City of Alexandria, Virginia

MEMORANDUM

DATE: DECEMBER 13, 2018

TO: THE HONORABLE MAYOR AND MEMBERS OF CITY COUNCIL

THROUGH: MARK B. JINKS, CITY MANAGER

FROM: YON LAMBERT, DIRECTOR, TRANSPORTATION & ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES

SUBJECT: 2019 METRORAIL SHUTDOWN PLANNING UPDATE

The purpose of this memo is to provide a progress report on planning efforts for the 2019 Metrorail shutdown by the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA).

Since a previous update in October, the City has worked with WMATA, regional partners, businesses and residents to understand concerns and develop plans to mitigate travel disruption. The WMATA Safety and Operations Committee will receive a briefing at its December 13, 2018 meeting (Attachment 1) which includes, for the first time, the outline of a proposed free bus shuttle program and plans to supplement Metrobus service. In response, the City has developed a letter to WMATA General Manager Paul Wiedefeld (Attachment 2) expressing concerns for how the effort is being resourced. Staff also intends to provide an oral update at a City Council Legislative Meeting in January 2019 and has invited WMATA staff to attend.

BACKGROUND: For 101 days between May 25 and September 2, 2019, WMATA will perform major repairs to 20 Metrorail station platforms. This will require the complete closure of the Blue and Yellow lines at six stations in Virginia south of National Airport. WMATA estimates the outage will affect approximately eight (8) percent of its peak weekday riders.

City Council has expressed support for the effort to address deteriorating outdoor station platforms. The City also recognizes that by performing this work continuously, WMATA will be able to complete each platform in far less time than if the work were performed overnight only. However, the traffic and fiscal impact of closing the stations will likely be significant. The City remains concerned about impacts to the traveling public and local business.

DISCUSSION: Alexandria has been an active participant in regional coordination efforts. In addition to mitigation measures planned by WMATA, the City is developing its own plan of travel alternatives for residents and visitors. The City is specifically concerned about two elements in WMATA’s Draft Regional Mitigation Plan. Specifically, based on the data provided,
the City believes WMATA’s currently planned free bus shuttle service and supplemental Metrobus service will be insufficient and under-resourced.

According to WMATA’s assessment, on typical weekday peak period, the Blue/Yellow Metrorail corridor can see up to 8,000 passengers per hour by the time trains reach the Pentagon Metrorail station. On an average weekday, Metrorail sees about 30,000 entries at the six stations south of National Airport. Based on its experience with SafeTrack and a 45-day closure of two stations on the Red Line in 2018, WMATA estimates that 60 percent of daily Metrorail riders will use shuttle buses and connect back to Metrorail. However, because the region has not experienced a shutdown of this magnitude or duration, the City is concerned more Metrorail riders may shift to buses than estimated. The City has requested WMATA increase resources for its free shuttle and supplemental Metrobus service plan.

**NEXT STEPS:** City staff have invited WMATA staff to attend a City Council Legislative Meeting as early as January 2019 to review with Council the proposed WMATA bus operations plan and other proposed mitigation measures. At that time, City staff will provide a summary of community engagement efforts and scalable cost estimates for Council’s review.

For its part, WMATA intends to work with regional providers to finalize travel alternatives in early 2019. WMATA staff has also indicated it intends to bring a complete evaluation of promotion and incentive strategies to the WMATA Board for consideration and approval. Customer notification is expected to begin in spring 2019.

**ATTACHMENTS:**
1. WMATA Information Item IV-A, FY2020 Station Platforms Project
2. Letter from Alexandria City Manager to WMATA General Manager

cc: Emily Baker, Deputy City Manager
    Hillary Orr, Deputy Director, T&ES
Safety and Operations Committee

Information Item IV-A

December 13, 2018

FY2020 Station Platforms Project
FY20 Station Platform Project

Discuss FY2020 planned service outages to repair 20 station platforms, which will close six stations in Northern Virginia during summer 2019 and affect approximately 8 percent of peak weekday riders. Provide a progress report on efforts to develop travel alternatives for impacted customers, Metro’s customer research and communications plan, and customer retention initiatives.

