



POTOMAC YARD METRORAIL STATION

DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



Introduction

Environmental Impact Statement for a New Metrorail Station at Potomac Yard

The Federal Transit Administration (FTA) and the City of Alexandria, in cooperation with the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA or Metro) and the National Park Service (NPS), have prepared this Draft Environmental Impact Statement (Draft EIS) under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) for construction of a proposed Potomac Yard Metrorail Station. NPS is a cooperating agency because of the potential of the project to impact natural and cultural resources of the George Washington Memorial Parkway. Any action taken by NPS in conjunction with this project must be consistent with the National Park Service Organic Act, which directs NPS to "conserve the scenery and the natural and historic objects and the wild life therein" (16 U.S.C. 1). Construction would include a new Metrorail station, associated track improvements, and pedestrian bridges at Potomac Yard within the City of Alexandria. The station would be located along the existing Metrorail Blue and Yellow Lines between

the Ronald Reagan Washington National Airport Metrorail Station and the Braddock Road Metrorail Station.

This document summarizes key information from the Draft EIS and gives information on opportunities to provide comments on the document. The entire Draft EIS document is available for review online at:

www.potomacyardmetro.com

Hard copies of the Draft EIS are available for review at the City of Alexandria public library and at:

**Alexandria City Hall
301 King Street
Alexandria, VA 22314**

The public comment period for the Draft EIS will be open until May 18, 2015. See **pages 14-15** for information on providing comments and participating in the public hearing.

Why Do We Need a Metrorail Station at Potomac Yard?

Project Purpose

The project is proposed to improve local and regional transit accessibility to and from the Potomac Yard area adjacent to the U.S. Route 1 corridor for current and future residents, employees, and businesses.

Project Need

Currently, the project area is not served by direct access to regional transit services, such as Metrorail. This area is served by local bus services that operate in the U.S. Route 1 corridor, including the Crystal City/Potomac Yard Transitway (also known as “Metroway”). Direct access to the Metrorail system will facilitate regional transit trips.

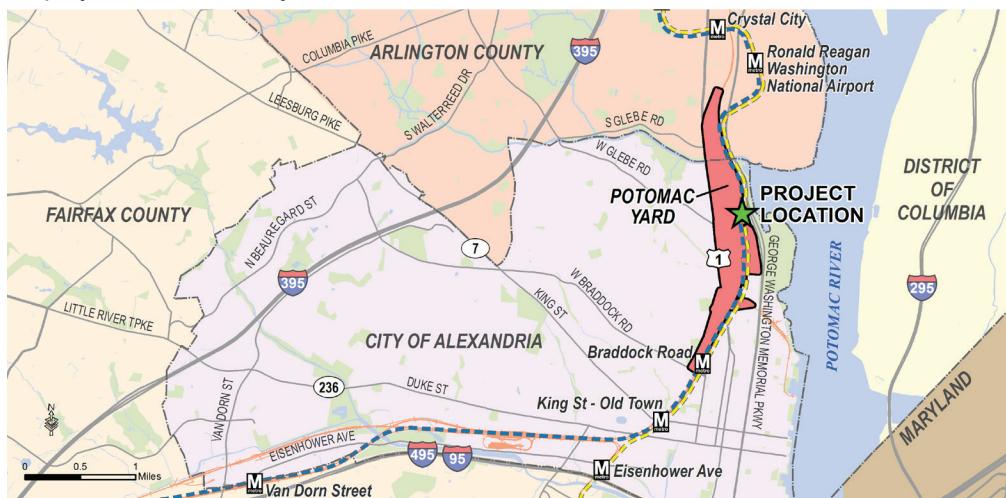
Traffic congestion will increase on U.S. Route 1 even without the proposed development in Potomac Yard. Increasing the share of transit trips would help to manage congestion, reduce auto trips and emissions along transit corridors, and make efficient use of existing infrastructure. Additional transportation options are needed to support the City of Alexandria’s redevelopment plans.

Due to the constrained capacity of the roadway network, additional transportation options are needed to support the City of Alexandria’s redevelopment plans by accommodating travel demand through transit and other non-auto modes. Direct regional transit access would provide more transportation choices for residents and workers and would enhance connections to regional employment and activity centers.

Planning for the Potomac Yard Area

Several initiatives have studied and proposed a Metrorail station in the Potomac Yard area:

- **1968 and 1975:** Metrorail system plans identified Potomac Yard as a site for a future Metrorail station that could benefit new development.
- **Mid-to-Late 1980s:** The draft *Alexandria 2020* plan proposed a mixed-use, neighborhood development with a Metrorail station. Operations of the existing rail yard began to be phased out.
- **1992/1999:** The City of Alexandria’s *Potomac Yard/Potomac Greens Small Area Plan* identified the potential for a Metrorail station. A 2009 revision included approval for an urban, mixed-use Town Center along East Glebe Road.
- **2010:** The *Potomac Yard Concept Development Study*, conducted by the City of Alexandria and Metro, analyzed eight potential Metrorail station locations, recommending further examination of three locations.
- **2010:** The *North Potomac Yard Small Area Plan* was adopted, envisioning replacement of the existing shopping center with a high-density, transit-oriented neighborhood anchored by a Metrorail station.
- **2011:** The current EIS study began, gathering public and agency input on the scope of the environmental study, project alternatives to be evaluated, and defining agency roles in the process.



