Docket Item #2-C
SPECIAL USE PERMIT #99-0020
POTOMAC YARD/POTOMAC GREENS

Planning Commission Special Meeting
June 15, 1999

ISSUE: Consideration of a request for a special use permit for a transportation management plan (TMP) for the Potomac Yard/Potomac Greens development site.

APPLICANT: Commonwealth Atlantic Properties Inc.
by J. Howard Middleton, Jr., attorney

LOCATION: 3601 Jefferson Davis Highway
Potomac Yard/Potomac Greens site

ZONE: CDD-10/Coordinated Development District

CITY COUNCIL ACTION, SEPTEMBER 8, 1999: Upon a motion by Councilwoman Pepper, seconded by Councilman Cleveland and carried unanimously, with respect to the application for a Transportation Management Plan special use permit for Potomac Yard/Potomac Greens, Council accepted the recommendation of the Planning Commission and approved this TMP special use permit, subject to all conditions set out in the staff report.

Vice Mayor Euille stated that this Council needs to commit itself to addressing transportation and traffic concerns city-wide, and should seriously consider the formation of a Special Task Force on Transportation.

PLANNING COMMISSION ACTION, JUNE 15, 1999: On a motion by Mr. Robinson, seconded by Mr. Dunn, the Planning Commission voted to recommend approval of the proposal, subject to all applicable codes and ordinances and the staff recommendations. The motion carried on a vote of 7 to 0.

Reason: The Planning Commission agreed with the staff analysis.

Speakers:

(See speakers list on item CDD #99-01, the Concept Plan for Potomac Yard.)

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends **approval** subject to compliance with all applicable codes and ordinances and the following conditions:

1. All required TMP activities within the Potomac Yard/Potomac Greens tract, including those of the existing shopping center, shall be coordinated by a single TMP Coordinator (TMPC) for the project. TMPCs for individual projects or buildings within the project are also permitted-- and, in fact, encouraged--but the activities of these sub-area coordinators shall be overseen and coordinated by the TMPC for the project. This TMPC shall be designated for Potomac Yard/Potomac Greens upon application for the initial building permit for the project. The name, address, and telephone number of the TMPC shall be provided to the Office of Transit Services and Programs (OTS&P). The TMPC shall maintain an on-site office at Potomac Yard/Potomac Greens.

2. The TMPC shall promote the use of transit, carpooling/vanpooling, bicycling, telecommuting, the regional Guaranteed Ride Home and other components of the TMP with prospective residents/tenants/employees during marketing/leasing/new employee orientation.

3. The TMPC shall display and distribute information about transit, carpool/vanpool, bicycling, telecommuting and other TMP programs and services to residents/tenants/employees of the project, including maintaining, on site, stocks of appropriate bus schedules (DASH, Metrobus), information on Metrorail and Virginia Railway Express(VRE), Office of Transit Services and Programs' transportation brochure, and applications to the regional rideshare program. The information will be displayed in a central location in all commercial buildings and in common areas for all residential development.

4. The TMPC shall administer a ride-sharing program, including assisting in the formation of two person carpools and car/vanpools of three or more persons. The applicant will coordinate this effort with the City's Office of Transit Services and Programs.

5. The applicant shall fund, or shall require that individual builders and owners within the project fund a transportation fund, at an annual rate equal to $60 per occupied residential unit and/or $0.10 per occupied net square foot of commercial/retail space. First payment to fund shall be made with the issuance of initial Certificate of Occupancy (or when first tenant/owner moves in). The rate shall increase annually, beginning January 2000, by an amount equal to the rate of inflation for the previous year (1999), unless a waiver is obtained from the Director of T&ES.

The TMP fund shall be used exclusively for the following approved TMP activities:

a) discounting the cost of transit fare media for residents/employees at the site;
b) marketing and promotional materials to promote the TMP;
c) subsidizing the cost of carpool/vanpool spaces;
d) installation of bike racks, lockers, and transit displays;
e) operation of a shuttle bus service;
f) any other TMP activities as may be proposed by the applicant and approved by the director of T&ES.

The TMPC will provide semi-annual reports to the Office of Transit Services and Programs. These reports will provide a summary of the contributions to the fund and all expenses. The first report will be due six months following the issuance of the first Certificate of Occupancy.