Update the Board on work underway with regional transportation partners to develop a robust mitigation plan, including promotions to retain riders and encourage them to return when the work is completed.

Metro staff are preparing for the first phase of the Platform Rehabilitation Project in summer 2019, with service alternatives, customer communications, and ridership retention strategies being refined based on information gained during SafeTrack and recent customer research.

Unlike SafeTrack, Metrorail customers are now familiar with line segment shutdowns and the use of temporary service alternatives. Metro no longer wants to deliver the "stay away" message that was required when the emergency SafeTrack program was introduced. Instead, the goal is to provide customers with more information about where service is running and what their options are for traveling around the shutdown, as well as information when service returns to normal and possible promotions to return to Metro.

Key Highlights:

- In FY20, major service outages are scheduled to enable the rehabilitation of station platforms:
  - May 25 – September 2, 2019: Shutdown BL/YL south of National Airport
September 3 – 29, 2019: Single tracking on BL, between Van Dorn St – Franconia-Springfield

- The closure of these six Metrorail stations will impact approximately 17,000 weekday rush hour customers, or 8 percent of peak weekday ridership.
- Metro is working with regional partners to develop a robust mitigation plan for the summer 2019 service outage and a campaign to inform customers of their travel options.
- Recent customer research has found that the majority of impacted customers are aware of next summer’s shutdown, and they plan to research alternative travel options less than three months before the shutdown start date.

**Background and History:**

In FY20, Metro will begin the first phase of a major capital project to rebuild 20 outdoor station platforms. From Memorial Day to Labor Day (May 25 – September 2, 2019), six Metrorail stations in Virginia on the Blue/Yellow Lines will be closed for platform reconstruction and other major capital work: Braddock Road, King St-Old Town, Eisenhower Ave, Huntington, Van Dorn St, and Franconia-Springfield. The Ronald Reagan Washington National Airport Metrorail station will remain open and represents the southernmost terminus on the Blue/Yellow lines during summer 2019.

On a typical weekday during peak periods, the six stations that will be closed in summer 2019 record about 17,000 entries per AM Peak, which is approximately 8 percent of the 212,000 AM Peak entries systemwide.

Experience from SafeTrack has shown that approximately 60 percent of daily Metrorail riders will take advantage of the free substitute bus shuttles and connect back to Metrorail.

**Discussion:**

**VIRGINIA COORDINATION EFFORTS**

Metro is leading, with the support of the Northern Virginia Transportation Commission (NVTC), a Northern Virginia stakeholder group using the SafeTrack coordination effort as the model. The group has over 140 members and includes representatives from Northern Virginia local governments, state government, VA Congressional offices, the federal government, transit providers, and police and emergency management. Following a kickoff in May 2018, the group convenes by regular conference calls that will continue monthly.

Metro and stakeholders use the time to coordinate mitigation efforts and report
progress on planning for the summer 2019 platform work. The group maintains a tracking list of outstanding follow-up items. It is also an opportunity to ensure coordination and share information on major transportation projects in the region such as the I-395 HOT lane construction (VDOT), Memorial Bridge reconstruction (NPS), National Airport construction (MWAA), and the King-Street Old Town Station Bus Bay project (Alexandria).

In addition, two other groups have met to begin planning for the summer 2019 work: (1) the regional bus providers who are developing a bus alternatives plan and (2) regional representatives who are developing Transportation Demand Management (TDM) and other mitigation strategies. Both of these groups support and inform the Virginia stakeholder group coordinated by Metro and NVTC.

**NoVa CUSTOMER RESEARCH**

Metro conducted customer research this fall to learn firsthand from Northern Virginia customers about their preferred service alternatives, as well as the best ways to communicate information related to service disruptions. The survey targeted regular riders with registered SmarTrip® cards who use the six impacted stations.

