

EPC Letter in Support of a Monumentally Sustainability Potomac Yard Development

To [Alx City Council, Monumental Sports and Entertainment, Ted Leonsis, Other City offices (T&ES/OCA/P&Z/AEDP)]

In December 2023, Monumental Sports & Entertainment, the Commonwealth of Virginia, the City of Alexandria, and JBG SMITH announced the framework for a public/private partnership to create an entertainment district in Alexandria at Potomac Yard. The proposal would bring a high-profile and highly visible new district, serving over one-half a million guests annually for events alone, comprised of 9+ million square feet across a new sports arena, performing arts venue, hotels, retail, residential, restaurants, and conference and community gathering spaces, resulting in a monumental development for the City of Alexandria with generational economic, social, and cultural impacts. The Alexandria Environmental Policy Commission believes the monumental development should pride itself on monumental sustainability.

As of xx date, the proposal lacks a focus on environmental impacts and commitment to ensure the development is not only consistent with but embodies the city's efforts to combat the climate crisis and build a thriving and sustainable community. In 2019, Alexandria declared a Climate Emergency as it adopted the Environmental Action Plan (EAP) 2040, setting targets to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, protect the environment, promote sustainability, and increase community engagement. While the City the has taken significant steps to meet its planned goals by 2040, they remain behind schedule across multiple key areas. The City of Alexandria, self-identified as an "Eco-City", has a tremendous opportunity to solidify its sustainability and livability vision and goals, and demonstrate to the region, nation, and world its environmental commitments and capabilities.

The EPC recommends that the City uses this opportunity to brand the proposed Entertainment District in line with the "Eco-City" Charter, such as a "Zero-Carbon District" or similar certification that sets specific site-goals and implements all available and reasonable approaches, as identified in this letter, to reduce its environmental impact, ensure the site's long-term sustainability and livability, and capitalize on the project's visibility to educate and promote key technological and operational strategies.

Leadership from Alexandria Economic Development Partnership, Monument Sports and Entertainment, the Commonwealth, the City of Alexandria and JBG SMITH have all coined the proposed district as "World-Class".

The EPC believes that in order to be world-class and be nationally competitive, the new entertainment district must pull inspiration from and use as a baseline, the implemented technologies, applied sustainable strategies, and environmental goals of recent similar developments. A few examples are provided below, with additional information attached:

- Intuit Dome [Key Impacts Metrics]

Commented [BC1]: Eco-District certificaion is changing <https://justcommunities.info/certified/>; Zero Carbon District would set measures for things like LEED...

- Climate Pledge Arena [Key Impact /Metrics]
- The Green Sports Alliance <https://greensportsalliance.org/> ...

The EPC recommends the City strongly consider the following actions to ensure the entertainment district's long-term sustainability and livability.

Building Design and Operations

(Quick sentence on goal/impact)

- Apply net zero requirements under the Green Building Policy applicable to the proposed performing arts venue (as it will be city owned) and to all structures in the entertainment district.
- Achieve net-zero carbon emissions by 2030
- Design for 10% better energy efficiency than the most recent ASHRAE code
- Achieve 30% reduction in embodied carbon emissions compared to baseline materials
- Construct the buildings with locally sourced materials and reused materials
- No onsite fossil fuel combustion: fully all-electric buildings
- Water efficiency, including targeting water-positivity by...to include incorporation of gray water stems and purple pipes....
- Establish recycling and composting and recycling programs...
- Refrigerant management plan
- Measure and display real time energy consumption and carbon emissions
- Communicate site's sustainability benefits to visitors and occupants

Commented [BC2]: Pull categories from ILFI or LEED certification and speak to those (Climate pledge arena LEED scorecard could be used as baseline <https://www.usgbc.org/projects/climate-pledge-arena>)

Site Design

(Quick sentence)

- Something about Stormwater Management
- Something about Heat Island reduction
- Something about plants - tree canopy /working with arborist on native plantings (not just trees!)
- Something about open space
- Something about pedestrian flow

Power Generation

(Quick sentence on goal/impact)

- Explore potential reasonable on-site alternative energy production to include solar panels, geothermal, energy storage, grid-interactivity and demand response....
- Set targets for energy production by solar

Transportation

(Quick sentence on goal/impact)

- On site EV charging
- Bike Valet (offer examples – Nats Park, Audi Field)

- Commit to no added lanes for car traffic to reduce additional vehicular travel caused by induced demand
- Ensure protected bike lanes to and through the site
- Dedicated bus lanes along Rt 1
- Prioritize non-vehicular transportation options to include...

Partnerships

(Quick sentence on goal/impact)

- Explore partnerships with Amazon, akin to its role in Climate Pledge Arena in Seattle, to emphasize the importance of a net zero development ...
- Explore partnership with Virginia Tech to use the district as a teaching tool, considering developing in a way where key features are prominent and accessible for future students to learn from. ; Engage VT to help identify and solve key site development early in planning phase, to have establish partnership and share in “ownership” of successes.

Social Equity

(Quick sentence on equity goal/impact)

- Partner with local CBOs such as Tenants and Workers United to ensure that disadvantaged communities are fully engaged and benefit from development process
- Hire local workers
- Pay prevailing wage
- Ensure the site is publicly accessible
- Meet the requirements of the ILFI Equity Petal

Education and Promotion

(Quick sentence on goal/impact)

- Prominently display benefits/impact of site design (power generated, emissions reduced), through video boards or other means on site.
- Dedicate a portion of the arts center to an “Eco-Learning” corner, to showcase best practices, lessons, learned, and key activities from across Alexandria. Utilize this space to provide education, training to residents, businesses and visitors on accessible methods to reduce impact and the funding/resources available to support. (e.g., promotion of green business program, information on grants...)

The EPC is available to help the City and staff advance plans for the entertainment district, and to advise on specific solutions. The EPC will continue to coordinate with other key commission (E.g, planning commission), to ensure vision and goals are aligned and implementable.

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Commented [BC3]: Where can we add commentary about finance? Alx has C-PACE and federal govt has IRA funds and we're in an energy zone and there are So Many Tax Credits to benefit from!

WORKING DRAFT