

City of Alexandria, Virginia

MEMORANDUM

DATE: AUGUST 31, 2021

TO: GLORIA SITTON, CITY CLERK
OFFICE OF THE CITY CLERK AND CLERK OF COUNCIL

THRU: KARL W. MORITZ, DIRECTOR
PLANNING & ZONING

FROM: JASON ALBERS, CHAIR
POTOMAC YARD DESIGN ADVISORY COMMITTEE (PYDAC)

SUBJECT: FY 2021 ANNUAL REPORT OF THE POTOMAC YARD DESIGN
ADVISORY COMMITTEE (PYDAC)

I am pleased to submit this Annual Report for the Potomac Yard Design Advisory Committee (PYDAC) for the Fiscal Year 2021, as required by City Code Section 2-4-7(i)(l). The attached record of attendance shows that no member failed to attend more than 75% of the meetings, as required.

Summary of Accomplishments

The mission of the Potomac Yard Design Advisory Committee is to review development applications for development within CDD #10 (South Potomac Yard) and CDD #19 (North Potomac Yard) for consistency with the North Potomac Yard Design Guidelines and the North Potomac Yard Design Excellence Standards. PYDAC provides guidance to staff and makes formal recommendations to the Planning Commission on new development proposals as well as amendments to previously approved projects. Within these guidelines, the Potomac Yard Design Advisory Committee membership completed the following activities during its 2020/2019 session.

Policy and Membership Accomplishments

- Over the past fiscal year, Committee membership remained steady with the appointment of two new members and the loss of two members; resulting in a final membership count of nine committee members with two vacant positions on the Committee.
- The committee continued their review of the range of development concept plans in North Potomac Yard in FY 2021 and ultimately endorsed the designs of seven new buildings, including:
 - Building 7 (Academic)– DSUP #2020-00012
 - Building 10 (Office) – DSUP #2020-00013

- Building 14 (Office) – DSUP #2020-00014
- Building 15 (Residential) – DSUP #2020-00015
- Building 18 (Office) – DSUP #2020-00016
- Building 19 (Residential) – DSUP #2020-00017
- Building 20 (Office) – DSUP #2020-00018
- Pump Station Building (Utility) – DSUP #2020-10024

The committee determined the design of the proposed buildings complied with the North Potomac Yard Innovation District Design Excellence Pre-Requisites and criteria and were endorsed.

Program Accomplishments

In FY 2021, PYDAC met four (4) times with the following general discussion topics:

- **July 16, 2020***: Applicant Presentation on the Public Realm Experience in North Potomac Yard (Streetscape, Open Space, Building Signage, and Sustainability)
- **August 26, 2020***: Applicant presentation on Architectural Refinements to Group 1 Buildings, introduction to the Pump Station Architecture and PYDAC Recommendation for Group 1 Buildings
- **September 9, 2020***: Applicant presentation on Architectural Refinements to Group 2 Buildings and PYDAC Recommendation for Group 2 Buildings
- **November 11, 2020***: Final design presentation and recommendation by PYDAC for Pump Station Building¹

The four meetings resulted in three votes to endorse the design of eight (8) buildings to be constructed as part of Phase 1 redevelopment in North Potomac Yard.

Goals for the Coming Year

In the next year the Committee expects to develop and approve by-laws for the Committee. The Committee will also be available to provide any necessary reviews of changes to approved buildings in Phase 1 redevelopment of North Potomac Yard, or provide reviews of any remaining land bays in South Potomac Yard, as applicable.

**Due to the COVID-19 Pandemic emergency, these PYDAC meetings were held electronically pursuant to Virginia Code Section 2.2-3708.2(A)(3), the Continuity of Government ordinance adopted by the City Council on April 18, 2020 or Sections 4-0.00(g) in HB29 and HB30 to undertake essential business. All of the members of the Board, staff, and applicant team participated from remote locations through a Zoom Meeting. The meeting was accessible to members of the public through a zoom meeting link on the PYDAC website or by calling into the meeting. Videos of all the meetings were uploaded onto the PYDAC website and public comment was received at all meetings and could be emailed to staff after the conclusion of meetings.*

Leadership

- Jason Albers will serve as Chair.
- Jeremy Fretts will serve as Vice-Chair.