Location of Potomac Yard and the Project

Description of Alternatives

Alternatives Considered

The Draft EIS identifies and evaluates alternatives that meet the project's purpose and need. The Draft EIS includes a "No Build Alternative," which describes what would happen if no station was built. The No Build Alternative provides a baseline to compare impacts.

Screening of Initial Alternatives

In March 2011, the project team completed scoping for the Draft EIS. A total of 36 initial alternatives were evaluated and screened to select those that were:

1. Responsive to project purpose and need;
2. Consistent with land use and development plans; and
3. Technically feasible.

Build Alternatives A, B, and D – representing three different Metrorail station locations – emerged from the scoping process. A design option of Build Alternative B, identified as "B-CSX Design Option," was developed in an effort to avoid and minimize adverse impacts of Alternative B to the George Washington Memorial Parkway, Federally owned land administered by NPS.

Alternatives Studied in the EIS

The **No Build Alternative** includes planned transportation projects expected to be finished by 2040, except the Potomac Yard Metrorail Station. These No Build projects include:

- Completion of the Potomac Yard street network and multi-use trails;
- Future pedestrian/bicycle bridge between Potomac Yard and Potomac Greens; and
- Expansion of local bus services.

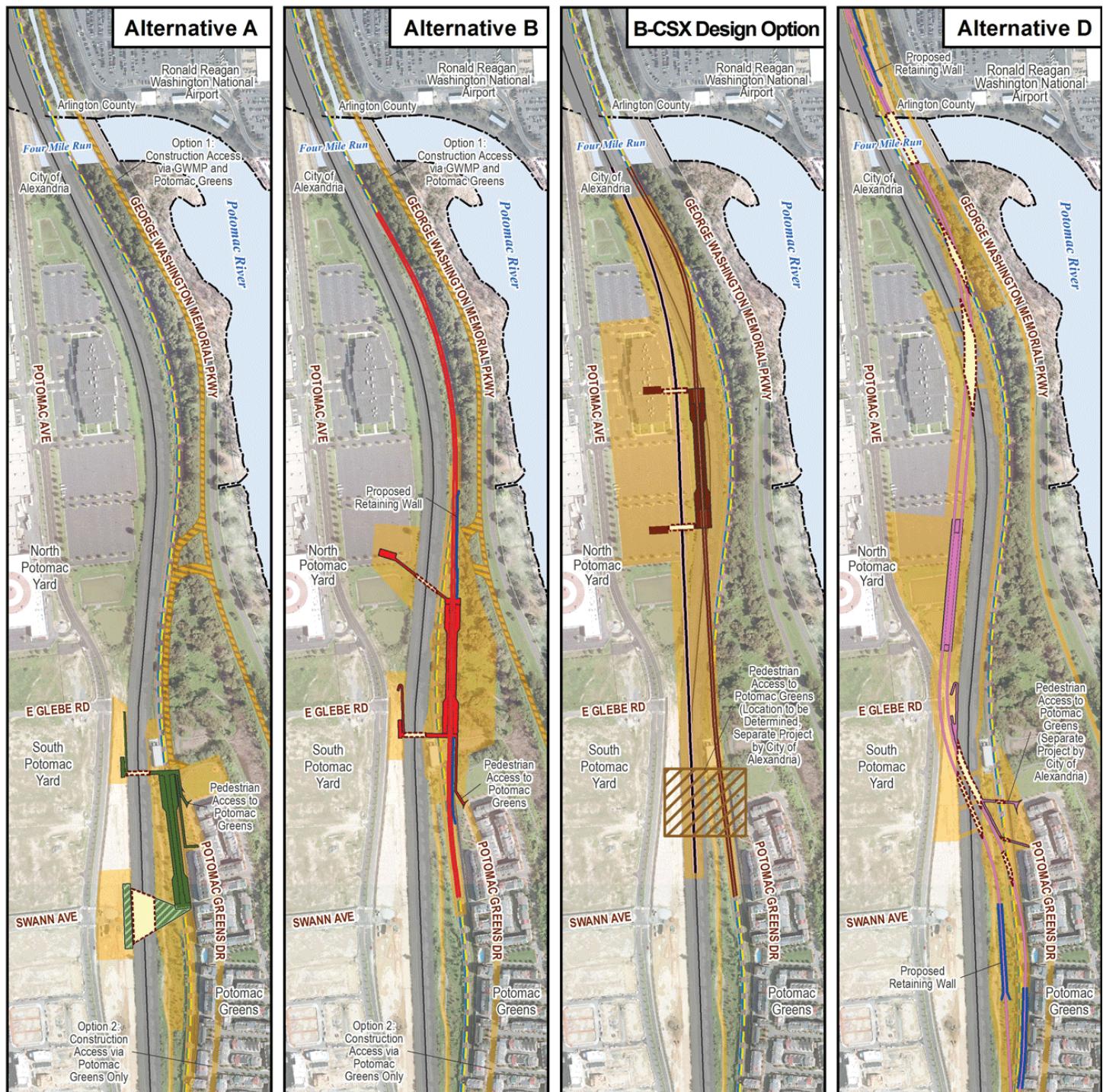
The **Build Alternatives** are the three Metrorail station alternatives and design option shown on this page. Detailed depictions of each Build Alternative are provided on the following page.



