

# *City of Alexandria, Virginia*

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## MEMORANDUM

DATE: MAY 21, 2014  
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**

**On March 3, 2014, the US Department of Transportation (USDOT) issued a Notice of Funding Availability for discretionary funds for National Infrastructure Investments (TIGER). Funds are to be awarded on a competitive basis for projects that will have a significant impact on the nation, a region, or a metropolitan area. The FY 2014 Appropriations Act appropriated \$600 million to be awarded for the program, and allows for up to \$35 million to be awarded as planning grants. Projects must demonstrate that all pre-construction activities will be complete to allow grant funding to be obligated by September 30, 2016 and expended by September 30, 2021. After the City Council approved the submission of an application for \$25 million to fund the construction of the Potomac Yard Metrorail Station on April 8, 2014, City staff submitted the materials necessary for the grant by the April 28, 2014 deadline.**

**The Commonwealth Transportation Board issued its Draft Six-Year Program (SYIP) on April 16, 2014 which provides the Commonwealth's draft outline guiding transportation funding from FY2015 through FY2020. The most important item which was denoted is that the Commonwealth is again not providing Urban and Secondary funds. After an absence of several years, the Commonwealth, expecting a major increase in funding, again outlined Urban projects in FY2017, FY2018, and FY2019. According to VDOT, less money is being generated for transportation projects than was originally projected, so these programs have been eliminated in the FY2015-FY2020 Draft SYIP. For Alexandria, this change represents a decrease of \$4,235,000 from FY2017 through FY2019 for various programs. Attached to this memorandum is the oral testimony that Alexandria provided at the Northern Virginia hearing on the plan on April 24, 2014.**

**The City Council adopted the FY 2015 budget on May 1, 2014. A few transportation items were discussed in the add/delete session. One of the most prominent was continuing to fund the Senior Taxi program, operated by the Department of Human**

**Services.** The City Manager's original budget proposed eliminating this program, but since the Council raised the tax rate, the City Council voted to continue to fund the program. The City Council also decided to modify the City Manager's request concerning the amount of transit benefit it would provide its employees. The City Manager originally proposed that it go up to \$130/month from the existing \$70/month. City Council decided to fund the program at \$100/month. The City Council approved extending meter hours to 9 p.m.

**In the Spring of 2013, the Commonwealth provided more funding for transportation, primarily through the NVTa. The uses for these funds is illustrated in the FY2015 budget. The primary usage of the funds is to fund the infrastructure necessary to build a set of three high-capacity transitways in the City.**

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

**The Potomac Yard Metrorail Station Implementation Group (PYMIG) held a meeting on May 15, 2014. The meeting included a viewing and discussion of recently completed physical and digital models of each Build Alternative and the CSX Option in relation to their surroundings. The meeting also included a discussion of updated capital costs, factors related to each alternative, and next steps.**

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

**Construction is continuing on the Route 1 Transitway. Activities through May 3, 2014 included:**

- **Placement of additional planting soil in the southbound median**
- **Demolition of existing sidewalk and placement of concrete for the new sidewalk ramp and curbs at the right turn from Route 1 to Potomac Avenue**
- **Installation of pipes and junction boxes for street lighting**
- **Installation of conduits and junction boxes for signalization**
- **Installation of pipes for electric for the stations at Northbound Custis, Northbound Swann and Southbound Glebe**
- **Planting of trees, juniper plants, roses, and other plants**
- **Placement of mat slabs for all station platforms with the exception of the northbound station at Swann**

**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.

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

**D. CAPITAL BIKESHARE**

**On April 11, 2014, the equipment and technology supplier to Alta Bicycle Share, Public Bike System Company (PBSC) was purchased by another company. Alta Bicycle Share has been working with the new PBSC owner, Bruno Rodi, and has been assured that there are no imminent changes to any of the current services, and that service will be maintained at this time. Staff continues to monitor the transition closely and will share information on the buyer's plans for PBSC and how that will affect Alexandria and the Capital Bikeshare operations and expansion.**

**Background:** The jurisdictions that own Capital Bikeshare stations - Washington, D.C., Arlington County, the City of Alexandria, and Montgomery County have each contracted with Alta Bicycle Share to operate and maintain the Capital Bikeshare system. Alta Bicycle Share also operates bike share systems in Boston, New York City, Chicago, the Bay Area, Columbus, and Chattanooga. An equipment and technology supplier to Alta Bicycle Share is Public Bike System Company (PBSC). PBSC, located in Montreal, Canada, filed for bankruptcy protection in January 2014.

**E. PEDESTRIAN AND BICYCLE MASTER PLAN UPDATE**

**The City is completing the procurement process for hiring a consultant to conduct the Pedestrian and Bicycle Master Plan Update and Complete Streets Design Guidelines Manual. It is anticipated that the consultant work will begin in late May, 2014. On April 8, 2014, the Council approved a resolution to establish a Ad Hoc Pedestrian and Bicycle Master Plan Advisory Committee that will consist of 12 members. A request for nominations for five of the positions (3 at large citizen representatives, one design professional representative, and one business representative) was released on April 11, 2014. It is anticipated that the Advisory Group will hold its first meeting in late June 2014.**

**Background:** The City will be conducting an update of the Pedestrian and Bicycle Master Plan, and development of the Complete Streets Design Guidelines Manual starting in the Spring of 2014, continuing through late 2015. The City completed both the Transportation Master Plan, and a Pedestrian and Bicycle Mobility Plan in 2008 which is data rich and serves as an implementation tool for the Transportation Master Plan. Since that time, staff has completed many important projects to improve walking and bicycling in the City, and many more are currently underway. In 2011, the City adopted a Complete Streets Policy which expanded staff to include a full time Complete Streets Coordinator, and initiated a Capital Bikeshare Program (Bikeshare Program), both of which continue to expand citywide. Given the many pedestrian and bicycle projects and initiatives completed over the past five years, including the Bikeshare Program, as well as the adoption of the Complete Streets Policy, the City will undertake an effort to incorporate these additions into an updated Pedestrian and Bicycle Master Plan and development of a Complete Streets Design Guidelines Manual.

The purpose of this update to the City's Pedestrian and Bicycle Master Plan and development of a Complete Streets Design Guidelines Manual will be to:

- Develop a non-motorized system that addresses the needs of all users (pedestrians, bicyclists, vehicles, and transit riders) and is consistent with the Transportation Master Plan that encourages transportation options, reducing dependence on the private automobile;
- Develop both a bicycle and pedestrian network and hierarchy, based on identification of major activity centers or destinations (including existing and projected development and Metrorail and fixed transit stations); and
- Develop a framework for implementing non-motorized policies and projects citywide

#### **F. PEDESTRIAN IMPROVEMENTS TO TRANSIT STOPS STUDY**

**As a part of the City's Complete Streets program, staff will begin a study to look at bus stops along King Street and Mount Vernon Avenue and provide recommendations for upgrading bus stops up to improve pedestrian safety and comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). The study will identify accessibility improvements needed at bus stops and will prioritize the implementation of improvements based on ridership, feasibility and funding. Staff will conduct public outreach in the fall, and provide an opportunity for feedback.**