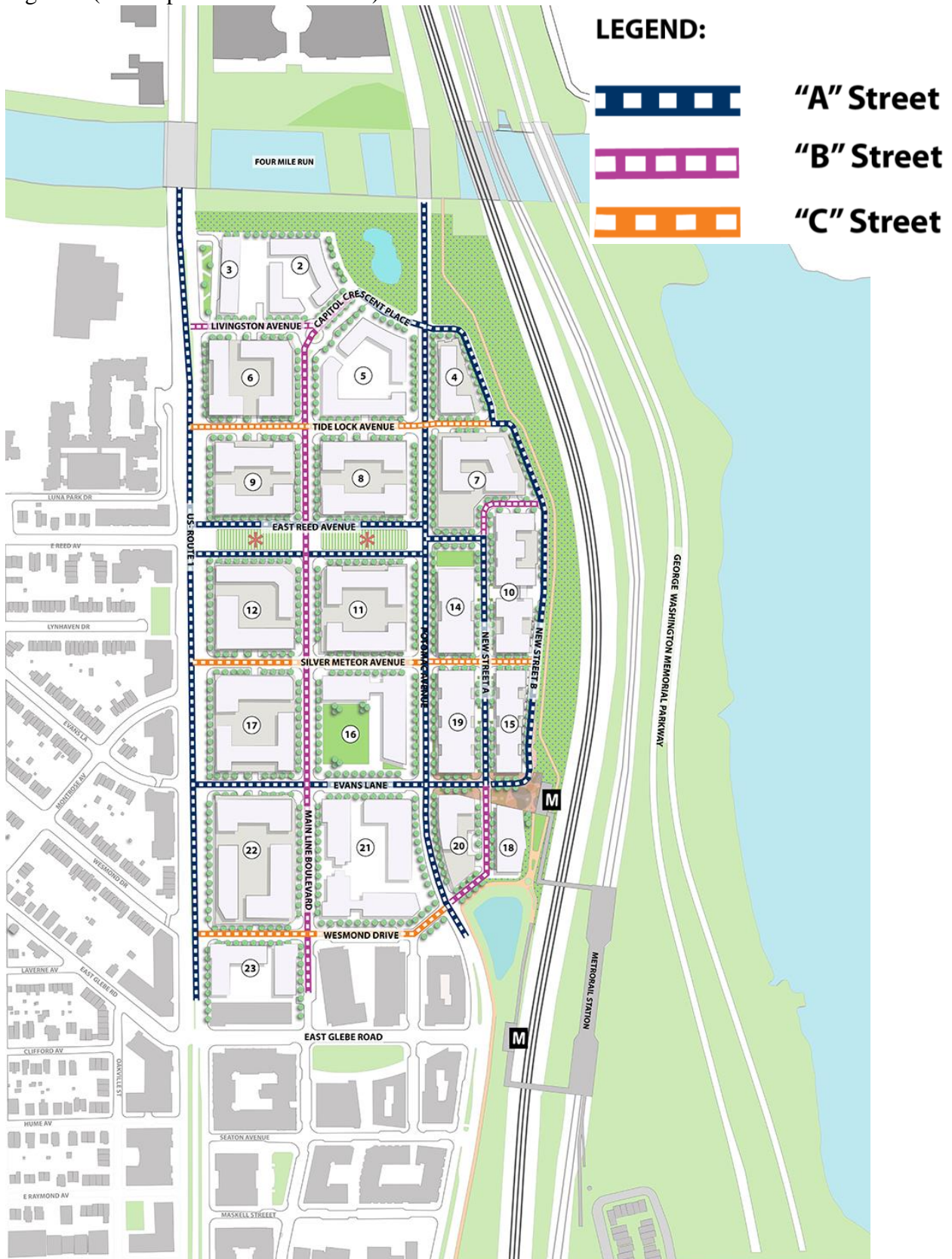


Figure 3

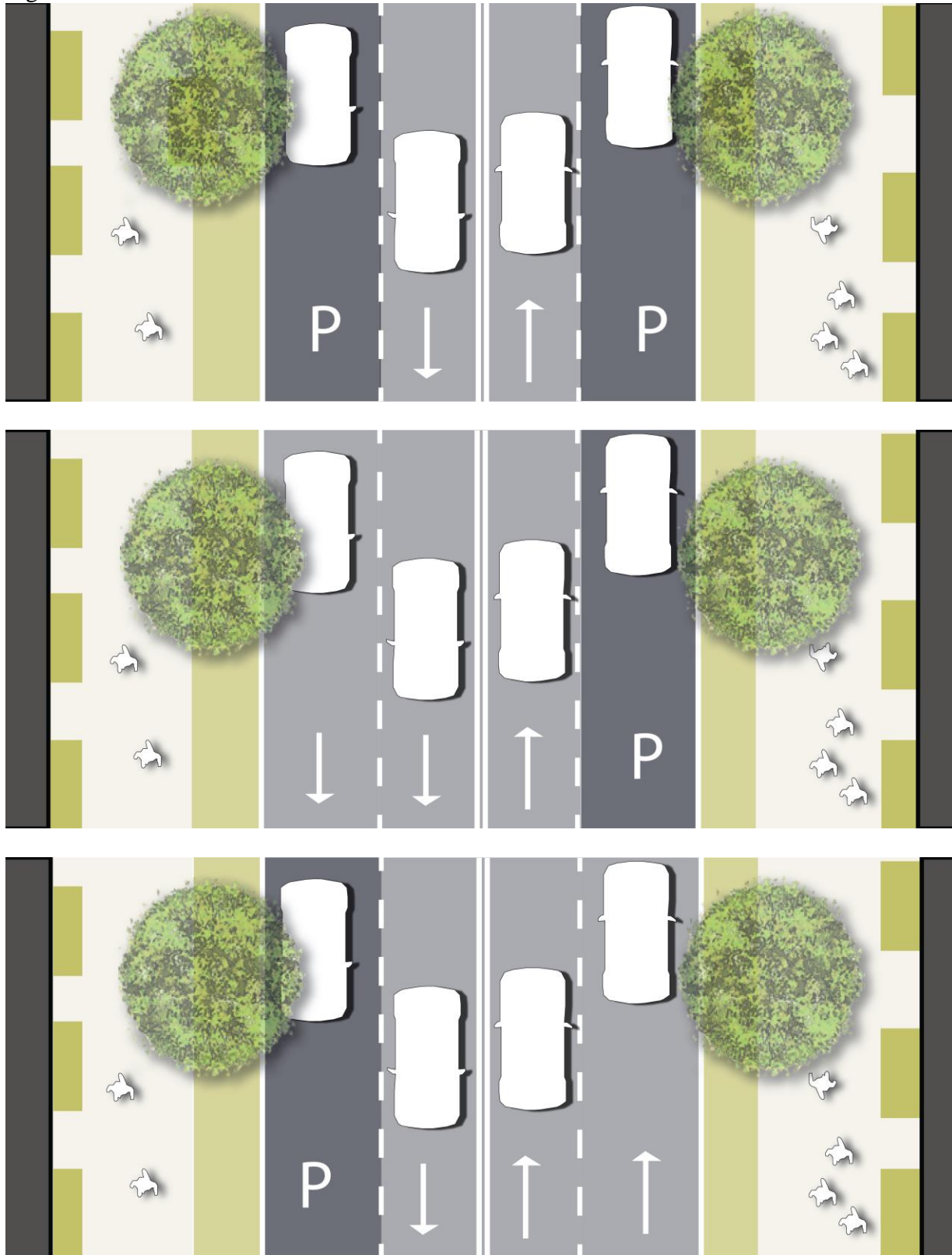


Figure 4



Figure 5



Figure 6 (daytime rendering)



Figure 6 (nighttime rendering)