Build Alternative station locations

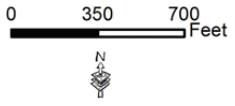
- **Build Alternative A** is located along the existing Metrorail tracks between the CSX Transportation (CSXT) railroad tracks and the north end of the Potomac Greens neighborhood, generally within the "Metrorail Reservation" identified as part of the *Potomac Yard/Potomac Greens Small Area Plan (1999)*.

Project Build Alternatives



- [Green Box] Alternative A - Platform & Facilities
- [Green Hatched Box] Alternative A - Range of Potential Pedestrian Crossings
- [Red Box] Alternative B - Platform & Facilities
- [Red Line] Alternative B - New Metrorail Track
- [Brown Box] B-CSX Design Option - Platform & Facilities
- [Blue Dashed Line] B-CSX Design Option - New Metrorail Track
- [Black Line] B-CSX Design Option - Realigned CSXT Track

- [Purple Box] Alternative D - Platform & Facilities
- [Purple Line] Alternative D - New Metrorail Track
- [Yellow Box] Aerial Structure over Railroad or Water
- [Yellow Box] Construction Access and Impact Area
- [Yellow Box] Alternative A and B - Option 1: Additional Construction Access and Impact Area
- [Blue Dashed Line] Existing Metrorail Blue/Yellow Line
- [Black Line] Existing CSXT Tracks
- [Grey Box] Existing CSXT Right-of-Way



Source:
City of Alexandria; Arlington County;
District of Columbia; WMATA

- **Build Alternative B** is located between the George Washington Memorial Parkway and the CSXT railroad tracks north of the Potomac Greens neighborhood, and east of the existing Potomac Yard Shopping Center. Portions of Build Alternative B would be located within the Greens Scenic Area, a NPS-administered easement located within the City's Potomac Greens Park.
- **B-CSX Design Option** is located east of the existing Potomac Yard movie theater on land currently occupied by the CSXT railroad tracks. This design option of Alternative B would require relocation of the CSXT tracks to the west, providing the room necessary for the station and realigned Metrorail track to avoid George Washington Memorial Parkway property and the Greens Scenic Area easement.
- **Build Alternative D** is located west of the CSXT railroad tracks near the existing Potomac Yard Shopping Center. The alternative would require elevated tracks starting north of Four Mile Run, crossing over the CSXT tracks into Potomac Yard, and then crossing over the CSXT tracks again to reconnect to the existing Metrorail line behind Potomac Greens.

Station Design

- Build Alternatives A, B, and B-CSX Design Option would have station platforms at the same level as the existing Metrorail tracks, with elevated entrance mezzanines providing two pedestrian bridges from the station over the CSXT railroad tracks to Potomac Yard.
- Build Alternative D would have an elevated station platform with a ground floor mezzanine entrance.

Pedestrian Connections

- Build Alternatives A and B would provide 24-hour pedestrian/bicycle access between Potomac Yard and Potomac Greens via one of their two pedestrian bridges.

- B-CSX Design Option and Build Alternative D would have separate pedestrian/bicycle bridges providing 24-hour access between Potomac Yard and Potomac Greens.

Construction Access and Staging

Construction activities would occur within identified staging areas and access routes shown on page 4. Construction activities for the project would last approximately two years. Opening of the station was assessed in the Draft EIS for the year 2016 based on previous project schedule assumptions. The schedule and anticipated opening year will be updated in the Final EIS.

Two construction access options for **Build Alternatives A and B** were assessed in the Draft EIS:

- *Option 1* – access to construction staging areas from the George Washington Memorial Parkway, Potomac Greens Drive, and the Rail Park, with relatively limited construction access from Potomac Yard.
- *Option 2* – access to construction staging areas from Potomac Greens Drive and the Rail Park, with relatively limited construction access from Potomac Yard, and no access from the George Washington Memorial Parkway.