New Members and Expirations

- Matthew Johnston, Expired January 2021
- Peter May, Expired April 2021
- Melissa Bennett, Appointed January 2021
- Sean Sweeney, Appointed March 2021

Terms

Name	Term Expiration	Role
Jason Albers (Chair)	January 14, 2022	Potomac Yard Area Rep
Nancy Appleby	March 10, 2022	Potomac Yard Area Rep
Melissa Bennett	January 12, 2023	Landscape Architect
Jeremy Fretts (Vice-Chair)	June 14, 2022	Architect
Travis Herret	January 12, 2023	Potomac West Rep
Kristen Nunnally	November 12, 2021	Potomac East Rep
Jeremy Moss	December 10, 2021	Business Community Rep
Sean Sweeney	March 9, 2023	Potomac West Rep
Amol Vaidya	October 22, 2021	Civic Association in Potomac Yard Rep
Vacant		National Park Service Rep
Vacant		Potomac East Rep

Staff Liaison

- Sara Brandt-Vorel, Planning & Zoning, acted as the staff liaison to the Potomac Yard Design Advisory Committee during the course of the FY 2021.

Attachments:

1. FY 2021 Attendance Sheet
2. Memorandum from PYDAC Regarding North Potomac Yard, Phase 1 Development – Group 1 Recommendations, Dated August 20, 2020
3. Memorandum from PYDAC Regarding North Potomac Yard, Phase 1 Development – Group 2 Recommendations, Dated September 3, 2020
4. Memorandum from PYDAC Regarding the North Potomac Yard, Pump Station DSUP #2020-10024, dated November 13, 2020

**APPENDIX F.
ADVISORY GROUP ANNUAL ATTENDANCE REPORT TEMPLATE**

**CITY OF ALEXANDRIA
POTOMAC YARD DESIGN ADVISORY COMMITTEE
MEETING ATTENDANCE REPORT**

JULY 1, 2020 THROUGH JUNE 30, 2021

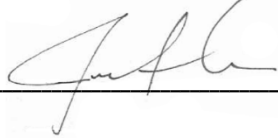
CHAIRPERSON: Jason Albers

MEMBER'S NAME	Jul 16	Aug 26	Sep 9	Oct	Nov 11	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Mar	May	May	Jun	Jun
Jason Albers	X	X	X		X									
Nancy Appleby	X	X	X		X									
Corey Faherty	X	X	X		X									
Jeremy Fretts	X	X	X		E									
Travis Herret	X	X	E		X									
Matthew Johnston*	X	X	X		E									
Peter May*	E	X	X		E									
Jeremy Moss	X	X	X		X									
Kristen Nunnally	E	X	X		X									
Amol Vaidya	U	U	X		E									
Melissa Bennett**														
Sean Sweeney***														

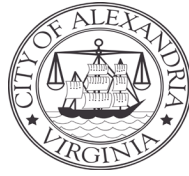
INDICATE: X - FOR PRESENT E - FOR EXCUSED U - FOR UNEXCUSED

LIST OF THOSE WHO DID NOT ATTEND 75% OF MEETINGS (*do not include excused absences in the 75% missed meetings*):

FORM MUST BE SIGNED BY CHAIRPERSON

(APPROVED)  (Chairperson)

*Term Expired **Appointed January 2021 *** Appointed March 2021



DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING AND ZONING

DATE: August 20, 2020

TO: Potomac Yard Design Advisory Committee (PYDAC)

FROM: Planning & Zoning Staff

SUBJECT: North Potomac Yard, Phase 1 Development – Group 1 Recommendations

Introduction

The applicant, CPYR Theater, LLC, CPYR Shopping Center, LLC and the Virginia Tech Foundation Inc, have submitted their final presentation on the design of the Group 1 buildings for Phase 1 redevelopment of North Potomac Yard. The applicant team is seeking PYDAC’s recommendations for the final design of the Group 1 buildings, including Building 7W, Building 10 and Building 14. The PYDAC website contains a link to the applicant’s presentation.

In addition to the presentation on the PYDAC website, the applicant team has completed the Design Excellence Matrix for the sitewide prerequisites and the criteria for each building and their justification for each building’s compliance with the criteria. For each category, staff has responded with our confirmation that the building complies with the applicable criteria, or in areas where compliance is not clear, suggested a continued refinement for the proposed building or site design to meet the Design Excellence Criteria for North Potomac Yard.