Figure 7



Figure 8

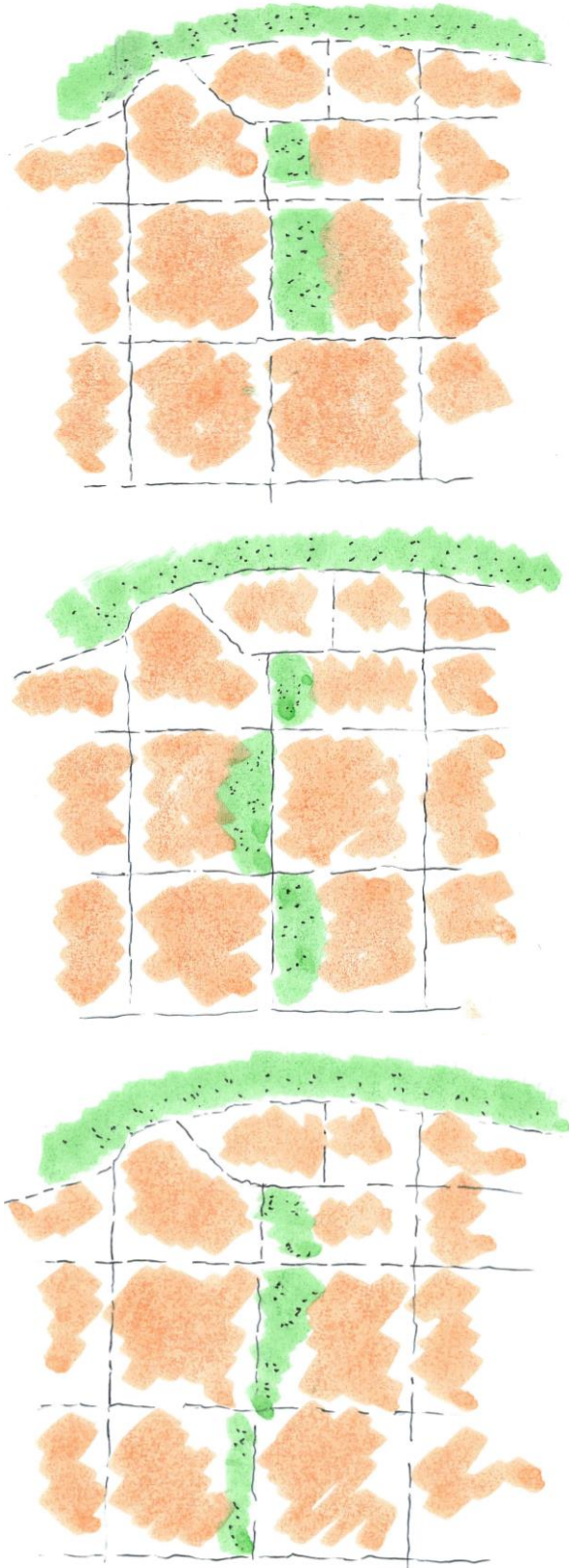


Figure 9