B-CSX Design Option construction access would be provided from the Rail Park and Potomac Yard. **Build Alternative D** construction access would be provided from the George Washington Memorial Parkway, Potomac Greens Drive, the Rail Park, and Potomac Yard.

Commercial vehicles are prohibited from the George Washington Memorial Parkway, with limited exceptions, under *NPS Management Policies 2006* (9.2.1.2.1) and Federal regulations (36 CFR 5.6). The NPS policies state that “commercial traffic will be prohibited on roads within parks, except for the purpose of serving park visitors and park operations (9.2.1.2.1).” If access to private lands is otherwise not available, the park Superintendent has the discretion to issue permits for commercial vehicles. The proposed construction project areas for Build Alternatives A and B are accessible from locations other than the George Washington Memorial Parkway. However, since

potential impacts would occur to residential communities at these other locations, construction access from the George Washington Memorial Parkway was also studied as an option in the Draft EIS.

Potential Benefits of the Project

Project Benefits

A new Metrorail station would serve residents, employees, and visitors, providing mobility benefits and supporting the City of Alexandria's redevelopment plans for Potomac Yard by helping accommodate higher-density, mixed-use development.

Transportation Benefits

- A Metrorail station in Potomac Yard would provide Metrorail access for thousands of Alexandria residents, employees, and visitors.
- Direct access to Metrorail would maximize the number of people taking transit to and from the Potomac Yard area.
- Additional high-density development, supported by Metrorail, would mean thousands of trips would stay in the community and allow more people to walk or bike to destinations in Potomac Yard to take care of their daily needs.

How Much Development is Permitted in Potomac Yard?

The amount of residential and commercial development in Potomac Yard will vary depending on the location of a new Metrorail station.

- Levels of development currently permitted are based on the City's North Potomac Yard Small Area Plan (2010) and adopted zoning, which assume the construction of a Metrorail station in the vicinity of Build Alternative B.
- Currently, a total of 13.075 million square feet of residential, commercial and office development are allowed in Potomac Yard.
- If the No Build Alternative or a different station location other than Build Alternative B is chosen, current zoning restricts the amount of development to 9.250 million square feet.
- B-CSX Design Option and Build Alternative D would occupy otherwise developable land in Potomac Yard, and Build Alternative A would be located too far from the northern end of Potomac Yard to adequately support the densest levels of redevelopment for the existing shopping center site.

Transportation Benefits of a Potomac Yard Metrorail Station



**10,000-
11,300**

Daily boardings at a Potomac Yard Metrorail Station



34%

Daily trips taken by transit, walking, or bike



5,000

Daily auto trips removed from the road



U.S. Route 1 at Potomac Yard

Development Benefits

- A new Metrorail station would **support the City of Alexandria's redevelopment plans by providing regional transit access to Potomac Yard**, helping offset automobile trips and traffic congestion caused by the current and future development already approved.
- Depending on the location of a new Metrorail station, **additional high-density residential and commercial development is permitted** in Potomac Yard under current plans and zoning.
- If no Metrorail station is provided, then less development would be permitted in Potomac Yard.



Existing Potomac Yard Shopping Center



*Artist's rendering of planned
North Potomac Yard Redevelopment*

Evaluation Measure	No Build Alternative	Build Alternatives			
		Alternative A	Alternative B	B-CSX Design Option	Alternative D
Project Purpose: Improving regional transit accessibility					
Regional transit access to Potomac Yard	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Project Need: Providing additional transportation choices for residents and workers					
Additional transportation choices for residents and workers	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Project Need: Increasing the share of transit and other non-auto trips					
Increased share of trips by transit, bike, and walking compared to Potomac Yard without regional transit access	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Project Need: Supporting City of Alexandria redevelopment plans					
Total Potomac Yard development volume (million square feet) permitted under approved plans	9.250 M	9.250 M	13.075 M	9.250 M	9.250 M

Costs and Funding Sources

Estimated Capital Costs

Capital cost estimates are preliminary and based on conceptual engineering completed to date. Capital costs include all costs necessary to construct the station.

Capital Funding Sources

The City has created the Potomac Yard Metrorail Station Fund to manage the revenues collected for the project. Proceeds from the fund are to be used solely for the design, construction, and financing of the station and will be accounted for separately from other City revenues.

Fund revenue comes from:

- Net new tax revenues generated by Potomac Yard development (beyond taxes to pay for City and School services);
- Two special tax districts in Potomac Yard; and
- Developer contributions.

Other opportunities for federal or state funds for construction include Surface Transportation Program funds, loans through the Transportation Infrastructure Financing Innovation Act (TIFIA), additional funding from the Northern Virginia Transportation Authority, and a \$50 million loan through the Virginia Transportation Infrastructure Bank (VTIB).

