

# *City of Alexandria, Virginia*

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## **MEMORANDUM**

DATE: MARCH 16, 2016

TO: MEMBERS OF THE TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION

FROM: T&ES STAFF

SUBJECT: AGENDA ITEM # 2 – ITEMS FOR CONSENT

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**ISSUE:** Staff update to Transportation Commission on various ongoing projects.

**RECOMMENDATION:** That the Commission receive the items for consent.

### **A. FUNDING UPDATE**

#### **Washington Area Transit Authority (WMATA)**

WMATA is evaluating the proposed budget that was presented at the WMATA Finance and Administration Committee meeting in December, 2015. On March 4, 2016, jurisdictional staff and WMATA staff met to discuss the proposed budget. The budget currently does not call for fare increases or subsidy increases for the basic operating budget at this time, but long term debt is expected to be issued in 2017, which will likely require a debt service payment.

Most recently, the general manager of WMATA proposed an \$898.8 million capital program for FY 2017 to fund critical safety and state of good repairs investments. This is a change from the \$1.12 billion dollar asked in the original submittal. The goal is for WMATA to lead in spending for the program instead of lagging as it had in previous years. This amount would also reduce the long term debt issued to the region for FY 2017 from \$287.7 to \$58.3 million to support the program. Staff will continue to update the Transportation Commission as the WMATA FY 2017 capital program budget process continues.

The WMATA Comprehensive Funding Agreement (CFA) one-year extension of the current agreement is still pending negotiations by the jurisdictions. The goal is to have jurisdictions to agree to the new CFA by April 2016.

### **Northern Virginia Transportation Authority (NVTA)**

NVTA staff is reviewing CMAQ/RSTP applications for funding for FY 2022. VDOT is developing ratings for all 70% funds being proposed for FY 2017 in accordance with the provisions of HB599. The evaluations are scheduled to be completed by April 2016.

### **Northern Virginia Transportation Commission (NVTC)**

NVTC Resolution #2298 authorizes NVTC staff to submit state operating and capital transit assistance applications to the Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transportation (DRPT) on behalf of NVTC's five WMATA jurisdictions for their local bus systems, and the NVTC jurisdictions' share of WMATA subsidies. The applications for the five WMATA jurisdictions total \$568.8 million in eligible operating costs and \$192.5 million in total capital expenses. The City of Alexandria has submitted \$12.4 million in capital applications, \$72 million in operating applications, and \$16.8 million in applications for DASH.

The resolution also authorizes NVTC to submit state assistance applications on behalf of VRE. For the northern Virginia district, this includes \$51.1 million in eligible operating costs, \$79.1 million in total capital costs, and \$1.5 million in preliminary engineering costs under DRPT's Rail Enhancement Fund.

### **Department of Rail and Public Transportation (DRPT)**

Grant applications were submitted on February 1, 2016 through the Northern Virginia Transportation Commission (NVTC) for transit capital and operating; state match assistance for the West End Transitway design; Van Dorn Metrorail Station improvements; and, the replacement of DASH buses.

**Background:** The City's transportation program has many sources of funding from federal, state, regional, and local sources. City staff coordinates regularly with representatives from each agency listed above to discuss funding opportunities from state and regional sources and the City's funding obligations for WMATA.

## **B. POTOMAC YARD METRORAIL STATION**

**The Federal Transit Administration (FTA) and the National Park Service (NPS) are currently reviewing the second draft of the Final Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). Once the document has been reviewed by the agencies and has been determined as meeting legal sufficiency requirements, it will be released for public review and comment, followed by Records of Decision (RODs) from FTA and NPS.**

**The design process for the Metrorail station is continuing. The next meeting of the Potomac Yard Metrorail Implementation Work Group (PYMIG) will be held on March 17, 2016. The meeting will include discussions of station architecture and materials, the concept design for Potomac Yard Park, and temporary construction impacts.**

**On February 23, City Council authorized the City Manager to submit a Letter of Interest for a loan of approximately \$88 million through the Transportation**

**Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Act (TIFIA) to assist in partially funding the construction of the Metrorail station. A TIFIA loan would be similar to the \$50 million Virginia Transportation Infrastructure Bank (VTIB) loan the City was previously awarded. Like VTIB, a TIFIA loan offers more flexible repayment terms and more favorable interest rates than the City could secure on the bond market.**

**Background:** The Potomac Yard Metrorail Station project is an infill Metrorail station located between the National Airport and Braddock Road Metrorail stations on the Blue and Yellow lines in the vicinity of the Potomac Yard Development.

For more information on the project, please visit [www.alexandriava.gov/potomacyard](http://www.alexandriava.gov/potomacyard).

### **C. KING STREET METRORAIL STATION**

**City, DASH and WMATA staff have been working to complete the items required for the design-build contract package, which is expected to be advertised in mid to late-spring 2016. The package will include a plan for the temporary locations for transportation services currently using the facility, as well as a comprehensive outreach strategy to help the public understand where and how to access those services.**

**Background:** The King Street Metrorail Station is Alexandria's largest transit facility and requires significant updates, expansions, and safety improvements. The City began addressing these needs by requesting that WMATA conduct a feasibility study for rebuilding the access facilities at the lot in 2006. The result of this study was released in March, 2008. Through an extensive vetting process with the general public and stakeholders, the City developed a design for the station that improves non-motorized access, bus access, shuttle and taxi access, short term rental car access, and aesthetics. In 2012, the design was endorsed by the Transportation Commission, the City Council, and the Planning Commission. After approval, the design was refined, and the City determined that some of the features of the facility needed to meet City standards rather than WMATA standards. A long discussion between WMATA and the City resulted in a decision that allowed the facility to be designed using City standards. WMATA gave the City a permanent easement to construct a transit facility, if the City maintained the facility in perpetuity. After this agreement, a more detailed design was produced for the facility and the cost was higher than budgeted. The improvement was placed in the FY 2016 CIP budget process, and eventually acquired sufficient funding to be constructed.

