

City of Alexandria, Virginia

MEMORANDUM

DATE: JUNE 15, 2016

TO: MEMBERS OF THE TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION

FROM: CARRIE SANDERS, ACTING DEPUTY DIRECTOR, T&ES

SUBJECT: AGENDA ITEM #4 -D.C. TO RICHMOND HIGH SPEED RAIL PROJECT

ISSUE: To provide Transportation Commission with an update on the D.C.-to-Richmond (DC2RVA) High-Speed Rail Project.

RECOMMENDATION: That the Transportation Commission receive the update regarding the project.

DISCUSSION: The DC2RVA project traverses a 123-mile corridor. The project proposes to follow the CSX rail line and would be a shared freight and passenger rail corridor with Amtrak, providing intercity passenger rail service and with Virginia Railway Express providing commuter rail service. The project corridor is a segment in a larger nationwide high speed intercity passenger rail plan identified by the U.S. Department of Transportation and the states of Virginia and North Carolina. The overall goals of the DC2RVA project are to:

- Improve reliability and on-time performance.
- Reduce travel time and improve trip times.
- Increase frequency by adding up to 9 round-trips daily between DC and Richmond from the current service of 10 trips per day.

The D.C.-to-Richmond VA (DC2RVA) segment of the federally-designated Southeast High Speed Rail Corridor is the northernmost part of a five-state network of a high speed rail corridor under development, stretching southward from Washington through Richmond to Raleigh, Charlotte, Atlanta and Jacksonville. Track and signal improvements for the Southeast High Speed Rail Corridor (SEHSR) will provide capacity for more trains operating at speeds up to 110 miles per hour.

The states, in conjunction with the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) and the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), completed a Tier I Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the implementation of high speed rail passenger service within the SEHSR corridor from Washington, D.C. to Charlotte, NC in 2002. Currently the project has established the Purpose and Need and is in the process of evaluating alternatives and rail options for the selection of the most viable option. This process has moved the project to enter into the Draft Environmental Impact Statement phase in 2016. In order to achieve the goals of the project, additional

infrastructure will be needed within the corridor. Currently, Department of Rail and Public Transportation (DRPT) is engaged in a Tier II EIS process that will evaluate the benefits, costs, and environmental effects of several possible alternatives. The Tier II Draft EIS will ultimately identify a preferred rail alignment and series of improvements for the corridor. The draft is scheduled for release in fall 2016, with public hearings immediately following to accept comment on the alternatives studied. DRPT has conducted previous outreach as part of its Tier II EIS including public scoping meetings (November 2014 in Arlington), preliminary alternative process development public meetings (June 2015 in Alexandria) and an alternatives review meeting (December 2015 in Springfield).

In the fall of 2016, DRPT staff will present the results of the Draft EIS to the Transportation Commission and hold a public hearing.

ATTACHMENTS:

Attachment 1: DRPT Draft Plans within Arlington and Alexandria

Attachment 2: DRPT Draft plans within Alexandria