Operating Costs and Funding Sources

The Potomac Yard Metrorail Station would add system-wide operating costs to Metrorail. The City of Alexandria's share of the WMATA operating subsidy for Metrorail is 5.1 percent, or approximately \$10 million in FY2013. The addition of one station and an estimated 5,000 additional City residents would increase the City's share to 5.3 percent under the approved allocation formula, requiring an additional \$1.39 million annual contribution. The City plans to fund the additional WMATA subsidy using the Potomac Yard Metrorail Station Fund.

Conceptual Capital Costs (millions of 2016 Dollars)*

Build Alternative	Low	High
Build Alternative A	\$119	\$228
Build Alternative B	\$149	\$293
B-CSX Design Option	\$193	\$358
Build Alternative D	\$277	\$539

* These estimates were based on a previous implementation schedule that assumed an opening date for the Potomac Yard Metrorail Station in 2016. Construction cost inflation likely would increase the estimated capital costs for a later opening date.



Existing Metrorail Blue/Yellow Line between Potomac Greens and Potomac Yard

Summary of Permanent Project Effects

Resource	Build Alternatives				
	No Build Alternative	Alternative A	Alternative B	B-CSX Design Option	Alternative D
Transportation					
Additional off-peak Metrorail train required	0	1	1	1	1
Improved pedestrian/bicycle access between Potomac Greens and Potomac Yard	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Human Environment					
Land acquisitions (acres)	0	1.3	4.0	14.4	10.0
Displacements of businesses or residences	0	0	0	Movie Theater	Movie Theater
Consistent with City of Alexandria Plans	No	No	Yes	No	No
Consistent with Regional Transportation Plans	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Consistent with Plans for George Washington Memorial Parkway (GWMP)	Not inconsistent	Not inconsistent	Not inconsistent	Not inconsistent	Not inconsistent
Adverse impacts to viewsheds from GWMP (opening year viewsheds with a reduction in quality)	0	2	3	3	3
Adverse impacts to viewsheds from Potomac Greens (opening year viewsheds with a reduction in quality)	0	2	1	0	2
Adverse impacts to viewsheds from Potomac Yard (opening year viewsheds with a reduction in quality)	0	1	1	0	1
Effects to GWMP historic architectural resources and parkland (acres)	0	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Visual impacts • Removal of trees (for Option 1) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transfer of land (0.16 ac.) • Visual impacts • Removal of trees 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Visual impacts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transfer of land (1.43 ac.) • Visual impacts • Removal of trees
Effects to archaeological resources (sites)	0	Option 1: 2 Option 2: 0	Option 1: 2 Option 2: 0	0	1
City of Alexandria park impacts (acres)	0	1.16	3.01	3.86	5.38
Greens Scenic Area easement impact (acres)	0	0	1.71	0	0
FTA noise criteria impacts (residences)	0	0	0	0	7
WMATA noise criteria impacts (residences)	7	7	7	7	3
FTA vibration criteria impacts (residences)	0	6	0	0	7
WMATA vibration criteria impacts (residences)	0	1	0	0	0
Natural Environment					
Increase in impervious surface (acres)	0	1.82	2.24	(-0.02)	9.24
U.S. Army Corp of Engineers (USACE) regulated wetlands impacts (acres)	0	0.02	1.22	0	0.52
NPS regulated wetlands impacts (acres)	0	0	1.28	0	0.50
Floodplain impacts (acres)	0	0	1.48	0	0.90
Resource Protection Area impacts (acres)	0	0.41	3.36	1.12	2.07
Natural habitat loss (acres)	0	0.03	2.58	0.18	1.76
Secondary and Cumulative Effects					
Secondary traffic & visual impacts	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Adverse effects to GWMP historic architectural resources	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Cumulative traffic, visual & floodplain impacts	None	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

Summary of Temporary Construction Effects

Resource	Build Alternatives				
	No Build Alternative	Alternative A	Alternative B	B-CSX Design Option	Alternative D
General impacts to roadways and driveways	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Use of GWMP roadway	No	Option 1: Yes Option 2: No	Option 1: Yes Option 2: No	No	Yes
Effects to GWMP historic architectural resources and parkland (acres)	0	Option 1: 0.30 Option 2: 0	Option 1: 0.78 Option 2: 0.55	0	2.40
Effects to archaeological resources (sites)	0	Option 1: 2 Option 2: 0	Option 1: 2 Option 2: 0	0	1
City of Alexandria park impacts (acres)	0	Option 1: 5.49 Option 2: 4.80	Option 1: 5.48 Option 2: 5.48	0.97	5.53
Greens Scenic Area easement impact (acres)	0	Option 1: 0.25 Option 2: 0.13	Option 1: 3.09 Option 2: 3.09	0	0.02
USACE regulated wetlands impacts (acres)	0	Option 1: 0.30 Option 2: 0.01	Option 1: 3.61 Option 2: 3.54	0	0.41
NPS regulated wetlands impacts (acres)	0	Option 1: 0.35 Option 2: 0.01	Option 1: 3.68 Option 2: 3.57	0	0.48
Resource Protection Area impacts (acres)	0	Option 1: 1.75 Option 2: 0.49	Option 1: 5.50 Option 2: 5.27	0.58	2.40

Project Effects for Key Environmental Resource Areas

Key Environmental Resource Areas

An overview of environmental impacts is shown on page 9; temporary construction impacts to environmental resources are listed in the table above. Specific effects to the George Washington Memorial Parkway are also described individually by resource area at the end of the section.