Any unencumbered funds remaining in the TMP account at the end of each reporting year may be either reprogrammed for TMP activities during the ensuing year or may be paid the City for use in TMP support activities which benefit the site. The Director of T&ES may require that the funds be paid to the City upon determination that the applicant has not made reasonable effort to use the funds for TMP Programs.

6. Annual surveys shall be conducted to determine the number of residents/tenants/employees and their place of employment/residence, mode of transportation, arrival and departure times, willingness and ability to use carpooling and public transit, and such additional information as the City may require. This survey will become the basis for the Annual Report.

7. The applicant shall provide annual reports to OTS&P, including an assessment of the effects of TMP activities on carpooling, vanpooling, transit ridership and peak hour traffic, the results of the annual survey, and a work program for the following year. Also, this report, and each subsequent report shall identify, as of the end of the reporting period, the number of square feet of leased commercial/retail floor area and/or the number of occupied dwelling units and the number of employees and/or residents occupying such space.

8. Discounted bus and rail fare media shall be sold on-site to employees/residents of the project. The fare media to be sold will include, at a minimum, fare media for Metrorail, Metrobus, DASH and any other public transportation system's fare media requested by employees/residents and/or the Office of Transit Services and Program. The availability of this fare media will be prominently advertised. At a minimum, the initial discount will be 20% on the transit fare media sold to residents/tenants/employees at the project unless otherwise approved by the Director of T&ES.

9. The applicant will implement a parking management program that provides incentives for HOV use as follows:

   a) Reserved carpool/vanpool spaces will be conveniently located near the building elevators;
   b) Registered vanpools will be provided free parking;
   c) Carpools of three (3) or more occupants, also registered, will receive a parking subsidy equal to one-half the single occupant vehicle monthly parking.
   d) Monthly parking rates for single occupant vehicles will be consistent with comparable
   office buildings located in the site vicinity.

10. Bicycle racks shall be provided in quantities sufficient to meet demand. The developer will encourage tenants to include personal amenities (showers, lockers etc.) in their suites for those who wish to walk, run, or bike to work

11. Shuttle bus service to and from the Braddock Road Metro station and/or the Metro station in Crystal City shall be provided. The nature and extent of this service, the time when it shall commence, the time when it may terminate and similar issues shall be assessed and determined by the Director of T&ES.

13. The applicant will work with the City's OTS&P and the transit companies in the vicinity to encourage bus service in and to the site.

14. The applicant will provide space, of approximately 450 square feet, for a transit store in or near the area designated as the Town Center of the Potomac Yard development.

15. The applicant shall prepare, as part of its sales/leasing agreements, appropriate language to inform prospective buyers/tenants/residents of the TMP conditions.

16. Modifications to the approved TMP activities shall be permitted upon approval by the Director of T&ES, provided that any changes are consistent with the goals of the TMP.

17. The Director of T&ES shall review the transportation management plan in conjunction with the submission of the initial preliminary development plan for each landbay and shall docket the transportation management plan for consideration by the Planning Commission and City Council if the director has determined that there are problems with the operation of the TMP and that new or revised conditions are needed.

Transportation at Potomac Yard

I. Background

Certainly, transportation is one of the most discussed elements relating to development at Potomac Yard. Over the past ten years, there have been no less than three major transportation studies related to this specific site, the Alexandria 2020 plan, the PTO proposal, and the most recent proposed project. In addition, there have been a number of transportation studies for portions of the corridor related to the retail center, a 568-unit apartment complex (Lincoln Properties), the 268-unit, Slaters Village residential community, periodic corridor analysis by the Council of Government Transportation Planning Board and Virginia Department of Transportation, ongoing traffic signal optimization surveys and analysis, plus a number of studies related to development in Arlington. This site and this segment of U.S. Route 1 is one of the most studied and analyzed corridors in the entire region. There is no lack of traffic and transportation data for all types and levels of development for this site. Many of these studies show an ever increasing travel demand in this corridor in both the peak and off peak. Even with no development on Potomac Yard the traffic volumes on U.S. Route 1 were predicted to continue to increase.

