

# City of Alexandria, Virginia

## MEMORANDUM

**DATE:** FEBRUARY 6, 2013

**TO:** MEMBERS OF THE TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION

**FROM:** MARTI REINFELD, CHIEF OF TRANSIT SERVICES, T&ES

**SUBJECT:** AGENDA ITEM #4 – WMATA STRATEGIC PLAN

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**ISSUE:** Update on the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (Metro) draft strategic plan.

**RECOMMENDATION:** That the Transportation Commission receive an update on the draft Metro strategic plan, and provide feedback to staff to incorporate into a letter to WMATA.

**DISCUSSION:** On January 24, 2013, the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (Metro) staff draft strategic plan, called Momentum, which defines the next generation of Metro. A multi-year capital rebuilding effort is currently underway to bring the regional transit system into a state of good repair. While that effort is ongoing, the agency is simultaneously beginning to plan for expansion to ensure the long-term competitiveness of the National Capital Region and to keep pace with demand from expected population growth.

Momentum reviews the primary challenges, opportunities, and accomplishments of the agency in recent years and builds the case for continued and expanded investment in the regional transit network. The plan is designed to guide Metro's decisions and business plans over the next 10 years and ensure that the system continues to support the region. The plan builds upon current regional planning documents, including:

- Region Forward 2010 (Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments vision document)
- Financially Constrained Long Range Plan 2012
- Metro's 2040 Regional Transit System Plan

Before reaching out to stakeholders, the Board established a Vision, Mission, and Goals for the agency, as described below.

### Vision

Metro moves the region forward by connecting communities and improving mobility for our customers.

## Mission

Metro provides safe, equitable, reliable, and cost-effective public transit.

## Goals

- Build and maintain a premium safety culture and system
- Meet or exceed expectations by consistently delivering quality service
- Improve regional mobility and connect communities
- Ensure financial stability and invest in our people and assets

Based on this high level strategic framework, Metro Board members and management reached out to customers, the general public, jurisdictional and federal funders, employees, and other key stakeholders for input. The most common areas of feedback were:

- As the primary circulatory system, Metro is critical to the region's future;
- Metro must continue to make both the infrastructure and the operations more reliable;
- Reduce overcrowding by increasing bus and rail capacity;
- Improve and increase customer information; and
- Ensure predictable, sustainable funding.

In addition to the stakeholder input, Metro completed a thorough review of the planned major transit projects throughout the region (including Van Dorn-Beauregard Transitway, Crystal City Potomac Yard Transitway, Potomac Yard Metrorail Station). Identifying these projects was an important component of the plan, as it allowed Metro to assess how it could leverage planned regional investments.

Based on the stakeholder feedback and planned regional projects, Metro formulated a series of initiatives to meet current demand, to prepare the system to keep up with regional investments, and to help the region maximize the return on these investments. The current estimate for all 2025 elements would increase Metro's annual funding need from \$1 billion to \$1.5 billion. These investments should be made by 2025 to have maximum impact:

- 100% 8-car trains
- Core station improvements, including underground pedestrian connections
- Infrastructure to increase Blue Line service between Pentagon and Rosslyn
- Pocket tracks, turnbacks, and interlockings
- Next generation communications infrastructure
- Full implementation of Metrobus Priority Corridor Network
- Bus service growth and emerging corridors

These planned investments will meet some of the objectives highlighted by stakeholders. Eight-car trains, for example, will add capacity and help reduce crowding on trains. Additional infrastructure to increase Blue Line service will greatly enhance mobility options for Alexandria residents and workers. Potential infrastructure solutions include a new connection between the Orange/Silver Line and Blue Line west of Rosslyn, or a second Rosslyn station. Implementing additional pocket tracks, turnbacks, and interlockings will improve Metrorail service reliability.

Even if all of the planned investments for 2025 are implemented, Metro still will not be able to keep up with the amount of projected growth that is forecast over the next 30 years. Momentum therefore also highlights Metro's planned improvements for 2040, which are currently being developed as part of the Regional Transit System Plan. The total cost of the 2040 elements is over \$25 billion (an additional \$740 million annually) and they require the implementation of the 2025 improvements as a precursor. Some of the key elements include:

- A new east-west tunnel between Rosslyn and Georgetown and a new north-south tunnel under 10<sup>th</sup> St NW and SW to alleviate congestion and increase capacity in the core
- Extension of BRT or LRT service between Maryland and Alexandria via the Woodrow Wilson Bridge. Metro's role in this project is unclear.
- Extension of MARC service into Virginia. Metro would take on a role of supporter and advocate.

To finalize the strategic plan, Metro will:

- Solicit additional feedback and endorsement from key stakeholders;
- Take the plan to the Board for approval;
- Identify a stable funding stream;
- Begin to integrate the 2025 elements into department business plans.

City staff agrees that all of the improvements outlined in the plan are necessary to support the growing demand for transit service in the region and to improve connectivity among regional activity centers. However, implementation will require significant capacity building efforts at Metro. While there have been improvements in the last few years in implementing the planned capital program, the agency still cannot keep up with the current planned improvements. Before a funding commitment is made by the region, Metro must continue to prove that it has the staff and organizational capacity to implement the 2025 and 2040 investments.