### **D. EISENHOWER AVENUE METRORAIL STATION**

**The Eisenhower Avenue Metrorail Station is proceeding as the City's Department of Project Implementation (DPI) is assembling all of the information needed for the project's design consultant to develop a set of 60% plans for the improvements, which will be submitted to WMATA for review in spring 2016.**

**Background:** The Eisenhower Avenue Metrorail Station project will use Federal Transit Authority (FTA) and Commonwealth funds to reconstruct the Eisenhower Metrorail station entrance to include improved amenities for transit patrons such as better weather

protection and a prominent plaza. This improvement is necessary to accommodate all of the high-intensity growth adjacent and/or in close proximity to the station.

**E. OLD TOWN NORTH SMALL AREA PLAN**

**The City will be conducting three phases of transportation analyses. During the winter/spring (phase 1), staff will be doing a preliminary analysis of the potential two-way conversion of Madison/Montgomery Streets, identifying potential railbanking needs / considerations of the Norfolk Southern rail spur, streetscape improvement needs, and street connectivity options. Over the spring/summer (phase 2), staff will compile the recommendations of all applicable developer traffic studies and will conduct a parking analysis. During the fall/winter (phase 3), a larger, more detailed transportation study is anticipated that will incorporate proposed land use changes. The Infrastructure and Environmental Sustainability/Transportation Subcommittee held its first meeting on February 10, 2016. Some of the key concerns noted were the need for a parking analysis, connectivity to the Braddock Metrorail station, improved connectivity to the George Washington Parkway, issues related to the potential two-way conversion of Madison and Montgomery Streets, street connectivity and access to/within the NRG site, and the potential use of the Norfolk Southern rail spur.**

**Background:** The current Old Town North Small Area Plan was adopted in 1992. The planning effort to update this small area plan began in September 2015 with the appointment of an Advisory Group and is anticipated to conclude in January 2017 with the Plan adoption. As part of this process, a week-long charrette was held in November to identify issues, needs, and ideas for a broad range of categories including transportation, housing, land use, and open space. For more information on the Old Town North Small Area Plan, please visit: <http://www.alexandriava.gov/86032>

**F. COMPLETE STREETS DESIGN GUIDELINES**

**Work on the development of Complete Street Design Guidelines continues with the document to be completed in early summer 2016. The Guidelines are tailored to the unique character of Alexandria and provide design direction based on the context of a street and the surrounding area. This document will serve as technical guidance to City staff, developers and the community when planning new streets or retrofitting existing streets. The guidelines aim to be an inclusive resource for all elements pertaining to street design.**

**Background:** As part of the original Complete Streets Policy that was approved in 2011, the development of street design guidelines was encouraged. The development of the Alexandria Complete Streets Design Guidelines are being undertaken in conjunction with the Pedestrian and Bicycle Master Plan Update.

**G. MOTORCOACH TASK FORCE**

**The City Manager has appointed representatives to the Motorcoach Task Force, a group comprised of citizen associations, citizens at-large, the tourism/motorcoach industry, and the hotel industry. In addition, three of four Commission and Board**

**representatives have been selected by their respective Commissions. The Task Force's first meeting was held on March 10, 2016. This meeting included an overview of the group's charter and the scope of its mission. The meeting also included a discussion of potential locations to address future loading/unloading and parking needs.**

**Background:** Due to pending development along the Waterfront and within Old Town, the City faces the loss of all three of its current short-term motorcoach parking locations (15 spaces total), as well as the loss of space used for unloading and loading on the Strand where queuing occurs during the peak season. This loss necessitated a re-examination of motorcoach parking and loading/unloading spaces. The Ad Hoc Motorcoach Task Force, which operated 2004-2005 and 2008-2010, will provide input to staff regarding future short-term parking and loading/unloading locations.

#### **H. KING STREET COMPLETE STREETS PROJECT**

**Staff has been conducting outreach to the public over the past few months on three proposed design options that were developed based on community input. Through the AlexEngage process, over 750 survey responses on proposed options have been received, and public comment continues with the upcoming public meeting and receipt of comments [online](#). Later this spring, a public meeting will be held to seek comments on a recommended option for the design of this roadway. The project will also be presented to the Traffic and Parking Board in late spring/early summer.**

**Background:** King Street, between Radford Street and Janney's Lane, is being resurfaced this summer and was therefore identified for Complete Streets improvements. Two public meetings have been held already and staff has met with resident groups on two different occasions. An online survey for the project received responses from over 750 people and staff received over 200 additional comments through this process and via the comment form posted on the project website.

#### **I. METROWAY**

**Metroway continues to show strong ridership growth In January 2016, Metroway carried an average of 1,632 riders each weekday, 24 percent higher than the previous January. On-time performance for Metroway buses is 96 percent.**

**Phase II of Metroway is expected to open in spring 2016. This phase will include dedicated lanes in the Arlington portion of the corridor to 26th Street, with additional bus-only lanes during rush hour from 26th Street to the Crystal City Metrorail Station. Phase II will also see the service extended to Pentagon City.**

**Background:** During the first round of TIGER grants, the City received \$8.5 million to design and construct the Route 1 Transitway between Monroe Avenue and East Glebe Road. The City compiled additional grant funding and \$5.2 million in local funding to design/construct various elements of the Transitway project. The total cost of the Transitway including vehicles is approximately \$20 million. The Alexandria portion of the facility, also known as the Crystal City/Potomac Yard Transitway, opened in August 2014.

For more information on the Route 1 Transitway project please see visit:  
<http://www.alexandriava.gov/tes/info/default.aspx?id=58644>