

From: Rafael Lima via Call.Click.Connect. <CallClickConnect@alexandriava.gov>
Sent: Monday, May 07, 2018 6:26 PM
To: City Council; City Council Aides; Alexis Lacy; Call Click Connect; Gloria Sitton
Subject: Call.Click.Connect. #146391: Mayor, Vice Mayor, City Council Honorable Mayor, Vice Mayor and...

Dear **Call.Click.Connect.** User

A request was just created using **Call.Click.Connect.** The request ID is 146391.

Request Details:

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- Name: Rafael Lima
- Approximate Address: No Address Specified
- Phone Number: 202-549-4536
- Email: cavazzonilima@gmail.com
- Service Type: Mayor, Vice Mayor, City Council
- Request Description: Honorable Mayor, Vice Mayor and Members of City Council,

I received with surprise and concern the following Memorandum issued by the City Manager:

<https://www.alexandriava.gov/uploadedFiles/PY%20Metromail%20Station%20Update%20on%20Revised%20Project%20Scope%205.4.18.pdf>

In effect, the changes proposed by City Staff to the design of the Potomac Yard Metro station, supposedly due to escalation of costs, put at risk not only the benefit of this project to the residents, it in fact could jeopardize the project itself.

Here a few considerations:

- Existing Potomac Yard residents will now need to walk to (and through) the movie theater parking lot to access the entrance to the station. Functionally this adds approximately $\frac{1}{4}$ to $\frac{1}{3}$ mile distance to the station vs. the deleted E. Glebe entrance. Nearly all of the existing Potomac Yard community is now outside the $\frac{1}{2}$ mile distance to a station typically considered a Transit Oriented development. Parts of Arlington (e.g., the Eclipse apartments) are now closer to the planned Potomac Yard metro entrance than nearly all existing residents of Potomac Yard (a good portion of which is now in effect closer to Braddock road station).
- The existing Potomac Yard residents whose access has been removed remain (alone among impacted neighborhoods) in the Tier II Special Tax District (STD). Although the City Manager recently recommend using part (\$15M of \$40M)) of an expected future payment from Dominion Virginia Power, the local energy utility, for the installation of a high voltage power line down Potomac Ave to offset the STD, it is now clear that when City Staff agreed to do this, they were aware that South access to the station had been removed from the scope of the project. This means City Staff proposed a trade of the STD for the Dominion line knowing full well the STD would need to be removed anyway given the inequity and increased distance to the station. By proposing such plan, City Staff decided once again to elude Potomac Yard residents to benefit other interests in the city, clearly not acting in good faith.
- This change makes further development of the remaining undeveloped lots in South Potomac Yard less likely and the type of development less valuable (i.e., not commercial/retail space that was anticipated), since these lots will no longer be within $\frac{1}{4}$ mile of the metro station entrance. As was stated in the city staff's recommendation for the two mezzanine Alternative B design, "[t]he importance of proximity is reflected in the fact that currently 86 percent of all office buildings under construction in the region are within one-quarter mile of a Metrorail station"

(p.12 of Report). The city staff report also noted that a smaller distance - 900 feet - was a "critical difference" distinguishing the preferred Alternative B from Alternative A (located further south), highlighting that proximity is critical to future commercial development.

- This descoping makes redevelopment of the Oakville triangle unlikely, as that area will also no longer be within ½ mile of the metro station entrance. It also affects other existing and proposed development in the area, including the Exchange at Potomac Yard, the future headquarters of both the National Industries for the Blind (NIB) and the American Physical Therapy Association as well as the Institute for Defense Analysis. The use of a "bait and switch" strategy with these developers will certainly affect the credibility of the City going forward.

As Potomac Yard residents, my wife Adrien and I are incredibly frustrated with this development. A possible scenario is that we could be in fact subject to a special tax while leaving closer to another metro station. We are also frustrated with the PYMIG process, which we followed closely attending most of the meetings, given that several residents voiced concerns that the proposed design for the station was too ambitious only to be brushed off by City staff indicating it was well within budget. But what we are most concerned with is in fact the lack of transparency of this decision, which per the memorandum can no longer be undone without further impacting the timeline of the project. Either the Mayor and City Council are not effectively monitoring City Manager and Staff, if this comes as a surprise to you as well, or the Mayor and City Council are in effect agreeable to shutting down public engagement and outreach precisely with the most important investment this City has ever made, if you were consulted about this before. Either scenario is simply unacceptable. And the consequences will far outweigh the benefits of moving forward quickly.