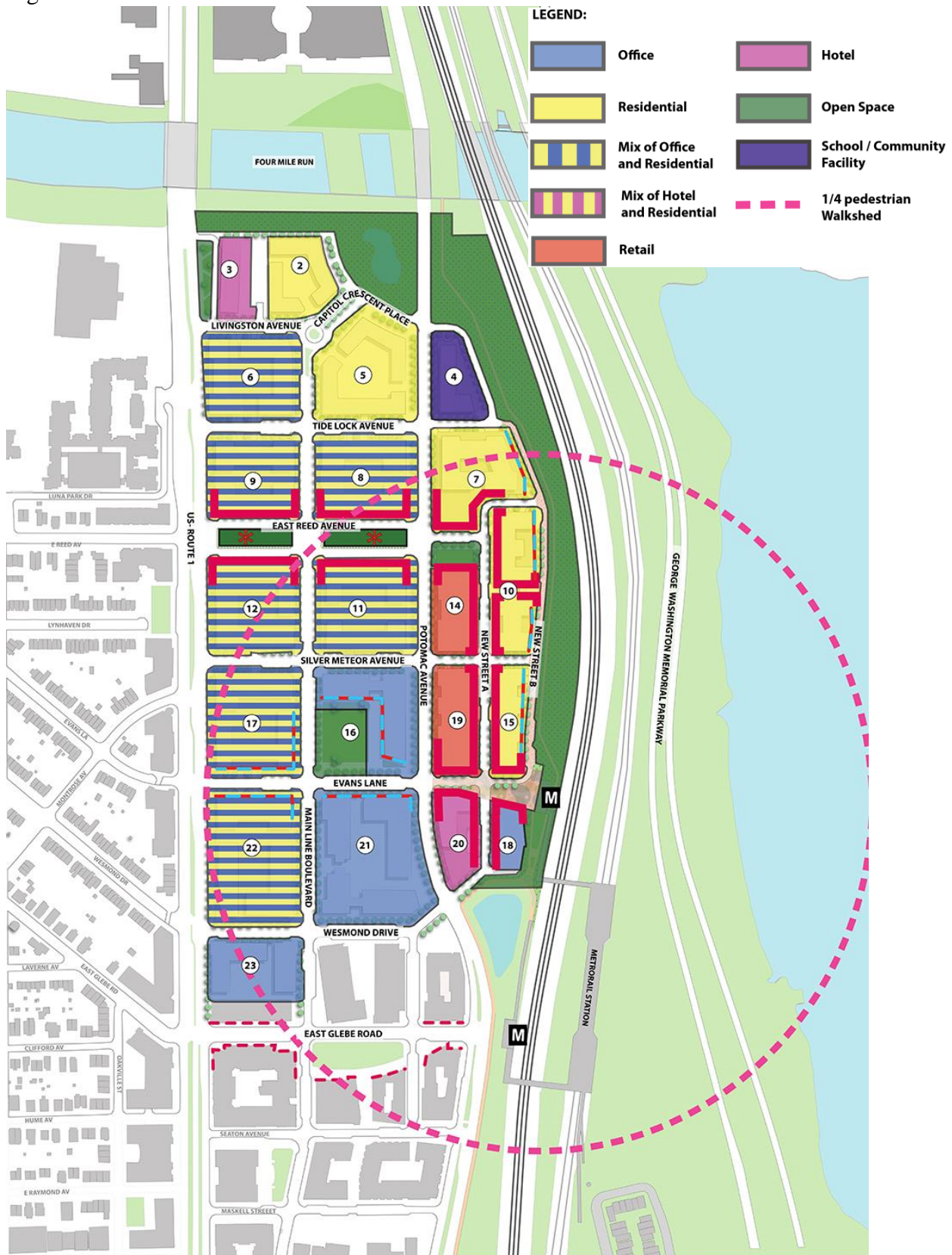
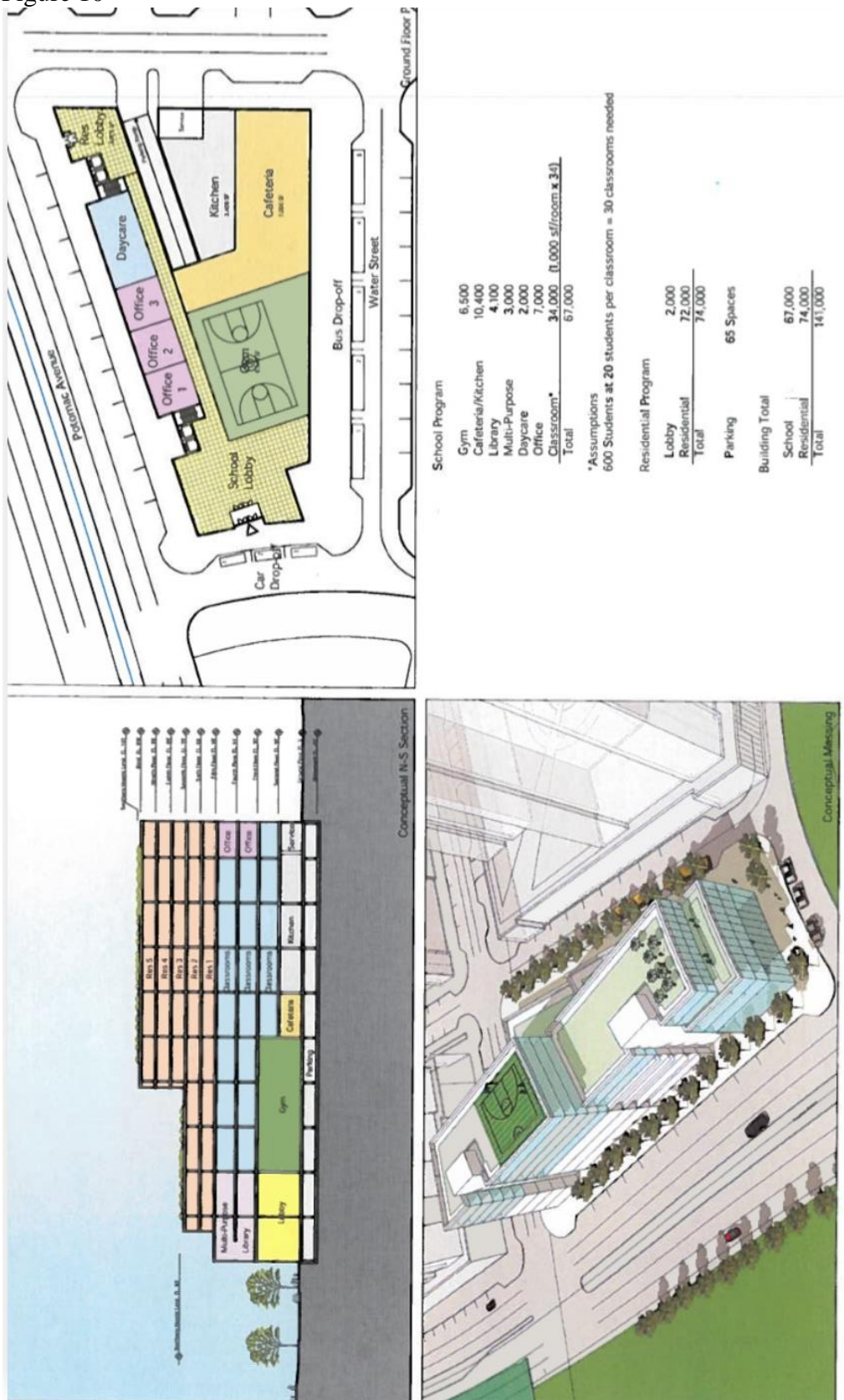


