



CASE STUDY

Potomac Yard

Stakeholder engagement services for the redevelopment of a former railway yard straddling Arlington County and the City of Alexandria. At 350 acres, Potomac Yard was the largest undeveloped tract of land inside the Beltway in Northern Virginia. Located in an urban environment, the site is adjacent to established neighborhoods, major transportation arteries and public facilities, including National Airport, Route 1 and the George Washington Parkway.

Challenge

Waterford began work on this project following more than six failed proposals for the redevelopment of the site (including one proposal to build a new Redskins Stadium). Earlier proposals were mired in controversy, replete with public demonstrations and a highly active anti-growth community that successfully lobbied against all the plans proposed.

Solution

Waterford developed and implemented an innovative public participation program in support of a new proposal to redevelop the site. Over a two-and-a-half year period, Waterford designed and implemented two complementary public participation processes (one for each jurisdiction) that effectively educated and involved the public about the proposed development plan, its opportunities and challenges. As a New Urbanist community, light rail, Metrorail and the impact of development on transportation patterns and road systems were a significant part of our educational efforts on behalf of our client.

The process culminated in public consensus in both jurisdictions in favor of the redevelopment proposal by local citizens, civic and business leaders. Following public hearings with strong citizen turnout (the Alexandria hearings, for example, each had more than 50 speakers in support of the project), both Alexandria and Arlington approved the proposal. Support remained strong for the plan, many years after it was approved by public bodies, in large part because of the significant education and outreach that was conducted.

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