

August 8<sup>th</sup>, 2017

Dear Mr. Ahl, Ms. Fuller and Crystal City Civic Association Members,

Thank you for your letter to the County Board, dated July 27<sup>th</sup>, regarding the process to determine a new location for the Virginia Railway Express Crystal City Station.

As you know, the station location decision will ultimately be made by the Virginia Railway Express, and the County Board will determine Arlington's official opinion on the matter. Consistent with past practice (most recently with VDOT's I-66 Inside the Beltway project and I-395 HOT Lanes project), the lead agency – VRE – receives public comment and will make the final determination. The County's official position, to be determined by the Arlington County Board, will be considered by VRE.

The County's deference to VRE as the lead agency, however, does not mean lack of opportunities for public input and recommendations. The County Board heard from the Crystal City Civic Association members and leaders requesting more opportunities to raise concerns directly to the Board and County staff. Consequently, my colleagues and I coordinated with our staff and VRE to create a process to reach the decision before us (the determination of the County's official position) that better mirrors other significant planning and transportation infrastructure issues in Arlington.

That process has already included and will include:

- A public County Board Work Session on June 28<sup>th</sup>
- Transit Advisory Committee Public Comment on September 12<sup>th</sup>
- Transportation Commission Hearing on September 13<sup>th</sup>
- Planning Commission Hearing on either September 6<sup>th</sup> or 7<sup>th</sup> (*agenda to be determined*)
- A County Board Public Hearing on September 16<sup>th</sup>

Although we respect your request for further dialogue, my colleagues and I would encourage you to consider again the many informal opportunities for engagement with the County Board (both past and upcoming) which complement these formal hearings. These conversations include testimony before the Board during public comment at our July meeting; discussions with Board members at Open Door Monday; phone and in-person meetings that CCCA leadership have had with individual Board members; and written communication between CCCA members and the County Board.

Taken together, along with the formal hearings, these are indeed the fora that the County Board has historically provided for hearing and discussing issues with residents. We - each of us as individual members, and collectively as a Board - greatly value these opportunities to hear from citizens with interests or concerns.

It is also our intention that the September 16<sup>th</sup> public hearing will, in fact, be a "serious consideration of the testimonies presented." To that end, we would encourage residents to put their remaining questions about the station location proposals in writing. The Board is committed to asking VRE and County staff to publicly address these issues during the hearing.

Finally, please know that Board members are also open to scheduling individual meetings with the CCCA in the coming weeks to provide another venue for your members to raise concerns. Mason Kushnir, in the County Board Office, [mkushnir@arlingtonva.us](mailto:mkushnir@arlingtonva.us) and (703) 228-3150, is available to assist in setting up those conversations.

Thank you again for your letter, and we look forward to continuing to hear from CCCA and its members regarding the VRE station relocation.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Katie Cristol". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, prominent "K" and "C".

Katie Cristol

Vice Chair, Arlington County Board