Some of the top findings include:

- Seven in 10 registered SmarTrip® users are already aware of the 2019 shutdown
- Most customers will begin researching alternative travel options less than three months before the shutdown start date
- The three most effective modes of communication are:
  - Metro emails or text messages
  - Posters in Metro stations
  - Brochures distributed at Metro stations
- Social media platforms were the least preferred forms of communication
- Half of the customers affected by the shutdown plan to use free Metro shuttle buses
- The expected use of the various options are (customers could choose more than one option):
  - Metro shuttle buses – 53%
  - Drive own car – 43%
  - Regular Metro buses – 33%
  - Uber/Lyft – 22%
  - VRE – 20%
- Expected use of regular Metrobus routes (8Z, 10A, 11Y, 21A, and Metroway) is relatively low, but we may be able to increase it through advertising/messaging
DRAFT MITIGATION PLAN
Based on initial discussions with our partners and customer research, Metro staff have prepared a draft mitigation plan that includes:

1. Free bus shuttles replacing rail service for the six closed stations
   a. Express shuttles to Pentagon (from Franconia-Springfield and Huntington Stations)
   b. Two local bus shuttles connecting closed stations
2. Supplemental existing Metrobus service on Metroway, 8Z, 10A, 11Y, and 21A
3. Local service enhancements and travel alternatives provided by jurisdictions

The following is the preliminary Metrobus service plan, which based on previous shutdown experience and customer research, anticipates approximately 60 percent of regular rail riders in the corridor will use bus alternatives.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Route</th>
<th>Days</th>
<th>Span</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8Z</td>
<td>wk</td>
<td>5:35am - 8:50pm (midday service ac</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10A</td>
<td>wk</td>
<td>4:25am - 1:46am</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11Y</td>
<td>wk</td>
<td>6:31am - 9:03am 4:10pm - 7:24pm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21A</td>
<td>wk</td>
<td>5:35am - 7:47pm (midday service ac</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Metroway</td>
<td>wk</td>
<td>5:30am - 9am 3:30pm - 7:30 pm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shuttle 1</td>
<td>wk, Sa, Su</td>
<td>5:30am - Midnight</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Express shuttle btw Franconia-Springfield and Pentagon Transit Center</td>
<td>wk, Sa, Su</td>
<td>5:30am - Midnight</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shuttle 2</td>
<td>wk, Sa, Su</td>
<td>5:30am - Midnight</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local shuttle btw Franconia-Springfield, Van Dorn St, King St, and National Airport</td>
<td>wk, Sa, Su</td>
<td>5:30am - Midnight</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shuttle 3</td>
<td>wk, Sa, Su</td>
<td>5:30am - Midnight</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Express shuttle btw Huntington and Pentagon Transit Center</td>
<td>wk, Sa, Su</td>
<td>5:30am - Midnight</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shuttle 4</td>
<td>wk, Sa, Su</td>
<td>5:30am - Midnight</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local shuttle btw Huntington, Eisenhower Ave, King St, Braddock Rd, and Crystal City</td>
<td>wk, Sa, Su</td>
<td>5:30am - Midnight</td>
</tr>
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</table>

** - Buses required will supplement existing service
^ - Buses required to provide midday service
COMMUNICATIONS

Metro, NVTC, Northern Virginia jurisdictions, and the Commonwealth of Virginia will work together to ensure there is a high level of communication to all stakeholders, including customers, elected and government officials, and local business and community groups.

Similar to the SafeTrack project, Metro will develop a dedicated project website to provide up-to-date information and link to other regional resources. Metro will distribute targeted outreach materials to customers at the impacted locations and will share those materials with other stakeholders to post on their own websites, share by social media, share with elected officials, and provide at key commuting locations.

Based on customer feedback, new communications and outreach tactics may be created to better inform customers about travel alternatives. For example, the campaign may include an effort to increase familiarity with local bus routes, which research has found is very low among regular rail riders at the impacted stations. Also, service alternatives may be presented in a more targeted fashion to provide specific alternatives to customers based on their regular travel patterns.