Broadly, each building is achieving the Design Excellence Criteria and this Memorandum summarizes those areas of design where staff finds continued work on the building or site design is important to achieve the Criteria’s intent for excellence.

Sitewide Prerequisites:

Prerequisite 4.3: *These features will be integrated into the site design and will be provided at-grade.*

- **Staff Response:** Staff does not find the proposed sitewide features fully achieve a unique design or demonstrate a sustainable design approach. Sitewide features, such as lighting, benches and bollards exhibit a high-quality of material but do not evoke a unique identity as the “Innovation District” or demonstrate a commitment to technology or sustainability. Staff recognizes that this final level of design may be forthcoming but due to the previous review schedule, has not had time to evolve. As such, staff would recommend that the

interim design of Metro Plaza, the final design of the Metro Plaza, Market Lawn, Building 10 Plaza and the streetscape that connects these critical areas come back to PYDAC for a final review. Staff would encourage the continued refinement of sitewide design elements to further demonstrate sustainable or a technological approach, such as solar belly trashcans, solar lights or other unique and as yet undeveloped features that build an identity and connect the streetscape to public open space.

- **Recommended Condition Language:** The applicant team shall seek approval from PYDAC on the final design of Metro Plaza, Market Lawn, the Block 10 Plaza and the public realm along New Street A to demonstrate an integrated design of the at-grade publicly accessible spaces and features that give the district a unique identity and achieve the Design Excellence Standards.

Building 7W:

Criteria 4.1: *Site and building design creatively integrates all support functions, parking garage entrances, loading docks, utility and mechanical spaces and penthouses to eliminate unsightly views and conflicts with pedestrians, and utilize creative screening where needed.*

- **Staff Response:** Staff does not find the final design of the interim surface parking lots achieves the intent of the Design Excellence Standards. Staff would like to see the lots be designed in a way that allows them to be used in other ways such as added gathering spaces, incorporate environmentally appropriate features such as increased tree canopy, pervious paving, and screening features along the street frontages.
- **Recommended Condition Language:** The Virginia Tech applicant team shall continue to work with City Staff to refine the final design of the interim surface parking lots and minimize the appearance of surface parking lot uses by increasing the level of screening and number of trees, or creating a design which clearly encourages alternate uses for the space during the evenings or weekends.

Building 10:

Criteria 2.1: *The public realm prioritizes the pedestrian experience and ground floors of buildings include active uses, interior-exterior visibility, and high-quality architecture.*

- **Staff Response:** Staff does not find the proposed design of the Block 10 plaza achieves the intent of the Design Excellence Standards as the number of planters and trees at the northern end of the plaza area blocks the visual sightlines and pedestrian approach into the building lobby of the northern tower. The location of the northernmost area of trees and plantings blocks the interior-exterior visibility of this critical corner that connects the Virginia Tech Campus building and the Building 10 Partnership building.
- **Recommended Condition Language:** Prior to the release of the Final Site Plan for Building 10, revise the site plan and landscape plans to remove the northernmost area of

plantings and trees in the Block 10 Plaza and create a stronger visual and functional connection between the Virginia Tech campus and Building 10.

Criteria 2.3: *Site design incorporates high quality paving materials, site furnishings, and lighting.*

- **Staff Response:** See Staff comment regarding prerequisite 4.3 and a staff recommendation to review the final streetscape design with sitewide elements and final design of key publicly accessible open spaces such as Market Lawn, Metro Plaza, and the Block 10 Plaza.

Criteria 6.1: *There is variety of architectural character, height, massing, and articulation which express a clear overall composition among the buildings within the District.*

- **Staff Response:** Staff finds the initial building design, with two separate towers connected by a strong base achieves the Design Excellence Standards to demonstrate a variety of architectural character, massing and articulation. The two masses balance each other and the clean break provides a clear distinction in the massing. Staff does not support the applicant's request to have a bridge between the two towers which spans the full height of the seven-stories as the clear articulation between the towers is lost. Staff believes a compromise in the height of the bridge will provide the applicant with the desired connectivity for leasing purposes while preserving the architectural excellence of the two-tower design.
- **Recommended Condition Language:** The building design may utilize a bridge between the two towers which is a maximum of two levels above the second floor. The bridge shall consist of circulation space only (no office).

