



Crystal Park  
Unit Owners Association  
1805 Crystal Drive  
Arlington, Virginia 22202  
703 892 4311

August 11, 2017

Arlington County Board  
2100 Clarendon Blvd, Suite 300  
Arlington, VA 22201  
TRANSMITTED VIA EMAIL TO BOARD MEMBERS AND STAFF

Virginia Railway Express (VRE) Operations Board  
1500 King Street, Suite 202  
Alexandria, VA 22314  
gotrains@vre.org

Dear Sirs and Madams:

We, the undersigned, hereby convey to the Arlington County Board and the VRE our deep concerns about the efficacy of the VRE Crystal City Station Improvement project, as currently being discussed. To date, the impacts for the Crystal City residential community have not been given any consideration in the VRE assessment to select Option 2 as the location of the new train station. Utilizing public funds on a project that adversely affects our community violates the "do no harm" principle of good governance.

By way of this letter we respectfully make two (2) requests of the County Board and VRE:

- First, immediately delay any decision to select the location of the proposed platform expansion in Crystal City.
- Second, advance to a decision only after reasonable consideration of resident concerns and a due diligence process that adequately incorporates several types of analyses (noted in this letter).

**Background.** Built in 1985, the Crystal Park Condominium residents have already had to adjust to the existing station after it was opened in 1992. The Condominium has 181 units and 252 residents. Therefore, our analysis of each of the three options is based on direct and daily experience with the railway located in our backyard. We understand that the VRE project managers offer Option #2 as the sole solution for further consideration. Option #2 and Option #3 overlap (and share one of the exits).

**Requested Consideration.** In this submission, we outline **three (3)** sets of reasonable considerations that should be analyzed prior to making a decision. Failing to do so is against the public good and based on incomplete and specious information.

**Consideration 1)** The proposed station (Option #2) will operate within 22 feet of the exterior walls of bedrooms and living rooms of 1805 Crystal Drive. Furthermore, the Option #2 location abuts a residential garage, which is open to the train tracks. Any engine servicing the platform

would directly vent into the building (through the garage). The condominium located at 1805 Crystal Drive is the closest residential building to the tracks. There is no road or driveway between the tracks and the two residential buildings (1801 and 1805 Crystal Drive). Without this road, fire and rescue access is limited. The open space is one floor above ground-level. See *Exhibits 1A-E*.

**Consideration 2)** The VRE analysis package is incomplete. It does not disclose assumptions, methodology, data, or weighting of the impacts on the residential community. Furthermore, it excludes the following critical and significant factors:

- a) Analysis of the noise (brake and horn) and vibration impact when more than one train services the platform at the same time.
- b) Health effects of a train station being next to the HVACs units and bedrooms and balconies of those more susceptible to the health impacts (children and the elderly).
- c) Any provision for emergency access by fire and emergency vehicles and personnel.
- d) Analysis of the effects of pollution and spillage so close to a residential building.
- e) Analysis of the impact of the idling of CSX and Amtrak engines (that use the current platform, See Exhibit 2) at a platform with the proximity so noted. *VRE has no manageable control over whether CSX or Amtrak use the station, but it can control the station location and prevent this adverse impact on the residents.*
- f) Financial assessment of the impact on property rights of the owners of 1805 Crystal Drive.
- g) Privacy concerns of residents when utilizing the private outdoor space next to the Platform.
- h) Full renderings with complete information about any mitigation measures.

**Consideration 3)** Option #3 is the better option because it improves the value for the Arlington community and enhances services for more than 60% of current VRE riders. With Option #3 there is:

- a) An existing access road see (Exhibit 3A along the entire length of the platform (no such option currently exists for Options 1 or 2) that would provide access for fire and rescue.
- b) Direct access to existing commercial real estate and closer access by public transit Potomac Yard offices.
- c) An existing Metroway station that would provide excellent morning rush service to office buildings north of the station and in Pentagon City.
- d) A fully compatible option of future/potential pedestrian access to National Airport as the Option #3 station location is aligned with the narrowest potential crossing point.
- e) A reduction in horn noise for residents as all predicted horn sounding locations will be by parks or roads (see Exhibit 3B).

Since learning about the hastened VRE decision-making process, we have attempted to engage productively and reasonably with our representatives. We have submitted written comments to the VRE project manager. We have attended open meetings. We have gathered 189 signatures on a petition (see Exhibit 4) from Crystal Drive residents.

Despite our efforts, our concerns were ignored in VRE public testimony and we understand that a pre-decision is being made prior to the next open meeting. We hope this complete lack of adequate hearing can be rectified before it is too late. We can still have a chance to forge an open and transparent decision-making process that improves both the economic and living conditions of Crystal City and addresses future transportation needs.

If Option #2 stands as the sole choice, VRE will be prematurely limiting its options based on incomplete data and selecting an option that adversely and substantively affects more than 1,000 people who call Crystal drive (in Arlington) their home.

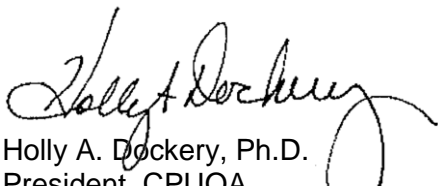
If Option #3 is selected, we feel VRE and Arlington County have the opportunity to produce a win/win for VRE and the community. Option#3 meets all of the goals of VRE's 2014 System Plan. It expands access and invests in multimodal regional mobility by bringing a new access point to the airport. It provides excellent access to the supermajority of current riders who prefer to walk and close access to metro for the minority who take metro. Furthermore, it only shifts the platform less than 400 yards (see Exhibit 5).

In summary, we ask the Arlington County Board and VRE Operations Board to delay the decision to move forward with a pre-determined option (Option #2) to allow reasonable time to undertake an analysis that is **comprehensive, inclusive**, and a **fair consideration** of the public health and safety impacts on Crystal City residents.

We are confident that a transparent process that fully analyzes the environmental, health and safety concerns of the Crystal drive residents will result in decision for Option #3, which shifts the north end of the platform less than 400 yards. A shift that will mean so much to our residents.

We thank you for addressing our concerns and would be happy to meet with the appropriate parties to clarify our concerns. Our lead points of contact are Board Members Dr. Giannoni and Mr. Johnson.

Sincerely,



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Crystal Park Unit Owners Association: Request for Delay  
VRE Crystal City Station Improvement Project

E-CC: Mary Johnson, Crystal Park Building Manager  
Crystal Gateway Board of Directors  
Crystal Park Civic Association

Attachments:

- Exhibit 1A: Photo from the Crystal Park Condo Roof
- Exhibit 1B: Photo from Balcony from a Residence in the Crystal Park Condo
- Exhibit 1C: Photo from Garage of Crystal Park Condo
- Exhibit 1D: Photo of elevation of Access from Crystal Park Condo
- Exhibit 2: Photo of CSX Train
- Exhibit 3: VRE Noise Study (Option #3)
- Exhibit 4: Petition
- Exhibit 5: Consolidated image of platforms