FUNDING IMPACT:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No funding impact at this time.</th>
</tr>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Project Manager:</th>
<th>Lynn Bowersox</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Project Department/Office:</td>
<td>Customer Service, Communications and Marketing</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

TIMELINE:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Previous Actions</th>
<th>May 2018: Platform rehabilitation program announced</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>October 2018: NoVa customer research conducted</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Anticipated actions after presentation</th>
<th>Early 2019: roll out mitigation campaign to prepare communities and riders</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>May 25 – September 2, 2019: Shutdown BL/YL south of National Airport</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>September 3 – 29, 2019: Single tracking on BL, between Van Dorn St – Franconia-Springfield</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
RECOMMENDATION:

This is an information item. No Board actions recommended.
FY20 Station Platform Projects

Safety and Operations Committee
December 13, 2018
Purpose

- Provide the Board with further details on FY20 station platform projects that will close 6 stations and impact 8% of weekday riders
- Preview draft mitigation plans prepared in cooperation with jurisdictions
- Highlight development of customer retention initiatives
Major Outage Guidelines to Minimize Customer Impacts

- No station should experience two major outages in a three-year period
- Focus construction on summer and major holiday weekends to reduce impact on loyal commuters
- Concentrate work to minimize impact to riders, rather than conducting a series of smaller outages
- Deliver best possible service outside work zone
- Provide public notification several months in advance
Capital Investment: Platform Rehabilitation Project

- **May 25 – September 2, 2019:**
  - Shutdown BL/YL south of National Airport
  - Stations Closed: Braddock Rd, King St, Eisenhower Ave, Huntington, Van Dorn St, Franconia-Springfield
  - During a typical weekday rush hour, approx. 17,000 customers board at these six stations (8% of ridership)

- **September 3 – 29, 2019:**
  - Single tracking on BL, between Van Dorn St – Franconia-Springfield
  - BL trains every 24 minutes
Regional Network Coordination

Planning Underway for Summer 2019 Mitigations

- Northern Virginia Stakeholder Group led by Metro and supported by the Northern Virginia Transportation Commission (NVTC)
- More than 140 members: local government, state government, Congressional offices, federal government, transit providers, police and emergency management, MWAA
- Using SafeTrack coordination effort as model
Customer Retention Strategies

Service Alternatives – Initial Metrobus Planning

- Free express bus shuttles to Pentagon
  - From Franconia-Springfield and Huntington stations

- Free local bus shuttles connecting closed stations
  - Franconia-Springfield, Van Dorn St, King St-Old Town and National Airport
  - Huntington, Eisenhower Ave, King St-Old Town, Braddock Rd and Crystal City

- Additional capacity on existing routes
  - 8Z, 10A, 11Y, 21A, Metroway

- Preliminary Metrobus plan anticipates approx. 60% of regular rail riders in corridor will use bus alternatives
Local Operator Service Enhancements

- Local operator service enhancements under consideration:
  - Fairfax Connector: supplement existing routes, shuttle connecting Huntington North and South
  - Alexandria DASH: operation of one of the free local shuttles, considering expanded trolley service in Old Town Alexandria
  - OmniRide: shuttles to VRE stations, contingency hours to alleviate overcrowding
  - Arlington ART: added capacity
Alternative Travel Options and Demand Management

- WMATA is working with state and regional representatives on:
  - Promotion of park and ride locations
  - Promotion of existing transit service
  - Telework policies
  - Signal prioritization and dedicated lanes
  - Outreach to slugging community and vanpools/carpools
  - Coordination with transportation demand management (TDM) professionals
  - Additional capacity on VRE
Learning from Summer 2018 Red Line Shutdown

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I know why Metro is suspending service between Fort Totten and NOMA-Gallaudet stations.</td>
<td>60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I trust that the service suspensions are necessary.</td>
<td>66%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I was informed early enough about the service shutdowns on the Red Line.</td>
<td>72%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I was reminded early enough about the service shutdowns on the Red Line.</td>
<td>73%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have a good understanding of my alternative travel options between late July and early September.</td>
<td>62%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
1 in 3 affected customers have the option of telecommuting 1+ days per week
1 in 4 can telecommute 2+ days per week

How often can you telecommute for work?

