

City of Alexandria, Virginia

MEMORANDUM

DATE: FEBRUARY 6, 2013

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

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

On January 12, 2013, City Council approved an ordinance to amend the City's Transportation Master Plan so that it is consistent with the findings of the Transitway Corridors Feasibility Study and High Capacity Transit Corridor Workgroup recommendations.

At the City Council legislative meeting of January 22, 2013, the City Council adopted taxicab fare increases and asked the Traffic and Parking Board to review whether the taxicab industry should be required to offer payment by credit card for trips of a certain distance of price.

City Council also approved a proposal allowing the City to lease public parking places to private vendors for carsharing.

State: Commonwealth Transportation Board (CTB)

At its meeting of January 16, 2013, Governor McDonald addressed the CTB and provided an outline of his proposal to revise transportation funding for the Commonwealth of Virginia. The Governor's proposal would:

- eliminate the 17.5 cents gas tax;

- increase sales tax from 5.0% to 5.8%;
- increase the percentage of the sales tax that goes to transportation (from 0.5 cents to 0.75 cents over five years);
- increase vehicle registration fees by \$15; and
- impose a \$100 alternative fuel vehicle fee.

State: Department of Rail and Public Transportation (DRPT)

DRPT has opened up applications for operating and capital grants of FY2014, and the City provided an application for these funds. The City submitted applications for DASH operating assistance, DASH expansion buses, BRT-style vehicles for the Crystal City Potomac Yard Transitway, and the local funds being spent on the construction of the Route 1 Transitway.

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 received a report entitled “What do People Think about Congestion Pricing?” The study brought together 300 participants in a series of forums to solicit feedback on several pricing scenarios. A majority of participants agreed that congestion is a critical problem in the region, but were generally unaware of how transportation is funded. There was some support for a HOT-lane scenarios, which offered both choice and predictability. Participants reacted negatively, however, to a GPS-based scenario. A cordon-pricing (or area-pricing, as in London) scenario garnered some support but participants did not feel it would do enough to solve regional problems.

Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA)

The WMATA Board received preliminary information on the FY2014 budget and the amounts of subsidy required for regional jurisdictions. The WMATA Board approved a set of Bylaws, procedures, and a travel policy.

The MAP-21 Transportation Authorization introduced a change in the allocation methodology for federal transit funding. As compared to the previous authorization SAFETEA-LU, MAP-21 shifts federal transit funding toward formula grant programs – a favorable change for agencies with Metro’s operating profile. The proposed FY2014 budget include more favorable projections of federal formula program funding. The six-year plan projects that Metro’s allocation of federal formula funding will grow from approximately \$238 million in federal FY2012 to \$273 in FY2013 through FY2018.

As part of the 2008 Passenger Rail Investment and Improvement Act (PRIIA), WMATA receives a direct annual appropriation from the federal government - \$150 million a year for 10 years to make needed repairs. The proposed FY2014-2019 CIP assumes a reduction of \$12 million of the expected annual PRIIA appropriation in both FY2014 and FY2015 in anticipation of the impact of Sequestration.

Forecasted passenger fare revenues for FY2014 have been revised downward. Metro has been experiencing lower rail ridership resulting from greater than anticipated elasticity

related to the July 2012 fare increase, increases in the use of alternative commuting options such as telework, and continued economic uncertainty. Recent Congressional action to increase the federal transit benefit to \$240 per month will likely slow the ridership loss experienced in the first five months of FY2013 and have a positive impact on the FY2014 ridership and revenue projections. Metro is projecting passenger revenues to be \$14 million lower than originally projected in October.

Northern Virginia Transportation Commission (NVTC)

The NVTC Board discussed the increase in the federal transit benefit to, which resulted from the fiscal cliff legislation. The NVTC Board also discussed the transportation bills which have been proposed in the General Assembly to amend the current process for allocating transportation revenues.

Northern Virginia Transportation Authority (NVTVA)

An NVTVA meeting occurred on January 31, 2013, which discussed legislative issues and a new VDOT proposal to recommend the highest priority traffic relieving projects in the Commonwealth.

Federal: Funding Updates and Grant Notices of Awards

FTA published a new rule and released a guidance document related to New Start and Small Start funding. Key components of the rule and guidance include:

- Simpler, more straightforward approach for measuring cost-effectiveness.
- Expanded range of environmental benefits used to evaluate proposed projects.
- New economic development factors added to the rating process.
- Streamlined project evaluation process by reducing regulations.