If the expected benefit of the project increased by \$400M as indicated by the City manager, why can't the City take on additional debt? City Staff is proposing to delay developer contributions and a lot of what was indicated in the memorandum points to a de-risking of the project.

We encourage you to do the right thing and, if needed, delay the project until all parties have had time to consider this and until concrete alternatives and trade-offs are presented to the community at large. City Council should only decide on changes to station design once alternatives are conceived and the impacts of each is well understood. If it takes two more years, then be it. City Staff is the one at fault here not the local communities who are being punished for their mistakes.

Sincerely,
Rafael Lima and Adrien Lopez

- Expected Response Date: Saturday, May 12

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From: Zack DesJardins via Call.Click.Connect. <CallClickConnect@alexandriava.gov>
Sent: Monday, May 07, 2018 9:33 PM
To: City Council; City Council Aides; Alexis Lacy; Call Click Connect; Gloria Sitton
Subject: Call.Click.Connect. #146400: Mayor, Vice Mayor, City Council For the Potomac Yard Metro, your...

Dear **Call.Click.Connect.** User

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Request Details:

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- Name: Zack DesJardins
- Approximate Address: No Address Specified
- Phone Number: 716-201-0664
- Email: Zacharydesjardins@gmail.com
- Service Type: Mayor, Vice Mayor, City Council
- Request Description: For the Potomac Yard Metro, your design contractors will often propose more scope to inflate their bottom lines which is what happened with Boston's Green Line Extension. The contractors proposed more than \$430 million for some stations but the state later reduced that cost to \$127 million by eliminating mezzanines and replacing escalators with stairs. Other examples of this include New York City's Second Ave Subway and East Side Access. <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/12/28/nyregion/new-york-subway-construction-costs.html> Because the city plans to use a design build contract, there is high potential for the design contractor to take advantage of the city and WMATA's inexperience and inflate costs. I work in transit oversight at the USDOT and have examples of this on many projects.

Here are some ways to reduce costs.

- Use an island platform rather than two side platforms which requires twice the number of stairs, escalators, and elevators.
- While WMATA requires a universal crossover (ie a switch) at each new station, offer to build one on the existing tracks directly north or south of the station instead. This will reduce the length of the new station's track, saving money, and making an island platform more technically feasible. A universal crossover could be installed when WMATA shuts down Metro service for three months next summer and since it is part of an existing system, would not require extensive permitting, design work, or planning. Since WMATA would realize some operational benefits and savings from the universal crossover sooner and would already have track crews mobilized during the shutdown anyways, they may be amenable to providing reduced or free labor and the city would only have to pay for materials.
- Build stairs instead of escalators because the height from the ground to the station bridge does not really require escalators. Escalators can always be added later. A ramp from Potomac Ave should be able to clear the CSX tracks from Potomac Ave and still meet ADA requirements.
- Instead of building two mezzanines above the tracks, build them at the end of the station bridge or closer to Potomac Greens Dr. Mezzanines above tracks cost more because they require more materials. WMATA's new rendering shows an expensive single mezzanine above the north end of the platform. Replacing with smaller ones at ground level near Potomac Greens Dr and near Potomac Ave would save the city money.
- Route the Potomac Yard Trail under the north bridge to mitigate conflicts with people using the Metro.
- Construct a pedestrian and bike bridge directly to Potomac Greens as a separate project. The bridge would provide a convenient connection to the Potomac Greens metro entrance and unlike the proposed south bridge, be open 24/7. A similar bridge at Rhode Island Ave Metro in Washington, DC cost \$5 million.
<https://actionnetwork.org/petitions/hamlinbridge>
- Replacing some materials with cheaper versions such as replacing gray stones with dark colored concrete
- Eliminate the awning sheltering the entire platform lengths. One of WMATA's renderings shows this expensive luxury spanning our entire Potomac Yard station when most of our existing stations make due with bus shelters or

smaller awnings.

I have spent years watching design contractors rip off cities and taxpayer money to pad their bottom lines with unnecessarily expensive designs. I am sad to see it happen in my own backyard.

Zack DesJardins

- Expected Response Date: Saturday, May 12

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