- I cannot telecommute for work: 46.8%
- Less than 1 day per week: 18.0%
- 1 day per week: 12.2%
- 2 days per week: 9.6%
- 3 days per week: 4.9%
- 4 days per week: 0.9%
- 5 or more days per week: 7.6%
Learning from Summer 2018 Red Line Shutdown

- Customers want personalized service alternatives based on their stations and travel patterns
- Increase use of email and text messaging for customer notification
- Ensure accuracy and maintenance of signage
- Improve messaging to set expectations about trip times on bus shuttles and other travel alternatives
- Provide clarity about frequent service available beyond work zone
NoVa Customer Research

- Conducted October 2018
- Surveyed existing Metrorail customers who entered or exited one of the affected stations at least five times in September 2018
- More than 10% of 17,000 riders affected by shutdown took survey
Customer Research – Impacted NoVa Riders

Were you aware of the 2019 shutdowns before taking survey?

- Yes: 70%
- No: 30%

Have you already researched travel alternatives?

- Yes: 61%
- No: 39%

When are you likely to research travel alternatives for next summer?

- A few days before the stations close: 3%
- 1 week before: 5%
- 2-3 weeks before: 16%
- 1-2 months before: 40%
- 3-5 months before: 25%
- 6-8 months before: 6%
- 9 months before: 5%
What is the best way to communicate information to you about alternative travel options? Select top 3 sources.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Email or text message from Metro</td>
<td>61%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poster in Metro station</td>
<td>43%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brochure distributed at Metro station</td>
<td>36%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poster aboard train</td>
<td>31%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WMATAcom</td>
<td>27%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Video screen in Metro station or aboard train</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brochure mailed to your home address</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Newspaper online or print</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Television news show</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Audio announcement in Metro station or aboard train</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Radio news show</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Twitter</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Facebook</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instagram</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Expected Demand for Alternatives

Would you use these alternatives? “Certainly Yes” responses only

All Affected Customers
36%

Non-Metro Modes

Regular Metrobuses
- Metroway: 6%
- 10A: 6%
- 11Y: 6%
- 8Z: 4%
- 21A: 3%

Free Shuttlebuses
- Express: Franconia to Pentagon Transit Center: 13%
- Express: Huntington to Pentagon Transit Center: 11%
- Local: Huntington to Crystal City: 10%
- Local: Franconia to National Airport: 5%

All Affected Customers: 100%
Which alternative travel modes do you expect to use more often when the stations south of National Airport are closed? Please select all that apply or "none of the above."

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Travel Mode</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Free Metro shuttle bus</td>
<td>53%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drive own car</td>
<td>43%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regular Metrobus</td>
<td>33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ride-hailing services such as Uber or Lyft</td>
<td>22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don't travel - telecommute</td>
<td>22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VRE train</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carpool</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ride own bike</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bike-sharing services (e.g., Capital Bikeshare)</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Taxi</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Car-sharing services (e.g., Car2Go, Zipcar)</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scootersharing services</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>None of the above</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Board Policy Matters

- Staff evaluating potential discounts or incentives to retain riders during shutdown

- Analysis underway to determine what offering could be made to demonstrate appreciation for customer patience and incentivize riders to return after shutdown
Next Steps

- Finalize travel alternatives from Metro and regional providers
- Complete evaluation of promotion and incentive strategies and return to Board for approval
- Customers notification beginning in spring 2019
December 14, 2018

Paul Wiedefeld
General Manager
Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority
600 5th Street, NW
Washington, DC 20001

RE: Request for Additional WMATA Resources During Summer 2019 Platform Work

Dear Mr. Wiedefeld,

The City of Alexandria (the City) understands and supports WMATA’s planned Summer 2019 Platform Work. This effort to address deteriorating outdoor station platforms is badly needed. The City also recognizes that by performing this work continuously, WMATA will be able to complete each platform in far less time than if the work were performed overnight only.

That said, the traffic and economic effect of closing the six Metrorail stations south of National Airport for three continuous months (May to September 2019) will likely be significant to city residents and businesses. The City remains concerned about impacts to the traveling public and local businesses. This is especially true since the entire platform repair program will begin south of National Airport, and the City and southern Fairfax County will be the first to experience such an extended and significant shutdown. Public perception and media coverage of the entire planned WMATA outdoor platform program will be shaped by this initial project.

