

# *City of Alexandria, Virginia*

## MEMORANDUM

DATE: NOVEMBER 2, 2011  
TO: MEMBERS OF THE TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION  
FROM: T&ES STAFF  
SUBJECT: AGENDA ITEM # 7 - STAFF UPDATES

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

**RECOMMENDATION:** That the Transportation Commission (Commission) receive the staff update.

### **A. CRYSTAL CITY-POTOMAC YARD TRANSITWAY**

The City received a grant for the Crystal City/Potomac Yard Transitway totaling \$8.5 million. The grant will be allocated to the design/build of the Route 1 Bus Rapid Transitway (BRT) between Monroe Avenue and Potomac Avenue in a dedicated transitway. This transitway will connect with the Crystal City transitway currently under final design.

The City has entered into negotiations with the preferred team based on responses to a request for proposal (RFP) completed in early October, 2011. It is anticipated that a design/build firm will be selected and under contract in November, 2011. The project will begin in Fall 2011 with construction completed in Winter 2013. To date, no funds from this grant have been spent.

Additionally, the City recently received a grant of \$990,000 from the Department of Transportation for design and construction of the stations of the BRT. This additional funding is outside of the \$8.5 million for the design and construction of the BRT transitway as noted above. The RFP for the station design will be prepared in Winter, 2011 with design to begin in early 2012 and construction to follow after design is complete. The construction of the BRT Stations will be completed by Winter 2013 in line with the opening of the Route 1 BRT Transitway.

### **B. BRAC-133 UPDATE**

- ✓ Occupancy of the BRAC-133 facility began August 9, 2011. The plans are to have 50-75 persons moved in daily, with  $\pm$  2,300 occupants by October 31,  $\pm$  another 2,600 by December 31, 2011, and the balance of  $\pm$  1,500 moved in by the end of 2012.
- ✓ VDOT is moving forward with the NEPA work by contracting for the Environmental Assessment (EA) for the Long-term Road Improvements at Seminary Road and I-395 for which they have committed \$80 million in funding. This may include a HOV/Transit Ramp at I-395 and Seminary Road, with a design/build process to expedite construction. Public information meetings will be held in conjunction with BRAC-133 Advisory Group meetings. The VDOT public hearing is scheduled for December 15, 2011.

- ✓ FHWA is moving forward with the NEPA work in the form of a Categorical Exclusion (CE) for the Short and Mid-term Road Improvements to key intersections adjacent to the Mark Center. There will be a public information meeting at the West End Community Redevelopment Center at Landmark Mall on November 3, 2011.
- ✓ Enhanced transit services in the form of express bus service provided by DASH between the King Street Metro Station (DASH) and the Mark Center, and between the Pentagon and Mark Center (WMATA) commenced in August, 2011. The Department of Defense (DoD) is subsidizing the service so their employees and contractors can ride for free, and others can ride on a fare basis. The DASH route is carrying approximately 1,000 passengers per week. The WMATA route is carrying approximately 7,000 passengers per week.
- ✓ Staff is moving forward with implementation of the Daytime Neighborhood Parking District adopted by City Council to address anticipated neighborhood parking encroachment issues resulting from the BRAC-133 facility. Over 50 block faces have been approved within the daytime parking district.

### **C. I-95/I-395 HOT LANES**

The Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) held three public hearings during the week of September 26 to discuss the new plans for the I-95/I-395 HOT Lanes. During the public hearings, VDOT described the latest version of the I-95/I-395 HOT Lanes plans. The main elements of the project are described below.

1. Provides a two-lane nine-mile extension of the exiting HOV lanes from Dumfries to Garrisonville Road in Stafford County.
2. Widens the existing I-95 HOV lanes from two to three lanes across 14 miles between the Prince William Parkway to approximately two miles north of the Springfield interchange, between Edsall Road and Duke Street.
3. Makes improvements to the existing two HOV lanes for six miles from Route 234 to the Prince William Parkway.
4. Creates a direct connection to the HOV/HOT lanes on the Capital Beltway.
5. Adds new or improved access to and from the HOV/HOT network at key interchanges, including Garrisonville Road, Joplin Road, Prince William County Parkway, Fairfax County Parkway, Franconia-Springfield Parkway, I-495, and a new ramp north of Edsall Road.

The new HOV/HOT lanes project will no longer include the originally planned construction of six miles of HOV/HOT lanes on I-395 in Alexandria or Arlington County or previously proposed upgrades to interchanges at Shirlington and Eads Street in Arlington County. Those lanes will continue to be restricted to HOV, transit, eligible hybrids and motorcycles during rush hours.

VDOT is conducting the required federal environmental review. Construction is expected to start in 2012. The City of Alexandria is not planning to hold a separate public hearing on this new version of VDOT's I-395 HOT Lanes project. This is a VDOT project and at this point VDOT is the best entity to hold hearings and to receive input.

Staff utilized the prior input and prior written City comments regarding the I-95/I-395 HOT Lanes to prepare City of Alexandria written comments with respect to this project. City staff submitted comments to VDOT on October 13, noting the following:

1. The impacts of the I-95 HOT Lanes should be assessed for facilities beyond the I-95/I-395 facility itself.
2. The impacts to residential communities adjacent to I-95/I-395 should be properly evaluated.
3. The benefits and potential adverse impacts to communities affected by the I-95/I-395 HOT Lanes should be evaluated.
4. Air quality and noise impacts should be properly mitigated.
5. Infrastructure to improve transit operations in the I-95/I-395 corridor should be provided to enhance the person throughput of the proposed facility.
6. The improvements should be implemented minimizing aesthetic impacts on adjacent land uses and minimizing the impacts to trees and existing vegetation.

With respect to City of Alexandria comments, VDOT will be reviewing the City staff comments as well comments received from Alexandria residents.