Land Acquisitions and Displacements

The Build Alternatives would require property for station facilities and right-of-way for realigned track, as well as additional temporary construction easements or access permits. No residential displacements would be required for any of the alternatives. B-CSX Design Option and Build Alternative D would result in a displacement of one existing business, the movie theater in the Potomac Yard Shopping Center. Build Alternatives A and B would not result in the displacement of any businesses.

Build Alternatives B and D would require permanent acquisition of 0.16 acre and 1.43 acres, respectively, of the George Washington Memorial Parkway property. Build Alternatives A and B-CSX Design Option would not require permanent acquisitions of the George Washington Memorial Parkway. In addition, Build Alternative B would be a violation of the Greens Scenic Area easement. Build Alternative B could not proceed unless the easement is released by NPS. Construction staging and access areas for Build Alternatives A and D would also be in violation of the Greens Scenic Area easement. B-CSX Design Option would not be in violation of the Greens Scenic Area easement.

Land acquisitions would be conducted in accordance with all applicable laws.

Local Plans and Zoning

The *North Potomac Yard Small Area Plan* and the zoning for Coordinated Development District (CDD) 19 link the level of development to the presence of a Metrorail station at the approximate location of Build Alternative B. Build Alternative A, B-CSX Design Option, and Build Alternative D are inconsistent with City of Alexandria plans. If a Metrorail station is constructed at a location other than Build Alternative B or is not built, the amount of permitted development in North Potomac Yard is reduced by approximately 3.825 million square feet. The selection of Build Alternative A, B-CSX Design Option, or Build Alternative D would require the City to undertake a revised planning and rezoning process for North Potomac Yard.

Visual Resources

The three Build Alternatives and B-CSX Design Option would impact views from the George Washington Memorial Parkway, the Potomac Greens neighborhood, Potomac Greens Park, and Potomac Yard, due to the introduction of new visual elements and removal of vegetation for construction access and staging areas. New visual elements include the stations and pedestrian bridges for all Build Alternatives, B-CSX Design Option, and the elevated track and structures required for Build Alternative D. The new higher-density development permitted in Potomac Yard under the No Build and Build Alternatives will also result in visual impacts, although this will happen whether or not a Metrorail station is constructed at Potomac Yard.

Noise and Vibration

Residences in Potomac Greens were constructed alongside the pre-existing Metrorail alignment; current Metrorail operations exceed WMATA noise criteria at seven residences. Approval for construction of these residences included a reservation for a future Metrorail station (location of Build Alternative A), and the potential construction of a Metrorail station is disclosed in land and ownership documents.

The existing noise conditions would remain under the No Build Alternative, Build Alternative A, Build Alternative B, and B-CSX Design Option. Build Alternative D would reduce noise impacts at four residences, but would result in new noise impacts based on FTA criteria at eight residences due to its elevated track.

Build Alternative B and B-CSX Design Option would not exceed criteria for vibration impacts. However, both Build Alternatives A and D would result in increased vibration impacts based on FTA criteria to residences in Potomac Greens due to Metrorail trains passing over new switches.

Other noise sources are associated with the proposed station. Metrorail door chimes, train conductor announcements, station public address announcements, and brake noise would be audible in the community as a new noise source. These noises are not expected to contribute to any exceedance or noise impact, based on WMATA and FTA criteria. These noise sources would be evaluated more closely during final design when the station features are finalized, and would be mitigated, as appropriate.



Potomac Yard Park, CSXT railroad tracks, and Potomac Greens

Wetlands and Waterways

Wetlands exist in the area to the east and north of Potomac Greens, between the WMATA tracks and George Washington Memorial Parkway, and in the vicinity of Four Mile Run. Build Alternative B would permanently fill 1.22 acres of wetland regulated by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) under the Clean Water Act. Build Alternative D would permanently fill 0.52 acre of USACE regulated wetland and would require a new bridge over Four Mile Run with new bridge piers in the stream. Build Alternative A and B-CSX Design Option would have impacts of less than one-tenth of an acre. Wetlands are also regulated by NPS; specific impacts to wetlands within the parkland of the George Washington Memorial Parkway and the Greens Scenic Area easement are described on page 13.