The most comprehensive study was contained in the Frederick R. Harris report that was prepared for the City as an analysis of the proposed Alexandria 2020 plan. Last year, for the proposed Potomac Yard-PTO master plan, the assumptions of the Harris report were compared with the current situation and projections from the development standpoint. The City's consultant projected an additional 10.2 million square feet of office development within Alexandria by 2010. At the current rate of construction, only about one-third of that total will be reached by 2010. The employment for the City was also overstated at 167,000 jobs by 2010 which COG now projects our employment to be 103,600 (-38%) by 2010. The Harris report projected that the District of Columbia would have 886,000 jobs by 2010, but the most recent COG projections for the District of Columbia are 756,000 (-15%).

The consultants analyzed a number of land use scenarios. Scenario D which was one of the maximum development scenarios assumed 3.8 million square feet of office development. The proposed transportation plan associated with this development was intended to accommodate traffic from the built out 2020 plan. The two major elements of the transportation plan were a four-lane spine road connecting U.S. Route 1 at the Monroe Avenue Bridge to the internal roadway system of Crystal City Connection and a Metrorail station providing for a connection to an AMTRAK/VRE station platform. If this level of development (the 2020 plan) were proposed, these transportation recommendations would continue to be valid for the horizon year. With the lower than expected office development in the City and the region which results in lower traffic generation, transportation improvements will operate at higher levels of service longer into the future.

II. Analysis and Assumptions

The most recent transportation analysis, by Wells & Associates conducted for Commonwealth Atlantic Properties (CAP), projected impacts and made recommendations related to the two development scenarios on Potomac Yard, median and low density plans. This CAP analysis was evaluated by PBS&J Consulting Engineers on behalf of the City. Their evaluation is contained in the attached report titled "Review of Traffic Impact Study - Potomac Yard/Potomac Greens", dated May 20, 1999. This evaluation focused on three areas: the assumptions and methodology, a review of existing conditions, and a review of future traffic both background and development generated.

- Assumptions & Methodology - The assumptions of the plan were evaluated by the City's consultant and the following are the summarized findings:

  1. Background Traffic - Although the assumed annual growth in background traffic in the TIS of 0.5% is slightly lower than the trends for U.S. Route 1 and other north-south routes in this area, the assumption is reasonable (see Table A-1 in PBS&J report).

  2. Trip generation rates - According to the City's consultant, the trip generation rates in the TIS should be 28% to 46% higher than the rates assumed in the report. While there may be some logical reasons for the reductions that Commonwealth Atlantic Properties' Engineer applied to obtain their reductions, the methodology was not clear in the report.

  3. Mode Split - The assumed mode split in the TIS of 30-40% transit usage is extremely high and overly optimistic, considering that no Metrorail station is included in their plan. A more feasible and attainable rate would be more in order of 20%. The office complexes in the King Street Station area have a mode split for work types by transit is about 20%. Arlington County staff indicates that they will assume a 20% split for transit for the development on their "South Tract".

  4. Distribution of Traffic - The TIS used the same distribution of traffic (direction of trip arrivals to the site) that was used in the Potomac Yard Small Area Plan and the Harris Report. This Distribution appears reasonable.

  5. Auto Usage and Ride Sharing - The TIS projects HOV usage at a very high rate of 1.4 persons/vehicle. The rate should be assumed closer to 1.2 to 1.25, which is a more reasonable rate. It is not impossible to attain higher HOV usage since Potomac Yard is situated at the north end of the U.S. Route 1 HOV corridor. If the HOV lanes

are ultimately extended beyond the Capital Beltway to Fort Belvoir in Fairfax County, there could be a significant increase in HOV usage. However, it is unlikely that 1.4 persons/vehicle could be attained within the horizon year of this project. While the land use trip generation rates are considered to be low and the percent of transit usage and the auto occupancy rates are high, the net effect on this proposed development is that transportation improvements, particularly Potomac Avenue, need to be operational sooner (2005) rather than later as they proposed (2010),

- Existing Conditions - The TIS gave a reasonable assumption of peak-hour traffic as a percent of 24-hour traffic and the growth rate of the peak is also generally consistent with the 24-hour volumes. The operating conditions along U.S. Route 1 as presented in the TIS closely portray actual characteristics at the intersection today. U.S. Route 1 at Reed Avenue, currently has the lowest level of service at "D" in this section of the corridor. The George Washington Parkway at Slaters Lane operates at levels of service "F" today.

