

City of Alexandria, Virginia

MEMORANDUM

DATE: JULY 11, 2012
TO: MEMBERS OF THE TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION
FROM: MARTI REINFELD, DIVISION CHIEF, TRANSIT SERVICES, T&ES
SUBJECT: AGENDA ITEM #4 – UPDATE ON DEL RAY-ARLANDRIA TROLLEY

ISSUE: Update on the Del Ray-Arlandria Trolley.

RECOMMENDATION: That the Transportation Commission receive an update on the implementation of the Del Ray-Arlandria Trolley.

DISCUSSION: As approved by City Council on June 13, 2012 the new trolley service between the King Street Metrorail Station and Del Ray-Arlandria will travel from King Street Metrorail Station, north on Commonwealth Avenue, west on Braddock Road to Braddock Road Metrorail Station, north on Mount Vernon Avenue, west on West Glebe Road, north on Russell Road, and south on Mount Vernon Avenue to return. The planned route is 4.2 miles one-way, with an estimated total travel time of 36 minutes (see Attachment 1).

City Council approved a \$700,000 annual budget for the new trolley service. In addition to describing the route in greater detail, this memorandum outlines an operating plan that is feasible within the approved budget.

Route

The new route will begin at King Street Metrorail Station and connect to the existing King Street Trolley, helping to build a ridership base on the new line and provide improved transit access for both residents and visitors between Del Ray, Arlandria, Old Town, and the Waterfront.

From the King Street Metrorail Station, the route will travel along Commonwealth Avenue, offering new service to the Rosemont neighborhood, and turn east on Braddock Road to connect to the Braddock Road Metrorail Station. Serving the Metrorail Station will provide an additional connection to hotel and office shuttles and enhance transit access to Del Ray and Arlandria for both residents and visitors from throughout the region.

From the Braddock Road Metrorail Station, the route will travel north on Mount Vernon Avenue, turn west on West Glebe Road, north on Russell Road, and south on Mount Vernon Avenue to return.

The approved route is 0.5 mile longer than the staff-recommended route (traveling along West Street). Due to the longer travel times, longer headways will be necessary in order to stay within the available budget.

Operations

The trolley will operate with 30 minute headways in order to (1) stay within the approved budget and (2) create a schedule that is easy for riders to understand. The King Street Trolley operates with 15 minute headways; riders that check the website or signage along the route know that the trolley will leave from the Metrorail Station or the waterfront on the quarter hour. Similarly, with 30 minute headways, the Del Ray-Arlandria Trolley would leave on the half hour, ensuring that riders know when the trolley will depart from its starting point and when they can expect it to arrive at their desired stop. The City preference is to provide the trolley service with hybrid or compressed natural gas (CNG) vehicles but the RFP will not exclude a low sulfuric diesel emission trolley similar to the DASH fleet.

The recommended hours of operation are Thursday and Friday from 3:00 PM – 10:30 PM and Saturday and Sunday from 11:30 AM – 10:30 PM. Offering service during peak dining and retail hours will offer both residents and visitors with an alternative to driving to, and parking in, the Del Ray and Arlandria business districts, relieving traffic congestion.

Costs

The estimated cost in FY 2013 for the operator to provide service between the King Street Metro and Mt. Vernon Avenue at Russell Road is projected to be \$640,000 (assuming start of service in November 2012). The operating cost of the trolley expansion to Del Ray and Arlandria can be covered with the \$700,000 included in the City's Transportation Improvement Program for FY 2013.

Next Steps

Staff will develop a Request for Proposals to select an operator for the new trolley service. Service is anticipated to begin in November 2012. Throughout the first year of service, staff will collect and analyze trolley and DASH ridership data. In addition, an onboard survey will be conducted in the summer of 2013 to evaluate customer satisfaction with the new service. Staff will also conduct an assessment of impacts on businesses along the trolley route. Staff will provide a periodic update to the Transportation Commission and Council on the status of the trolley's implementation, as well as after-implementation updates on the success of the service with a formal docketed report to Council in the fall of 2013.

If you have any questions, please contact Marti Reinfeld at 703.746.4061.

ATTACHMENTS:

Attachment 1: Del Ray-Arlandria Trolley Route