Construction Access and Staging

Areas designated for construction staging (see areas shaded in orange on Page 4) would be cleared of all trees and other natural vegetation and filled or leveled as necessary to make construction activities possible. After construction, the areas would be replanted and landscaped according to prior uses and wetlands would be restored in coordination with NPS, USACE, and other relevant agencies. A screen of vegetation along George Washington Memorial Parkway would be maintained where possible to minimize the visual impact to users.

Option 1 construction access for Build Alternatives A and B (access from the George Washington Memorial Parkway) would impact two archaeological sites if avoidance measures are not possible. Construction of Build Alternative D would impact one archaeological site.

George Washington Memorial Parkway/ Mount Vernon Memorial Highway

The George Washington Memorial Parkway, including the historic Mount Vernon Memorial Highway, commemorates the first president, preserves the natural setting, and provides a quality entryway for visitors to the nation's capital. The construction of a Metrorail station at Potomac Yard would affect resources of the Parkway:

Cultural Resources

The segment of the George Washington Memorial Parkway within the project study area is listed on the National Register of Historic Places through two separate nominations: the Mount Vernon Memorial Highway and the George Washington Memorial Parkway.

Build Alternative D, and Option 1 construction access for Build Alternatives A and B (access from the Parkway) would impact the George Washington Memorial Parkway. Specifically, construction of temporary access roads to support station construction under the alternatives would require removal of trees and other vegetation that were intended to screen views of uses to the west. B-CSX Design Option, and Option 2 construction access for Build Alternatives A and B (no access from the Parkway) would not require the construction of temporary access roads from the George Washington Memorial Parkway. For Build Alternative B, both construction access options would require use of a portion of parkland for construction staging, regardless of the access route. Viewsheds and the visitor experience along the Parkway would be impacted by the introduction of a new Metrorail station under any of the three Build Alternatives or B-CSX Design Option.

The three Build Alternatives and B-CSX Design Option would impact historic resources by removing vegetation west of the George Washington Memorial Parkway and introducing new non-historic visual elements and views to the west. These new non-historic elements would impact the integrity of the designed historic landscape and degrade the scenic and historic quality and contemplative experience for travelers, important characteristics of the Parkway experience.

Option 1 construction access for Build Alternatives A and B (access from the George Washington Memorial Parkway) would impact two archaeological sites if avoidance measures are not possible. Construction of Build Alternative D would impact one archaeological site if avoidance measures are not possible. B-CSX Design Option, and Option 2 construction access for Build Alternatives A and B (no access from the Parkway) would not impact any archaeological sites.

Visual Resources

Views from the George Washington Memorial Parkway would be impacted by the introduction of the Metrorail station as well as the Potomac Yard redevelopment in all Build Alternatives, especially during winter, due to the loss of vegetative foliage.

- Build Alternatives requiring construction access from the Parkway (Option 1 construction access for Build Alternatives A and B, and Build Alternative D) would create long-term viewshed impacts. Removal of vegetation would create gaps in the vegetated viewsheds, and replacement vegetation would need to develop and mature to match the existing vegetation growth.
- Build Alternatives that do not require construction access from the Parkway (Option 2 construction access for Build Alternatives A and B, and B-CSX Design Option) would have viewshed impacts from station structures and bridges, and removal of vegetation off of the George Washington Memorial Parkway property. Build Alternative B would require clearing of vegetation within the Greens Scenic Area easement.
- Under the No Build Alternative, viewsheds would be degraded as the Potomac Yard area is developed.

Wetlands

Depending on the construction option, up to 1.28 acres of wetlands on NPS parkland or the Greens Scenic Area easement would be impacted. Up to 3.68 acres of additional wetlands would be temporarily impacted during construction.

Build Alternatives B and D would permanently impact 1.28 and 0.50 acre, respectively, of NPS regulated wetlands. Option 1 construction access for Build Alternatives A and B, and Option 2 construction access for Build Alternative B would all lead to additional temporary wetland impacts. Specific wetland mitigation would be determined through discussions with various agencies for unavoidable impacts. All wetlands located on NPS land would be replaced within the Parkway property or on other NPS sites. B-CSX Design Option and Option 2 construction access for Build Alternative A would not result in any permanent or

temporary impacts to wetlands on the George Washington Memorial Parkway.

Construction Traffic

Build Alternatives that require construction access from the George Washington Memorial Parkway (Option 1 construction access for Build Alternatives A and B, and Build Alternative D) would have temporary traffic impacts due to construction vehicles. Construction vehicles would impact the driver experience along the Parkway and would require a permit from NPS. The number of construction vehicles accessing the site per day would vary and would be restricted to specific times based on NPS and City of Alexandria construction regulations and permits. Construction vehicles using the Parkway may damage the roadway pavement, which would require repair after construction. B-CSX Design Option and Option 2 construction access for Build Alternatives A and B would not require construction access from the George Washington Memorial Parkway.