- Review of Future Traffic - The TIS forecasts satisfactory operation of U.S. Route 1 even in 2005 without Potomac Avenue and estimates that it would be needed by 2010 in order for U.S. Route 1 to continue to operate at acceptable levels of service. However, the City's consultant predicts that because of revisions to the trip generation and the mode split as noted earlier, Potomac Avenue will be needed by the year 2005. This is the most significant find of the analysis.

III. Potomac Avenue (the Spine Road)

Construction of Potomac Avenue is the most significant transportation improvement proposed with the Potomac Yard development. Without this facility, all the traffic growth in the corridor would have to be handled on U.S. Route 1 Access to the new development on the Potomac Yard, both in Alexandria and Arlington, would come from U.S. Route 1 and there would be no alternatives available other than adjacent streets. New traffic capacity is essential to service the proposed new development on Potomac Yard. Potomac Avenue, as proposed, plan could provide additional capacity of 1500 to 2000 vehicle per hour in the corridor. There are significant advantages to implementing this recommendation in the plan. Potomac Avenue will provide direct access to the new proposed Main Street and all the abutting properties in the development. Without it to provide this essential ingress/egress, all turning movements associated with the development would have to take place on U.S. Route 1. This would further reduce the carrying capacity of U.S. Route 1 and substantially increase the pressures on the streets in the adjacent neighborhoods as access routes to and from Potomac Yard. In the Alexandria portion of the site, it is proposed that Potomac Avenue intersect with Main Street which connects all internal streets; Howell Avenue (extended), Swann Avenue (extended), East Glebe Road (extended), East Reed Avenue (currently at the entrance to the theaters), and the northern most access drive adjacent to the supermarket and Four Mile Run.

In addition, the Arlington County staff has indicated that an essential element of the proposed development project at the south end of Crystal City is to extend South Glebe Road to intersect Potomac Avenue to provide direct access to the internal circulation system in Crystal City. With the implementation of proposed roadway improvements at the South Glebe Road and U.S. Route 1 intersection, where a grade separation is anticipated, and proposed changes at the I-395/South Glebe Road/ West Glebe Road interchange, the South Glebe Road corridor potentially becomes a very attractive arterial linking I-395 and areas to the west to east (in the morning peak) to this corridor. Also, there would be some diversion of the south to north movement. In viewing the figure #19 (on page 40 of the Wells & Associates Report) on traffic distribution, these movements are of the most concern with respect to the potential impact on nearby neighborhoods. The South Glebe Road connection to Potomac Avenue becomes a very attractive, major street network improvement that will reduce through traffic impacts in these areas.

The timing of the Potomac Avenue implementation is still an issue between the developer and the staff. From traffic operation and impact standpoints, it is imperative that the project be built early in the development of this site. The sooner it is operational, the sooner travel patterns will be established away from U.S. Route 1 and away from local streets. Our consultant concluded that the developer's estimate of trip generation was too low and their estimate of transit and HOV usage was too high. These assumptions result in higher vehicular volumes sooner in their development. This roadway improvement should be in place by 2005.

IV. U.S. Route 1

U.S. Route 1 has several significant issues related to this development. Through the public involvement process, CAP was asked to evaluate a widening of U.S. Route 1 in lieu of constructing Potomac Avenue. The intent was to create a boulevard affect with on-street parking during off peak hours, wide landscaped medians, and a more pedestrian friendly roadway. Widening to six lanes would create additional peak period capacity, but as discussed in the previous section on Potomac Avenue, U.S. Route 1 would remain the primary corridor for through traffic and traffic destined to Crystal City and Potomac Yard. There would be no alternatives other than existing adjacent streets and when U.S. Route 1 could no longer satisfactorily accommodate the travel demand in the corridor, more pressure would be brought on the adjacent neighborhoods as traffic moved toward the developments. While the intent was to give the feeling of Washington Street to this section of the corridor, unfortunately, the result would have been similar to the U.S. Route 1 and 23 Street (in Arlington_ intersection or Washington Street at Montgomery Street. These are very wide roadways that are extremely unfriendly to pedestrians. The roadway should remain at four travel lanes with raised and landscaped medians that are at least wide enough (14-20 feet) to protect left turn lanes at various intersections in the corridor. On-street parking in not recommended since this "side

friction"(vehicles entering or exiting parking slots) would reduce the overall capacity of the roadway. On-street parking would require a six-lane roadway section. Pedestrians would be forced to cross another 22 feet of pavement (two 11 foot lanes). This is not a pedestrian improvement.