Alexandria has been an active participant in local coordination efforts and we appreciate WMATA’s collaborative approach. In addition to mitigation measures planned and funded by WMATA, the City is developing its own plan of travel alternatives for residents and visitors.

We also appreciate the opportunity to review and support WMATA’s Draft Regional Mitigation Plan. However, Alexandria is concerned about two plan elements. Specifically, based on City staff calculations, the free shuttle service and the supplemental existing Metrobus service staff believes are insufficient and under-resourced.

According to WMATA’s assessment, on typical weekday peak period, the Blue/Yellow Metrorail corridor can see up to 8,000 passengers per hour by the time trains reach the Pentagon Metrorail station. On an average weekday, Metrorail sees about 30,000 entries at the six stations
south of National Airport. Based on its experience with SafeTrack, WMATA estimates that 60 percent of daily Metrorail riders will use shuttle buses and connect back to Metrorail.

Upon our review of the data, and in consultation with key stakeholders, the City is concerned that WMATA has designated too few shuttles. Assuming 6-minute headways, the 4 shuttles combined will be able to move a maximum of 2,400 passengers/hour. The supplemental service along existing Metrobus routes will move a maximum of approximately 780 additional passengers/hour. Together, that totals only 3,180 passengers/hour, well short of WMATA’s 60% target of 4,800. Stating it another way, WMATA’s plan is only two-thirds of what it should be. WMATA’s plan needs to “lean in” and take an over-resourcing risk.

More seriously, we are convinced that the estimate of 60 percent diversion onto shuttles is already too low for the following reasons:

1. The impact of this shutdown will be materially different than SafeTrack, which affected the City most substantially for only two weeks. This was a short enough timeframe that people were willing to change their behavior and travel patterns. The Summer 2019 shutdown will be three months. While the City is building alternatives, it is unlikely those options can consistently replace unmet demand by the additional bus service.

2. The data show the number of riders in the City does not diminish as much in summer as it may elsewhere. At the King St.-Old Town station, total boardings during August 2017 were 19.7 percent higher than our slowest month in the last fiscal year, which was January. In fact, July 2017 was the second busiest month for station entries over a 12-month period. Many of these riders in the summer are likely visitors to Alexandria, most of whom do not have e-mail addresses linked to SmarTrip cards. As a result, they may not be represented in WMATA’s surveying efforts.

3. Unlike rail, which has a dedicated right of way, buses must share right of way with other traffic. The City will try to ease vehicular congestion where applicable, such as by extending hours and occupancy requirements for HOV lanes along Washington Street, but with a probable increase in traffic due to the Metrorail closure, it is likely that congestion along certain roadways in the peak hours will continue or worsen. Traffic congestion on the streets impacts travel times for buses, creates less reliable bus operations and can lead to bus bunching which increases the wait time between shuttles.

Because the City of Alexandria, Fairfax and Arlington counties will be the first jurisdictions to experience these extended station closures, we want to work with WMATA to ensure that passengers experience as little inconvenience as possible and the media coverage and public feedback on the planning and handling of these closures is positive. First impressions will be critical to the success of the entire WMATA Platform Project.

To accomplish this, the City requests WMATA revise its planning assumptions to ensure it has sufficient capacity. By our calculation, at a minimum, this means increasing capacity by another 1,620 passengers/hour, just to hit the 60% target. WMATA needs to be aggressive in its shuttle capacity planning. While the City believes added capacity at the King St.-Old Town Metrorail
station is most beneficial, capacity anywhere is welcome. The City will partner with WMATA and neighboring jurisdictions to move people as efficiently as possible and is committed to making the bus bridge and supplemental service successful.

We also request that WMATA staff attend the Alexandria City Council Legislative Meeting at 7 p.m. on January 22, 2019 to provide an update on mitigation planning.

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact Yon Lambert, Director, Department of Transportation & Environmental Services at 703.746.4025 or yon.lambert@alexandriava.gov.

Sincerely,

Mark B. Jinks
City Manager

cc: The Honorable Mayor and Members of City Council, City of Alexandria
    Emily A. Baker, Deputy City Manager
    Yon Lambert, Director, Department of Transportation & Environmental Services