

City of Alexandria, Virginia

MEMORANDUM

DATE: JANUARY 8, 2014
TO: MEMBERS OF THE TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION
FROM: T&ES STAFF
SUBJECT: AGENDA ITEM # 2 – ITEMS FOR CONSENT

ISSUE: Staff update to Transportation Commission on various ongoing projects

RECOMMENDATION: That the Commission receive the items for consent.

A. FUNDING UPDATE

The following is an update on funding and/or actions of major regional transportation bodies as they relate to the City.

Northern Virginia Transportation Authority (NVTA) 70% Funds

Staff reported last month that the NVTA funding methodology was determined to be legal by an appeals court on October 11, 2013, and no appeal to the State Supreme Court was received by the filing deadline 15 days past this date. An appeal was filed past this deadline, which can be considered by the Supreme Court, if it wishes. Staff determined that another type of appeal needed to be filed 30 days after the decision was made, and nothing has been filed yet.

Based upon this funding stream being available, the NVTA placed a call for projects for the remainder of FY 2014, FY 2015, and FY 2016 using the 70% regional funds on December 12, 2013. The responses must be received by the NVTA by January 31, 2014. This is discussed in more depth in Agenda Item #4.

In regards to the call for projects, one of the provisions of HB2313 states that the 70% funds shall be used solely to fund transportation projects selected by the Authority that are contained in the regional transportation plan and that have been rated in accordance with HB 599 or mass transit capital projects that can increase capacity. Thus, the 70% projects can either be capacity-increasing transit projects or must be projects that have been rated. The Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) is in the process of performing this rating of projects, as directed by HB599.

The process VDOT is using in the HB599 study is to first establish a set of projects to evaluate, and then to use a set of measures of effectiveness to rate the projects. The initial tier of analysis VDOT took was to establish a set of “priority principles” which were adopted

by the CTB on October 17, 2013. The principles include the following:

1. Preserve and enhance Statewide mobility through the region
2. Increase coordinated safety and security planning
3. Improve the interconnectivity of regions and activity centers
4. Reduce the costs of congestion for Virginia’s residents and businesses
5. Increase system performance by making operational improvements
6. Increase travel choices to improve quality of life in Virginia

Projects will initially need to be consistent with at least one of the principles. The second tier of analysis in the HB599 process involved distributing an initial draft set of project selection criteria which were sent out on November 1, 2013, with a revised due date for comments being November 20, 2013. After the responses were collected, VDOT held a listening session on November 22, 2013 to discuss the methodology and comments. Based upon this listening session, VDOT developed a revised selection model which was documented in a memo dated December 2, 2013. This methodology is significantly different from the initial one. A key difference is that sets of projects, in one corridor, can be labeled as one project to be evaluated by VDOT. It is thus possible to include all modes in one of these corridor level projects. VDOT established 11 criteria, in the areas of significance, congestion reduction, and homeland security mobility which will determine which of the submitted projects will proceed to the evaluation phase.

On December 3, 2013, VDOT used automated polling technology to determine the importance of each of these factors to the region. This session, which provided equal weights to all present, was reviewed by VDOT, and weights were given to different attributes based upon whether the person at the polling session was representing a NVTAs voting member.

The criteria and blended weights using both inputs are shown below:

Category Attribute	Blended Weights
Project Significance	
Project Type	3%
Designated Corridor	13%
High Travel Volume	15%
Connects Regional Activity Centers	16%
Connects Major Facilities	8%
Congestion Reduction Potential	
Congestion Severity	6%
Congestion Duration	9%
Person Hours of Delay	8%
Adds Capacity	9%
Reduces Vehicle Trips	5%
Homeland Security Mobility	
Facility Improvements	8%
Total	100%

The HB599 study will develop a set of Measures of Effectiveness, circulate them in early January 2014, and have another Decision Lens session on the Measures of Effectiveness in February, 2014.

The legislature did not require that this methodology be used to rank projects in FY 2014. However, the current law requires it to be done for future NVTA projects funded by 70% funds, except transit capacity increasing projects. It is staff's understanding that this rating system must be used for any major project receiving VDOT or Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transportation (DRPT) funds. If the City wants some of its transit projects to receive state funds beyond NVTA funds, they should be rated.

The number of projects to be rated by VDOT and the time between ratings is a point of contention. Currently VDOT's interpretation is that they only need to rate 25-30 projects every four years. Many of the jurisdiction representatives at the NVTA Project Implementation Working Group feel that this is too small of a number to fill a NVTA Six-Year Plan. Further, they feel that a rating study should occur annually to produce the set of projects required to populate the NVTA Six-Year Plan.

WMATA Funding Update

The Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA) also released its proposed FY2015 budget in December 2013. It calls for an across-the-board fare increase, which is parallel with inflation rates. The amount of subsidy increase for operations for Alexandria is forecast to be \$700,000, a 2.5% increase. WMATA also proposed to start funding Momentum 2025, entirely. This would represent a large increase in subsidies for capital. Staff is working with WMATA to develop a prioritized list of capital needs which can begin to fund Momentum 2025.