The proposed realignment (straightening) of U.S. Route 1 at the Monroe Avenue Bridge has been discussed for a number of years. This was originally a staff recommendation as a part of the Alexandria 2020 plan, however, there was strong opposition from civic association leaders which lead to its deletion from that plan. During this most recent public discussion of development at Potomac Yard, the concept resurfaced and gained support from a number of community groups. Over the past few weeks a schematic plan for straightening the bridge was developed by the Planning office which has very positive land use and transportation elements. Briefly, the plan calls for the two curves in U.S. Route 1 at the Monroe Avenue bridge to be eliminated roughly between Slaters Lane and Custis Avenue. A shorter bridge crossing of the mainline railroad tracks would be required. Potomac Avenue (the spine road) would intersect U.S. Route 1 north of the new bridge where the grades of the two roadways meet. Monroe Avenue would no longer connect directly with U.S. Route 1, but would intersect Main Street (Potomac Yard Development) just south of the new bridge. Planning has indicated that this is a far more desirable configuration of streets to support the land use and the parks. From a traffic safety standpoint, the straightening eliminates a very bad intersection at Monroe Avenue. While the number of reported accidents has been reduced in the recent year, this is only as a result of ongoing changes to the signals and signing by Traffic personnel to alert motorists of the dangerous intersection. The City spends a substantial amount of money at this location in signal work, pavement markings, signs, guard rail replacement, and replacement of the large energy dissipaters that are hit and destroyed on a regular basis. Operationally, this is a superior alignment.

With respect to Monroe Avenue, the elimination of the direct connection to U.S. Route 1 reduces some of the ongoing traffic problems (speeding, pedestrian access, etc) and concerns along Monroe Avenue that neighbors have raised over the years. At the same time, Monroe Avenue in this plan would give good access to Main Street and all of Potomac Yard.

While the straightened U.S. Route 1 is a very desirable project, there is a short fall of construction dollars to implement both this improvement and construction of Potomac Avenue according to the developer. If this is truly the case and it is decided that both improvements are essential, other sources of funding will have to explored. There is no alternative funding source at this time.

V. Metrorail and Transit

Many citizens of the City have expressed their desire to have a Metrorail station included with the proposed development at Potomac Yard. A Station was included in the Alexandria 2020 plan, but none is proposed in the current plan. The main differences are the amount, density, and configuration of development in the two plans. Alexandria 2020 was more than twice the size of the development currently proposed. In the 2020 plan, densities for all uses were substantially higher and the office development was concentrated around a central Metrorail station. The current plan has 1.9 million square feet of office proposed, but it is decentralized at a town center, along U.S. Route 1, and south of the Monroe Avenue bridge.

Although the developer estimates transit usage up to 40% (40% in Arlington and 30% in Alexandria) without a station, it is unlikely that a transit usage rate above 20% could be achieved with the proposed plan even the 2020 plan only predicted a 30% transit usage rate and it included a rail station and was transit oriented. The Arlington County staff estimates that the highest level of transit usage that can be expected from their "south tract" on Potomac Yard is 20% even with a new station in Alexandria. Alexandria's rail stations do not have high usage. All of our stations rank in the lower half of all the system stations for ridership. Transit ridership at the King Street Station office complex is approximately 20% for work trips. The Braddock Road Metrorail station (ranks 55 of 76 stations) handles about 6500 passengers per day as compared to 14,000 per day system average. In spite of restricted parking, frequent bus service, and other transit amenities and incentives, the stations in the City handle smaller volumes of passengers than neighbor jurisdictions. In the larger 2020 project with a Metrorail station, the staff felt that a 30% transit usage rate was achievable. This will not be reached with the proposed Potomac Yard development. Although no analysis of projected rail transit usage has been provided for this proposed plan, it is estimated that just over 4000 trips (one-way trips) would be handled at a new Metrorail station at buildout of the proposed plan, including half of all transit trips from the Arlington tract (this assumes no change in use at the retail center). These numbers have not been confirmed with the Transit Authority.

