

City of Alexandria, Virginia

MEMORANDUM

DATE: SEPTEMBER 9, 2013
TO: MEMBERS OF THE TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION
FROM: T&ES STAFF
SUBJECT: AGENDA ITEM # 6 - STAFF UPDATES

ISSUE: Staff update to Transportation Commission on various ongoing projects

RECOMMENDATION: That the Commission receive the staff update.

A. POTOMAC YARD METRORAIL STATION

The Potomac Yard Metro 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.

The project team is working on the draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS), which analyzes the socioeconomic, environmental, and transportation impacts of a no build and three build alternatives. The DEIS will address key environmental considerations, including air quality and climate change, transportation and land use, visual resources, parklands, historic and cultural resources, noise, vibration, wetlands and habitats, and temporary construction impacts.

During the preliminary review of the DEIS by all of the participating and cooperating agencies, several technical changes and amendments were recommended, and the project team is incorporating those modifications into the document. The planned release date of May 2013 was therefore shifted to late fall 2013 in order to ensure ample opportunity for community input. The release of the DEIS will be followed by several Community Education and Discussion Workshops, as well as a public hearing. The schedule changes will also allow the City and cooperating agencies more time to discuss the impacts of the alternatives and potential mitigation measures.

For more information on the project, please visit www.alexandriava.gov/potomacyard.

B. CRYSTAL CITY/POTOMAC YARD (ROUTE 1) TRANSITWAY

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.

Transitway construction began in July 2012. Substantial completion of the runningway construction is anticipated by Winter 2013/2014. Heavy and hazardous materials have been found on-site during excavation. The contractor is working with the City to dispose of the materials correctly.

Among other design elements that will ensure the Transitway is a premier facility, the City is including colored concrete in the runningway at Transitway stations. The contractor began pouring colored concrete in April 2013 and pours will continue through September. To ensure that the dual colored concrete will remain unmarred, these sections will be covered with plastic and sand until the Transitway opens.

In the first three weeks of September, work will be dependent on the weather, but continued construction is anticipated within the Transitway from East Glebe to Evans Lane and from Howell to Potomac. Maintenance of traffic (MOT) plans are in place on either end of the construction and will continue through September.

For more information on the Route 1 Transitway project please see visit:

<http://www.alexandriava.gov/tes/info/default.aspx?id=58644>

C. DASH GOVERNANCE

The Alexandria Transit Company (ATC) provides local bus service (DASH) with connections to regional Metrobus, Metrorail, Virginia Railway Express, and other local bus systems. Since the ATC was created 29 years ago, the route network has more than doubled, and ridership has increased fourfold. The City initiated the DASH Efficiency Study to evaluate the current governance structure, organization, and management practices, and to ensure that there is capacity to accommodate the planned expansion of service. City staff presented the major findings of the DASH Efficiency Study to City Council at the annual meeting of the ATC stockholders on February 26, 2013. Since then, City and ATC staff have been meeting regularly to develop an implementation plan for the DASH Efficiency Study recommendations outlined by City Council at that meeting.

At the February 26 stockholder meeting, Council agreed upon several principles and directed staff to work with ATC to develop a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) that includes a detailed implementation plan. City and ATC staff and management, including the ATC Board Chairman have met weekly since the February stockholder meeting to develop the MOU. The following actions are intended to improve the accountability and transparency of the structure and ensure that the operational strengths of the system remain intact:

- Expand the ATC Board to nine members from the existing seven. The new members will include representatives appointed by the Chief Finance Officer and the City Manager. In addition, in interviewing new members in the future, the Board will ensure that there is at least one member with transportation expertise and one member with finance expertise.

- Expand the Board functions to include oversight of:
 - i. BRT/Transitway operational policy and coordination with other jurisdictions and transit agencies;
 - ii. DOT Paratransit policy and fares;
 - iii. Metrobus fare and route changes; and
 - iv. Implementation policy considerations associated with transit infrastructure throughout the City (excluding Metrorail).
- Additional coordination between ATC and the City's finance and administration functions, including full transition to the City's financial and accounting systems by December 31, 2013.
- The City and ATC Board are exploring options for modifying the Transit Management Agreement with First Transit, Inc. No change to the subsidiary corporation that employs the rest of DASH's staff is anticipated.