Figure 10



City of Alexandria, Virginia

MEMORANDUM

DATE: JUNE 2, 2017

TO: CHAIRWOMAN MARY LYMAN AND MEMBERS OF THE PLANNING COMMISSION

FROM: KARL W. MORITZ, DIRECTOR, DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING AND ZONING

SUBJECT: JUNE 6, 2017 DOCKET ADDENDUM: NORTH POTOMAC YARD PLAN - STAFF RESPONSE TO EPC RECOMMENDATIONS

The Environmental Policy Commission's May 11, 2017 letter of support for the North Potomac Yard and Old Town North Plans includes recommended Plan revisions related to Green Building, carbon reduction, and transportation for consideration. The EPC recommendations and staff responses related to the North Potomac Yard Plan follow below.

1. Green Building

EPC Recommendations:

1a). Recognizing that the City's Green Building Policy will be updated no later than FY 2019, but that some development proposals may be submitted by developers before it is finalized, set a minimum of LEED Gold or comparable for all developments, or the City's green building standards and requirements, whichever is greater.

1b). Specify that a minimum number of points from the "Energy and Atmosphere" and "Water Efficiency" categories will be required for buildings to meet the City's Green Building certification requirements.

1c). Offer additional floor area to developers or other incentives, such as those authorized by HB 1565, that pilot Passive House certified buildings or Net Zero Energy Buildings as certified by the Living Future Institute.

Staff Response:

1a). Staff recommends that Small Area Plans not establish new citywide policy, and therefore that the Plan should retain the currently proposed recommendation for "LEED Silver or comparable, or the City's Green Building policy, whichever is greater." When the

EAP and associated Green Building Policy are updated in Fiscal Year 2019, all new development citywide will be expected to comply with the new standards. It should be noted that LEED Silver continues to be an aggressive target recommendation as the energy and building performance requirements within the LEED system are continuously increasing. As an example, a LEED Silver Building under the 2010 standards (LEED v2) would no longer even qualify as LEED certified under the current LEED v4 standards.

1b). Staff recommends that the policy regarding points in LEED categories be addressed in the City's Green Building Policy update, not in the Small Area Plan.

1c). Staff recommends that the City's use of incentives enabled in the new state legislation be addressed in the Environmental Action Plan (EAP) update, not in the Small Area Plan.

2. Carbon Reduction & Alternative Energy

EPC Recommendations:

2a). *Set a goal in both SAPs that all new buildings built in or after 2030 will be carbon neutral. Do not limit the goal in Old Town North only to the power plant site.*

2b). *Explore the development of district energy systems for heating and cooling that take advantage of local renewable energy sources, including but not limited to geothermal energy, sewage heat, anaerobic digestion, and waste heat from buildings.*

2c). *Encourage onsite generation and storage of renewable electricity from solar PV and other available renewable resources.*

Staff Response:

2a). The North Potomac Yard Advisory Group had extensive discussion about sustainability and specifically, carbon neutrality, seeking to develop a recommendation that was both aggressive and achievable. They discussed whether the goal should be applied to individual buildings or the district as a whole, and reached consensus on applying the target to the district as a whole because of the potentially greater benefits to be achieved by addressing the issue holistically. In addition, they applied a target date of 2040 for carbon neutrality, taking into account the 20-30-year anticipated build-out of the Plan.