Building 14:

Criteria 2.1: *The public realm prioritizes the pedestrian experience and ground floors of buildings include active uses, interior-exterior visibility, and high-quality architecture.*

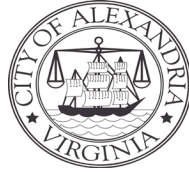
- **Staff Response:** The final design of Market Lawn has yet to be reviewed by Staff or PYDAC. Initial studies of the space have indicated a mix of unique site features and designs which could achieve design excellence that promote active uses in a prominent publicly accessible open space while maintaining interior-exterior visibility with the interior Garden Room. However, without reviewing the final design, staff can not verify this criterion has been met.
- **Recommended Condition Language:** The applicant team shall seek approval from PYDAC on the final design of Metro Plaza, Market Lawn, the Block 10 Plaza and the public realm along New Street A to demonstrate an integrated design of the at-grade street design, including proposed features, and publicly accessible public spaces which achieve the Design Excellence Standards.

Criteria 2.3: *Site design incorporates high quality paving materials, site furnishings, and lighting.*

- **Staff Response:** See Staff comment regarding prerequisite 4.3 and a staff recommendation to review the final streetscape design with sitewide elements and final design of key publicly accessible open spaces such as Market Lawn, Metro Plaza, Block 10 Plaza.

Criteria 4.1: *Site and building design creatively integrates all support functions, parking garage entrances, loading docks, utility and mechanical spaces and penthouses to eliminate unsightly views and conflicts with pedestrians, and utilize creative screening where needed.*

- **Staff Response:** Staff is unable to verify the proposed materials for the garage door and loading dock door at the southern end of Building 14. The overall framing of the two doors does show high-quality materials but the doors themselves appear to be a standard metal roll-down door which does not align with the Design Excellence Standards to use high quality materials or creative screening.
- **Recommended Condition Language:** The final materials for the garage door and loading dock door should utilize a frosted glass panel with indirect interior lighting, or material of comparable quality.



DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING AND ZONING

DATE: September 3, 2020

TO: Potomac Yard Design Advisory Committee (PYDAC)

FROM: Planning & Zoning Staff

SUBJECT: North Potomac Yard, Phase 1 Development – Group 2 Recommendations

Introduction

The applicant, CPYR Theater, LLC, CPYR Shopping Center, LLC and the Virginia Tech Foundation Inc, have submitted their final presentation on the design of the Group 2 buildings for Phase 1 redevelopment of North Potomac Yard. The applicant team is seeking PYDAC’s recommendations for the final design of the Group 1 buildings, including Building 15, Building 18, Building 19 and Building 20. The PYDAC website contains a link to the applicant’s presentation.

In addition to the presentation on the PYDAC website, the applicant team has completed the Design Excellence Matrix for the sitewide prerequisites and the criteria for each building and their justification for each building’s compliance with the criteria. For each category, staff has responded with our confirmation that the building complies with the applicable criteria, or in areas where compliance is not clear, suggested a continued refinement for the proposed building or site design to meet the Design Excellence Criteria for North Potomac Yard.

Broadly, each building is achieving the Design Excellence Criteria and this Memorandum summarizes those areas of design where staff finds continued work on the building or site design is important to achieve the Criteria’s intent for excellence.

Sitewide Prerequisites:

Prerequisite 4.3: *These features will be integrated into the site design and will be provided at-grade.*

- **Staff Response:** Staff does not find the proposed sitewide features fully achieve a unique design or demonstrate a sustainable design approach. Sitewide features, such as lighting, benches and bollards exhibit a high-quality of material but do not evoke a unique identity as the “Innovation District” or demonstrate a commitment to technology or sustainability. Staff recognizes that this final level of design may be forthcoming but due to the previous

review schedule, has not had time to evolve. As such, staff would recommend that the interim design of Metro Plaza, the final design of the Metro Plaza, Market Lawn, Building 10 Plaza and the streetscape that connects these critical areas come back to PYDAC for another meeting to allow for additional input by PYDAC.

- Staff would encourage the continued refinement of sitewide design elements to further demonstrate sustainable or a technological approach, such as solar belly trashcans, solar lights or other unique and as yet undeveloped features that build an identity and connect the streetscape to public open space.

