



## Redevelopment of the Power Plant Site in Alexandria

by Paul Kaplowitz

Last year, after many years of waiting, Alexandrians got the good news that Hilco Redevelopment Partners (HRP) had agreed to purchase the Potomac River Generating Station (PRGS) along the Potomac River and adjacent to the Mount Vernon Trail. This coal-fired power plant, formerly known as the "Mirant plant," has been closed since 2012 and basically awaiting redevelopment.

This is good news for the City of Alexandria, but those of us in the environmental community are still awaiting word on how environmentally sustainable this project will be. Here is what we know so far, based on the September 29<sup>th</sup> community virtual meeting.

Hilco's plans for the 18.8 acre site "will surpass environmental standards, incorporate green technologies, and maximize the recycling of existing materials." Some of the principles guiding the project are

- 1) Including on-site affordable housing
- 2) Using sustainable strategies that will include carbon reduction and energy master planning into building design
- 3) Incorporating high-quality open space (5.2 acres) connecting to the river and the Mount Vernon Trail and creating open space for a variety of activities
- 4) Including separate paths for pedestrians and bicycles separate from streets carrying cars and buses.

The 5.2 acres of open space will provide river views and include a 2.5-acre park adjacent to the Mount Vernon trail, as well as a linear park along the Norfolk Southern rail property, and a 0.7-acre public plaza in the center of the property.

The project, which is still in the early stages of planning, will not be completed until close to the end of the decade, and detailed plans for environmental sustainability have yet to be presented. However, our local PRG group, Alexandrians for the Environmental Action Plan 2040 (Alex4EAP) have recently written to the developers with suggestions for making the

development greener than what is required by the city's 2019 Green Building Policy. Here's the text of the letter we sent:

Mr. Roberto Perez  
CEO  
Hilco Redevelopment Partners

Dear Mr Perez:

I am writing to you on behalf of Alexandrians for the Environmental Action Plan (EAP) 2040, a local group which is part of the Potomac River Group of the Sierra Club. We are pleased that progress is being made on redeveloping the Potomac Rover Generating Station site. As part of Hilco Global, we know that Hilco Redevelopment Partners is committed to environmental sustainability. There are a number of environmentally sustainable and financially feasible measures that Hilco Redevelopment Partners could take that go beyond the Alexandria Green Building Policy and we urge you consider them.

First, there are a number of environmentally sustainable measures undertaken in July 2021 by the developers at Landmark Mall in Alexandria, Inova Alexandria and Foulger-Pratt, and approved by the Alexandria City Council. These measures include the following:

1. Explore LEED Gold certification and, at a minimum, achieve LEED for Neighborhood Development.
2. Build solar-ready buildings, and have solar installed during construction where feasible.
3. Make residential multifamily buildings all-electric.
4. Prepare an Energy and Resilience Plan which delineates its proposed concepts, elements, metrics, and phasing for (a) individual building efficiency and site wide energy demand, (b) on site renewable energy, (c) on site district energy, (d) on site electrical storage, (e) off-site renewable energy, (f) building and grid integration, and (f) resilience.

In addition to the above, we would urge Hilco to consider the following questions in your development planning:

1. How will Hilco incorporate the Alexandria EAP 2040 goals of achieving greenhouse gas reductions of 50% by 2030 and 80-100% by 2050 into the design for the development of the Power Plant site?
2. Can you plan for the site development as a whole to be carbon neutral? Does your plan include an analysis of the project to enumerate the project's GHG impact?
3. Will the development employ microgrid design and technology so that power may be shared among facilities?

4. How many stations for charging electric vehicles in public and private spaces are planned? What are plans for expanding the number of stations as electric vehicles become more common?
5. How much tree cover or greening of vertical wall spaces is planned?
6. Will storm water runoff metrics meet or exceed EPA's National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) Permitting Program for municipalities?

We appreciate your consideration of these suggestions. We would appreciate a response at your earliest opportunity and look forward to participating in the development process as it unfolds. In the meantime, should you have any questions, please feel free to contact the undersigned at [pkaplowi@gmail.com](mailto:pkaplowi@gmail.com)

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