Staff sees merit in the holistic approach agreed upon by the Advisory Group. At the outset of the project, the developer would be required to submit an Environmental Sustainability Master Plan (ESMP) demonstrating, among other things, how the 2040 carbon neutrality target will be met for the entire plan area. As part of each subsequent Development Special Use Permit (DSUP), the developer will be required to update the ESMP, including the path to 2040 carbon neutrality for the plan area. If progress toward the target is achieved incrementally over the course of the Plan build out, and the requirement to update the ESMP is implemented and monitored, this approach could yield greater environmental benefit in the long run. On the other hand, the EPC's recommendation to apply the standard to individual buildings built in or after 2030 (as opposed to the plan area) may be easier to implement and monitor.

However, because of the Advisory Group’s careful consideration and consensus on this topic, staff recommends the Planning Commission retain the existing recommendation for carbon neutrality to be met plan-area wide by 2040. It should be noted that the Plan references compliance with the EAP as implemented through City policy, so when the green building policy is updated, new development in North Potomac Yard will comply with the policy as updated.

2b.) Staff is not opposed to adding this recommendation proposed by the EPC: *“Explore the development of district energy systems for heating and cooling that take advantage of local renewable energy sources, including but not limited to geothermal energy, sewage heat, anaerobic digestion, and waste heat from buildings.”* The intent is consistent with Advisory Group discussions and uses language appropriate to Small Area Plans.

2c). Staff is not opposed to adding this recommendation: *“Encourage onsite generation and storage of renewable electricity from solar PV and other available renewable resources.”* The intent is consistent with Advisory Group discussions and uses language appropriate to Small Area Plans.

3. Transportation: Autonomous Vehicles, Electric Vehicles, and Vision Zero

EPC Recommendations:

3a). *Provide clear plans for incorporating both AV and EV technologies, including charging infrastructure, into development plans, and assess their potential for reducing emissions as well as parking requirements within the area.*

3b). *References be added to the City’s Vision Zero goals in both SAPs.*

Staff Response:

3a). The Plan has been updated to include general recommendations to consider autonomous vehicles and electric vehicles in street design and parking garages and to not preclude emerging technologies as they develop in the future. More detailed requirements on these topics will be established through the Coordinated Development District (CDD) guidelines and through the Development Special Use Permit (DSUP) process.

3b). The Plan has been updated to include reference to the City’s Vision Zero goals.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Proposed Changes for Planning Commission Consideration:

1. Add new recommendation: *“Explore the development of district energy systems for heating and cooling that take advantage of local renewable energy sources, including but not limited to geothermal energy, sewage heat, anaerobic digestion, and waste heat from buildings.”*
2. Add new recommendation: *“Encourage onsite generation and storage of renewable electricity from solar PV and other available renewable resources.”*



COMMUNITY PLANNING HOUSING AND DEVELOPMENT
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June 6, 2017

Kristen Walentisch
City of Alexandria
Department of Planning and Zoning
301 King Street
Alexandria, VA 22314
PlanComm@alexandriava.gov

Dear Ms. Walentisch:

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on Master Plan Amendment #2017-0003, North Potomac Yard Small Area Plan Update. We understand that the update would allow for the existing Target and shopping center to remain for longer than originally planned and redevelopment to proceed on the former theater site including the new Metrorail Station (Phase I) and approximately 1.3 million square feet of development on 25 acres.

Arlington is in agreement that careful consideration of the critical issues of changes in street configuration, bike-pedestrian environment/public realm, open space, land use mix, neighborhood impacts, building heights, better integration of the proposed Metro Station into the design, affordable housing and environmental sustainability contribute to an improved small area plan.

Arlington staff have reviewed the transportation components of the amendment and support the planned changes to adjust the alignment of Potomac Avenue south of Four Mile Run, to develop an enhanced network of appropriately-scaled, local streets, and to emphasize pedestrian access to the Potomac Yard Metrorail station.

Arlington anticipates that the proposed amendment will ultimately result in successful and compatible development to the adjacent Potomac Yard project within Arlington County.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Robert J. Duffy", written over a circular stamp or seal.

Robert J. Duffy, AICP
Planning Director

CC: Samia Byrd, Assistant County Manager, CMO
Claude Williamson, Acting Director, CPHD
Jennifer Smith, Acting Comprehensive Planning Supervisor, CPHD
Dennis Leach, Transportation Director, DES
Leon Vignes, CPHD