Construction traffic would impact park user experience, an important element of the purpose of the park.

Commercial vehicles are prohibited from the George Washington Memorial Parkway, with limited exceptions, under *NPS Management Policies 2006* (9.2.1.2.1) and Federal regulations (36 CFR 5.6). The NPS policies state that “commercial traffic will be prohibited on roads within parks, except for the purpose of serving park visitors and park operations (9.2.1.2.1).” If access to private lands is otherwise not available, the park Superintendent has the discretion to issue permits for commercial vehicles. The



Existing wetland area within Potomac Greens Park; George Washington Memorial Parkway in the background

proposed construction project areas for Build Alternatives A and B are accessible from locations other than the George Washington Memorial Parkway. However, since potential impacts would occur to residential communities at these other locations, construction access from the George Washington Memorial Parkway was also studied as an option in the Draft EIS.

Public Involvement and Next Steps

How Has the Public Been Engaged in the Project?

The public has been engaged through:

- Public meetings and community group meetings;
- Project newsletters and email distribution lists;
- Project website; and
- Interaction with community organizations.

Informational materials at all public meetings, including presentation materials, handouts, and comment sheets, have been available in Spanish as well as English, and a Spanish-speaking staff member has been present at all meetings.

In addition, the Alexandria City Council created the Potomac Yard Metrorail Implementation Work Group to assist in the EIS process by informing City officials and providing a venue for input on the project.

What Are the Roles of Other Agencies?

During project scoping, Federal, state, and local agencies that might have an interest in the project were invited to participate. Agencies have been involved through briefings and additional communication focused on specific areas of expertise within each agency's reviewing purview. Agencies, as well as the public, are invited to comment on the Draft EIS.

Agencies are also involved through concurrent Federal processes, including reviews for consistency with:

- Clean Water Act;
- National Historic Preservation Act;
- U.S. Department of Transportation Act ("Section 4(f)"); and
- Coastal Zone Management Act.

The National Park Service (NPS) is a cooperating agency because of the potential of the project to impact the George Washington Memorial Parkway. Any action taken by NPS must be consistent with the National Park Service Organic Act, which established NPS and governs its activities.

Public Comment Period

The public has the opportunity to comment on the environmental analysis. Comments received during this period can help to identify changes to alternatives that may mitigate adverse effects. Any changes will be incorporated into the Final EIS. See www.potomacyardmetro.com for the full copy of the Draft EIS and supporting background materials from the study.

Hard copies of the Draft EIS are available for review at the City of Alexandria public library and at:

**Alexandria City Hall
301 King Street
Alexandria, VA 22314**

The public comment period on the Draft EIS will be open until May 18, 2015.

See following page for information on opportunities to provide comments at the public hearing, by email, or by mail.



Project public meeting, April 2012

City of Alexandria Outreach

The City of Alexandria will be hosting two public workshops, in which individuals can learn more about the EIS process and get more information about specific subject areas. A separate public hearing will be held by the City of Alexandria as part of its legislative process.

For more information on the final dates of City meetings and hearings related to the project, please visit the City's website:

 Alexandriava.gov/PotomacYard/

or you may call the City's general information line:

 **703-746-4357**

Public Hearing

A public hearing on the Draft EIS will be held as part of the NEPA process at the following time and location:

Thursday, April 30, 2015 at 6:30pm

**Cora Kelly Recreation Center
25 W. Reed Avenue
Alexandria, VA 22305**

The location of the hearing is wheelchair accessible. Any individual who requires special assistance such as a sign language interpreter or additional accommodation to participate in the public hearing, or who requires these materials in an alternate format, should contact Danise Peña at 202-962-2511 or TTY: 202-962-2033 as soon as possible in order for WMATA to make necessary arrangements. For language assistance, such as an interpreter or information in another language, please call 202-962-2582 at least 48 hours prior to the hearing.

What Happens after the Public Hearing?

Following the public hearing, the City of Alexandria will choose a preferred alternative. The City will continue coordination with FTA and NPS before selection of a preferred alternative to ensure compliance with NEPA and other applicable laws.

After identification of the preferred alternative, a Final EIS will be prepared. The Final EIS will state how public comments are addressed, include further design and refinement of the project to minimize community and environmental impacts, identify impacts of the preferred alternative, and describe measures for avoiding, minimizing, or mitigating adverse impacts.

Comment on the Draft EIS

Submit written comments by May 18, 2015:

- By email: comments@potomacyardmetro.com
or
writtentestimony@wmata.com
- By mail: **Potomac Yard Metrorail Station EIS
P.O. Box 16531
Alexandria, VA 22302**
or
**Office of the Secretary
WMATA
600 Fifth Street Northwest
Washington, DC 20001**