Cost of a Metrorail station is also a significant issue. It has been estimated by WMATA that a new rail station at Potomac Yard will cost between $45 million and $50 million (including rolling stock and assuming no land costs). While no preliminary engineering drawings have been produced, it is assumed that this would be a utilitarian station with none of the visual "amenities" associated with other stations in the system. At this time and in the foreseeable future, there is no funding source for design and construction of a new Metrorail station at this location.

For information, it is estimated that if a new station were constructed at Potomac Yards in Alexandria, the City's annual subsidy to the regional transit system would increase by $1.25 million with no offsetting revenues. These are substantial costs that would have to be shared by the member jurisdictions with Alexandria receiving the major portion. While it is not recommended that a

station be constructed at this time. It is imperative that adequate land be set aside for a rail station in the future. The site must be approved by Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority to ensure that the WMATA could construct the facility when the need arises in the future, perhaps when the retail center has reached the end of its useful life and the site is redeveloped. This land should be set aside as public right-of-way in the name of the City of Alexandria.

There is one final issue not related to various discussions of other transit elements (i.e. light rail, dedicated right-of-way, bus circulation, etc.). The state legislature approved money for a comprehensive study of this area of U.S. Route 1 from Crystal City to Potomac Yard. The study is intended to be a comprehensive look at all modes of transportation, including light rail. It is scheduled to begin during the summer with conclusions and recommendation late in the fall. The staff of the City, Arlington County, and VDOT have begun developing a scope of work to expedite the project. It is anticipated that this analysis will provide additional insight and solutions to some of the concerns that have surfaced related to the development of Potomac Yard. This comprehensive analysis of transit in the corridor will resolve many of the questions that are still outstanding today.

VI. Transportation Management Plan Comments & Conditions

On the whole, the applicant has done a good job of outlining strategies to reduce single occupant vehicle traffic. Unfortunately, the goal of 30% of the site-generated trips as non-auto trips is unrealistically high. The King Street Station office complex, bounded by Duke Street, Diagonal Road, and Reinekers Lane, has a non-auto trip generation rate of 35% (this includes carpooling/vanpooling) and of that 20% is for transit. There is less parking provided at King Street Sation, 1.5 vehicles per 1000 square feet, as compared to 2 vehicles per 1000 GSF proposed for Potomac Yard, and the office complex is practically on top of a Metro station, so there is no need to use a shuttle bus. Every time a transfer is introduced into a trip (transferring from rail to shuttle bus to complete trip) the percentage of usage for that mode is reduced. A goal of 20-25% non single occupant vehicle usage would be more realistic for this site unless there was a Metro station located here.

The applicant has proposed a fare media subsidy of $60 per person for six months. This is an excellent strategy to encourage employers to provide a transit benefit to their employees and mirrors a program that the City's Office of Transit Services and Programs offers using grant money. This strategy is not appropriate for this site as it does not benefit the residential component of the site. Therefore, staff recommends the continued sales of discounted fare media. Currently, at the Potomac Yard Retail Center, $20 Metrocheks are sold for $10. This a 50% discount and over 100 are being sold every month.

Presently, Potomac Yard Retail Center runs a continuous shuttle from the Yard to the National Airport Metrorail Station. The shuttle runs 10 hours a day, Monday through Friday, with a planned expansion of hours this year as new tenants come on-line. The future routes and headways for shuttle service at the expanded Potomac Yard will have to be approved by the Director of T&ES as some alternatives may be more conducive to encouraging ridership than those proposed by the applicant.

SUMMARY OF THE MAJOR CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The most significant conclusion and recommendation from the transportation analysis is that construction of Potomac Avenue (the spine road) is absolutely essential regardless of the level of development of Potomac Yard. This roadway facility must connect with U.S. Route 1 (at the Monroe Avenue Bridge), pass through the proposed development at intersections designated in the plan, intersect with the proposed extension of South Glebe Road in Arlington, and intersect directly with Clark Street and Crustal Drive, the internal circulation roadways within Crystal City. Although the Commonwealth Atlantic Properties study indicated the need for this facility later in the development of Potomac Yard (for the medium density) in 2010. The staff does not agree with this time frame and recommends strongly that this program in the 2005 time frame with all the connections that are proposed.