B. POTOMAC YARD METRORAIL STATION

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.

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.

As discussed previously, the project team has been investigating several options to mitigate impacts identified during the DEIS analysis. One of these options involves moving the CSXT tracks to the west, which would potentially allow Alternative B to be removed from NPS-owned land and the 1999 scenic easement. City staff met with representatives of CSXT on November 13, 2013. At the meeting, CSXT staff asked a number of questions and engaged in a discussion of the details of the proposed option. As expected, no decision was reached at the meeting. CSXT staff stated that they would discuss the option internally with the appropriate people within their organization. They could not give a timeframe for a response to the City, but City staff will follow up in January.

If the response from CSXT is favorable, this mitigation option will be incorporated into the DEIS. Following incorporation of mitigation options, the DEIS will be completed and released for public review and comment.

City staff presented an update on the project to City Council at the December 12, 2013 work session. The Potomac Yard Metrorail Implementation Work Group (PYMIG) will be meeting on January 6, 2014. The meeting will include updates on development in Potomac Yard and the progress of the DEIS.

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

C. 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. Running-way construction is substantially complete. Remaining items include milling and paving of asphalt pavement along curbs and installation of signage. Construction of the stations and installation of landscaping will take place in the Winter and Spring, with completion in Summer 2014.

The branded Metroway service will start with the opening of the transitway, with buses running every 12 minutes between the Braddock Road Metrorail Station and Pentagon City. The service will operate in mixed traffic through Arlington County until early 2015, when their portion of the transitway is scheduled to open.

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

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

D. BRAC-133 UPDATE

The Transportation Commission requested that staff provide a written update on transportation issues related to BRAC-133, since the completion of the BRAC facility and the short and mid-term roadway improvements.

Short and Mid-Term Projects

The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA's) Short and Mid Term Projects were completed in late summer 2013. All proposed improvements have been constructed and are operational.

Traffic Impacts

As of September 2012, all of the BRAC staff migration has occurred, and in January, 2013, there were 6,100 employees working at the BRAC facility. On average, approximately 3,300 people enter the building in the morning peak period hours each day. As of September 2013, there are 149 registrants in the Washington Headquarters Service (WHS) carpool data base, 273 carpool parking permits, and five vanpool parking permits. On average, approximately 1,900 parking spots (of the 3,262 spaces) were utilized (including official vehicles).

Traffic counts and level of service analysis has been conducted periodically by VDOT between the pre-occupied BRAC facility, and present conditions. Counts were conducted in September 2011 prior to any occupation of the BRAC facility. Counts were also taken in November 2012 after the full occupation of the BRAC facility and the completion of the short-term improvements. The latest counts were taken in November 2013, after completion of the mid-term improvements. Between November 2012 and November 2013, during the AM peak, there has been an overall slight increase in site traffic, but a modest decline in background traffic, resulting in an overall decline in traffic within the area. During the PM peak, there has been an overall slight decrease in both site traffic, and background traffic, resulting in an overall decline in traffic within the area. In comparing November 2012 and November 2013 AM and PM peak queue conditions, most of the queues at the intersections were able to clear upon each cycle.

Both the AM and PM peak intersection level of service has remained relatively constant between September 2011 and November 2013, as seen in the following graphics. In general, the traffic in the BRAC-133 area has leveled out, and reached steady state. Intersections and movements operate at saturated conditions but are not oversaturated.

AM Peak Level of Service Comparison



PM Peak Level of Service Comparison



I-395 HOV Lane and Auxiliary Lane Projects

Design - The 60% Right-Of-Way drawings were submitted to VDOT by the Design/Build Team on December 2, 2013 and the Roadway plans are well underway towards 100% completion. The Noise Analysis and Report has been accepted by VDOT and FHWA. Voting letters and ballots were sent on December 2, 2013 via USPS certified mail to property owners and renters whose property was determined by the noise study to be an impacted and benefitted property. They will be allowed to vote on whether a noise wall should be constructed adjacent to their property but within VDOT's limited access right of way. As requested by concerned citizens and agreed to by VDOT, the originally planned date to send out the letters was revised from November 22 to the December 2 date because VDOT wanted to allow the citizens more time to review the noise report prior to the ballots being sent. Voting forms are required to be returned to VDOT's Design/Build team by January 1, 2014.

Field Activities - During the month of November VDOT's Design/Build contractor performed the required I-395 northbound inside shoulder strengthening operations. The shoulder strengthening operation was performed from Duke Street to Seminary Road.

Other Items - VDOT and their Design/Build team met with Parkside Homeowners Association on November 20, 2013 to discuss the project's noise walls and voting process. The Design/Build team will begin working on procuring right-of-way and temporary construction easements in the coming months, and will continue advancing the construction plans to 100%. The Design is scheduled to be complete by March 2014 and the construction is scheduled to begin April 2014 with the new HOV ramp open to traffic in September 2014.