

# *City of Alexandria, Virginia*

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## **MEMORANDUM**

DATE: NOVEMBER 7, 2012

TO: MEMBERS OF THE TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION

FROM: SANDRA MARKS, ACTING DEPUTY DIRECTOR, T&ES

SUBJECT: AGENDA ITEM #2 - FUNDING UPDATE & ACTIONS OF MAJOR TRANSPORTATION BODIES

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**ISSUE:** Update of funding and actions of major transportation bodies.

**RECOMMENDATION:** That the Transportation Commission receive the report.

**DISCUSSION:** This memorandum provides a brief monthly update on funding and/or actions of major regional transportation bodies that relate to Alexandria.

General updates on funding-related issues of local, regional and national importance are provided below. Attachment 1 is the Commission's regular Monthly Update of Regional Transportation Board Major Actions and Funding.

### **City: City Council**

At the City Council meeting of October 23, 2012, Council adopted the FY2013 Legislative Package which included proposed legislation that would grant referendum authority to the Northern Virginia Transportation Authority (NVTA), allowing NVTA to propose transportation projects for the region to be funded by certain tax increases.

The Legislative Package also included a request for financial support for the proposed Potomac Yard Metrorail station in conjunction with any appropriation by the State for the construction of the new Metrorail Silver Line.

City Council also endorsed the use of state funds for a real-time bus information system for DASH.

### **State: Commonwealth Transportation Board (CTB)**

At its meeting of October 17, 2012, the CTB received a briefing on the results of the SJR 297 study, which proposes to change the methodology for allocating transit funding in the Commonwealth. Historically, operating assistance has been allocated based on local operating expenses. The proposed approach would provide 50% of funding based on operating expenses and ridership and 50% based on various performance measures (e.g.,

riders per revenue mile). Staff has several concerns with the proposed approach, including:

- Inability to predict future state aid and ensure budget stability;
- Integrity of data;
- Disincentive for transit providers to add service;
- Peer groups do not control for many factors (e.g., prevailing wage);

The DRPT model results have changed each time the model has been run, illustrating that the new approach is very sensitive to data. The latest run showed a slight increase in funding for the City, but that increase is not guaranteed for future years beyond FY2014.

### **State: Department of Rail and Public Transportation (DRPT)**

Under the previous federal transportation bill, the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) allocated money for commuter railroads to pay track access lease fees. VRE relied on this funding source to compensate AMTRAK for track access. MAP-21 eliminated this earmarked source of funds, although the total amount of money going to the states remains the same. If the Commonwealth does not continue to cover the cost of track access fees, VRE could experience a \$9-14M deficit in FY 2014. This deficit would likely be made up by increasing jurisdictional subsidies or significantly increasing passenger fares. DRPT has not committed to allocating the money and has told jurisdictions to request funds from the CTB.

### **Regional: Transportation Planning Board (TPB) and Northern Virginia Transportation Authority (NVTA), Northern Virginia Transportation Commission (NVTC), Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA) and Northern Virginia Regional Commission (NVRC)**

#### *Transportation Planning Board (TPB)*

TPB approved a call for new CLRP projects. The TPB also received information about electric vehicles, Capital Bikeshare, and Buses Operating on Shoulders.

#### *Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA)*

The WMATA Board approved a set of rail service standards and a strategic framework for the agency. WMATA also conducted bus service public hearings, which included modifications to Routes 7A, 7E, 7F, 7Y, 8X and 8W in Alexandria.

#### *Northern Virginia Transportation Commission (NVTC)*

NVTC received a briefing on the SJR297 proposals by DRPT by DRPT staff. They also received a status report from the WMATA General Manager.

#### *Northern Virginia Transportation Authority (NVTA)*

No NVTA meeting occurred in October, 2012. The Efficiency and Consolidation study to review the structure of transportation functions in Northern Virginia developed a draft final report which was distributed prior to the October 25, 2012 meeting of the Efficiency and Consolidation Task Force.

### **Federal: Funding Updates and Grant Notices of Awards**

Changes in the MAP-21 process for allocating track access fees could potentially have adverse impacts on VRE.