



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

1108 Jefferson Street
Alexandria, Virginia 22314
Phone: (703) 746-4343
Fax: (703) 746-5585
James B. Spengler, Director

Park and Recreation Commission

May 15, 2015

Mayor William Euille
Vice Mayor Allison Silberberg
Councilman John Taylor Chapman
Councilman Timothy B. Lovain
Councilwoman Redella S. Pepper
Councilman Paul C. Smedberg
Councilman Justin M. Wilson

Re: Potomac Yard Metro Station

Dear Mayor Euille and City Council Members:

The Park and Recreation Commission supports the staff recommendation of Alternative B as the location for the Potomac Yard Metro Station because it is consistent with park plans and goals.

Throughout the process, the Commission has received reports from staff regarding the various options, including taking a walking tour of the various proposed sites. Alternative A would either destroy or significantly and negatively impact the newly constructed play spaces and water feature in Potomac Yard park and would mean that the largest section of that linear park would not be usable as parkland. Alternative B has a much smaller impact on the existing Potomac Yard Park, as it will land in a plaza area that was initially conceived as a landing point for a pedestrian bridge.

Although the Commission supports the staff recommendation, the Commission does so with the following four pieces of advice related to issues of concern to the Commission.

First, and presence of the Metro station at Potomac Yard will undoubtedly increase use of the Potomac Yard Park and the pedestrian and bicycle trail. The increased use will result in the need for significant additional maintenance including the need for additional trash pick-up, among other things. Council must plan now to make available the appropriate funding to ensure that the increased needs created by increased use related to Metro can be met.

Second, the Potomac Yard bicycle and pedestrian trail is a key element for the success of the Metro station, as residents and visitors will be able to safely walk and bike to and from the station. The Commission urges Council to ensure that the planning and design process includes areas for bicycle share stations and personal bicycle parking. There are many examples of innovative bicycle parking solutions around the world. The planning process should include consideration of creative solutions for bicycle parking. The Commission expects to see bicycle parking and bicycle share stations accounted for in the design phase.

Third, to the extent entrances to the station are in a park, those entrances must be designed as park features so that they are consistent with and seamless with the character and use of the surrounding park. Council should direct staff to ensure that the planning and design process includes the consideration of the station entrances as park elements.

Fourth, Council should direct staff to make every effort to ensure that both Potomac Greens Park and Potomac Yard Park remain safe and accessible throughout the construction phase. Council should ensure that appropriate maintenance of the parks continues throughout the construction phase to keep the parks safe and accessible. 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 must be made to the public. To the extent that, for example, the Potomac Yard pedestrian and bicycle trail might become unusable at some point during construction, there must be a well-designated detour to ensure appropriate through travel for cyclists and pedestrians. Likewise, any interruption to the safe use of the play space in Potomac Greens Park must be limited and well communicated to the community.

The Commission supports the addition of Metro to Potomac Yard and urges Council to take steps to make clear that the planning, design, and construction process must include careful attention to ensure the existing Potomac Yard Park and Potomac Greens Park are enhanced by the presence of the Metro station.

Sincerely,

DocuSigned by:
Jennifer Atkins

D3421C109181409

Jennifer Atkins, Co-Chair
Park and Recreation Commission