Building 15:

Criteria C 1.2: *The District includes public and private open spaces that, in concert with the regional Potomac Yard Park, support a variety of active, social, and passive uses in a mix of urban plazas, lawns, shared streets, rooftop open spaces, and recreational areas.*

- **Staff Response:** Staff finds the current proposal for the private residential balconies which overlook New Street A are too small to provide usable private open space to the building tenants. The current balconies are approximately 16 inches in depth and staff would encourage balconies with a desired width of approximately 36 inches (three feet) to provide usable open space. With 36 inches in depth, balconies can comfortably provide space for small chairs and tables.
- Staff would recommend enlarging the proposed balconies so that they extend past the face of the building and project over New Street A to provide an overall width of three feet. The additional projections from the building face will also increase the visual interest of the building architecture per Criteria 6.1 which encourages a variety of articulation. However, if projecting balconies are not feasible, staff would support balconies which are further recessed into the building to achieve the desired depth and usability for building tenants..

Building 18:

Criteria 2.3: *Site design incorporates high quality paving materials, site furnishings, and lighting.*

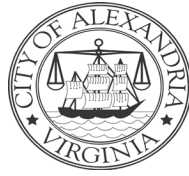
- **Staff Response:** Staff finds the current proposal for the final design of Metro Plaza does not demonstrate a design for the Plaza that is consistent with the Plaza's role as a key civic space in North Potomac Yard. Staff recognizes that this final level of design may be forthcoming but due to the previous review schedule, has not had time to evolve. Staff would encourage further refinement of the initial design concepts, as shared with PYDAC, and the finalization of the proposed Plaza design.

- Staff would recommend that an interim and final design of Metro Plaza come back to PYDAC for another meeting to allow for additional input by PYDAC. This meeting would allow the applicant team to share a final design and interim design of Metro Plaza to PYDAC and the community once the concepts have evolved. This meeting could include any updates to the streetscape elements per Prerequisite 4.3.

Building 20:

Criteria 4.1: *Site and building design creatively integrates all support functions, parking garage entrances, loading docks, utility and mechanical spaces and penthouses to eliminate unsightly views and conflicts with pedestrians, and utilize creative screening where needed.*

- **Staff Response:** Staff finds the use of a dark mesh perforated metal screen material to screen the mechanical penthouse on the top floor of the northern tower, creates a visual difference between the top floor of the building and the floors below which utilize glass. As Criteria 4.1 encourages creative screening to eliminate unsightly views of penthouses and other mechanical uses, staff would encourage the consistent use of glass to screen the penthouse area and ensure the top floor reads as a portion of the active office use.
- Staff would encourage replacing the perforated metal screen in the top floor of the northern tower, with a glass material to create vertical consistency between the top floor and floors below.



POTOMAC YARD DESIGN ADVISORY COMMITTEE

DATE: November 13, 2020

TO: Karl Moritz, Director of Planning
City of Alexandria

FROM: Jason Albers, Chair
On behalf of the Potomac Yard Design Advisory Committee (PYDAC)

SUBJECT: North Potomac Yard, Pump Station DSUP #2020-10024

Per Section 5-610 of the City’s Zoning Ordinance, the Potomac Yard Design Advisory Committee (PYDAC) is tasked with reviewing applications for preliminary development plan special use permit approval within CDD No. 10 Potomac Yard/Greens and CDD No. 19 North Potomac Yard, for compliance with the respective urban design guidelines or design standards applicable therein, and make recommendation on such applications to the planning commission and city council through the director.

In that role, the Committee met twice to specifically review the design of the architecture for the Pump Station Building for compliance with the *North Potomac Yard Design Excellence Standards*.

- **August 26, 2020:** Introduction to the Pump Station Design and feedback from PDYAC.
- **November 11, 2020:** Final design presentation and recommendation by PYDAC.

The Committee voted to unanimously approve the design of the Pump Station Building as presented to PYDAC on November 11th with no additional conditions. Committee members commended the applicant’s efforts to create a more playful and inviting building design and expressed appreciation for the final trellis design. Committee members encouraged continued refinement of the metal materials to ensure there would be no glare from the metal and that the educational signage be affixed to the structure in a pleasing manner.

Attendance: November 11, 2020 PYDAC Meeting

Member	Attendance	Member	Attendance
Jason Albers	Present	Matthew Johnston	Excused Absence
Nancy Appleby	Present	Peter May	Excused Absence
Corey Faherty	Present	Jeremy Moss	Present
Jeremy Fretts	Excused Absence	Kristen Nunnally	Present
Travis Herret	Present	Amol Vaidya	Excused Absence