With respect to the straightening of U.S. Route 1, this a very desirable project both from a land use and traffic safety standpoint. The public has generally expressed support for this option primarily because of the positive land use effects, consolidation of parkland, elimination of the adverse curves on U.S. Route 1, removal of the direct connection of Monroe Avenue to U.S. Route 1. Since the funding to relocate the bridge and U.S. Route 1 and to construct Potomac Avenue has not been determined at this time, it is not definite that the complete project will be implemented. If the straightening of the roadway does not occur, the construction of Potomac Avenue must proceed and connect to U.S. Route 1 near the intersection with Slaters Lane as was proposed in the Commonwealth Atlantic Properties plan. The clear preference for the public and the staff is to straighten U.S. Route 1.

While there has been significant interest in the construction of a Metrorail station at Potomac Yard, strongly recommended by the Chairman of the Arlington Count Board, the proposed medium density development does not support a capital investment of $45 to $50 million for a station or for an estimated $1.25 million per year in operating subsidy from the City. Of the 1.9 million square feet of office development proposed in this plan, only 400,000 sq. ft. are in fairly close “proximity” to the station site. This level of development would generate fewer that 800 transit trips per day (estimated at 25% mode split for transit). The lack of any other significant transit trip generator near

this station site eliminates any potential for a new station at least associated with this proposal. However, it is strongly recommended that adequate land area be set aside, to the satisfaction of WMATA and Director of Transportation & Environmental Services to accommodate a station at some point in the future. Over the next 10 to 20 years, the Potomac Retail Center will approach the end of its expected life and the potential exists for substantial redevelopment where the retail center exists today. If the type and density of the new land uses are substantial enough to support a rail station, the opportunity would be available to have the new station construction. Transit is still an important element of this project and the corridor. The proposed internal shuttle service must be provided as a continuous transit link between the Crystal City Metrorail Station City (and/or National Airport Metrorail Station) and the Braddock Road Metrorail station (via the extended Main Street), serving all the commercial, residential, and retail development along the route. Although it is not specifically addressed in the plan, other transit options must be explored that link the development with the adjacent residential areas.

Since the state has allocated funds for a comprehensive transportation study of this corridor to include Crystal City and Potomac Yard. The City must be an active participant throughout this study. Virginia Department of Transportation estimates that this analysis will be completed in late fall of this year and the conclusion and recommendations will focus equally on highway and transit needs in the corridor. This will most likely provide an opportunity to enhance the transportation improvements proposed for the corridor.

Access between the street system in the proposed development and the area west of U.S. Route 1 should be maintained at East Glebe Road, Swann Avenue, and Howell Avenue (the access points north of East Glebe Road would not be changed). The access at Bellefonte Avenue should be maintained and residents should have input into the decision on whether or not this would have direct access into the project. East Windsor Avenue must have access maintained at least for emergency vehicles since the fire station is located on East Windsor Avenue. The degree of access at the remaining intersections south of East Glebe Road should be determined by input from the adjacent neighborhoods.

The proposed plan appears to offer safe and well coordinated pedestrian and bike facilities. The proposed pedestrian/bike crossing of the rail corridor will add an important link between the neighborhoods and developments east and west of the railroad tracks. In addition, if the Monroe Avenue bridge is replaced and straightened, there must be a provision for pedestrian/bike facilities on both sides of the bridge with a minimum of eight feet.

As the various land bays are developed, the supporting transportation facilities (streets, transits, and pedestrian/bike facilities) must be constructed to provide the required access and circulation. While it is not known at this time when or in what order the development will occur, implementation of these improvements should be considered in the context of systems and not

merely as the improvements immediately adjacent to a site or land bay. The most notable example related to the remaining portions of "unimproved" U.S. Route 1 south of East Glebe Road. All of the roadway improvements in this section should be done at one time rather than piecemeal on a block by block basis as individual sites are developed. The disruption to traffic and nearby property owners should be minimized by having the construction occur at one time. There will most likely be other similar situations associated with this very large project.

STAFF: Tom O'Kane, Director, T&ES
Betsy Massie, Chief/Office of Transit Services, T&ES