

City of Alexandria, Virginia

MEMORANDUM

DATE: MAY 8, 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 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 Public Hearing on April 13, 2013, City Council approved both the rezoning of the Beauregard Corridor and the Waterfront.

State: Commonwealth Transportation Board (CTB)

The legislature ratified the new Transportation Package with the Governor's suggestions which were:

- Addressed the Attorney General's issues of constitutionality of the Northern Virginia and Hampton Roads regional taxes. The Attorney General opined that these taxes, by being imposed in specific localities, constituted local laws related to taxation, which are prohibited by Article IV, §14(5) of the Virginia Constitution. One of the Governor's amendments says that these local taxes can be imposed in any planning district meeting certain population, vehicle registration, and transit ridership levels. Northern Virginia and Hampton Roads meet these requirements. Although no other planning districts do at this time, they could grow into them.
- Lowered the new regional transient occupancy (hotel) tax from 3% to 2%.
- Lowered the tax on the purchase of new automobiles (from 3% to 4% on July 1; rather than increase an additional 1/10 of a percent each succeeding July 1

- through 2016; it will increase 1/20 of a percent each July 1 and be capped at 4.15% on July 1, 2016).
- The grantor's tax (paid by the seller when a property is sold) will be increased by 15 cents/\$100 under the Governor's proposal. The bill passed at the end of Session proposed a 25 cent/\$100 increase.
 - The tax on hybrids and other alternative fuel vehicles is lowered from \$100/annually to \$64/annually.
 - The bill passed by the General Assembly required each Northern Virginia locality to spend at least as much on transportation in the future as it did in FY 2013. The Governor amended this requirement so that (i) state and federal grant money (e.g., money that the City is receiving for Route 1 Bus Rapid Transit) does not count as a locality expenditure; and (ii) this requirement does not apply solely to FY 2013 expenditures, but to the average annual expenditure for FY 2011-2013.
 - The bill passed by the General Assembly said that if any locality misspent its funds (e.g., spent some of the new revenues for something other than transportation), all the new taxes and revenues would expire, thus allowing one locality to disrupt the entire plan. The Governor amended the bill to say that if any locality misspends its funds, it will not receive any of the new revenues for the following year.

The CTB will release a draft six-year plan shortly and hold a public comment on May 29, 2013.

State: Department of Rail and Public Transportation (DRPT)

The General Assembly passed legislation requiring that any new transit funds be allocated based on performance, but did not dictate the process or the indicators. A committee (Transit Service Delivery Advisory Committee) (TSDAC) has been appointed to develop the performance indicators and had its first meeting on April 8, 2013.

The first meeting of TSDAC was organizational, with descriptions being provided of the current system for resource allocation and that proposed by SJR297. Discussion was held about what types of performance indicators should be used. DRPT staff indicated that developing groupings of transit providers, similar to that proposed in SJR297 was preferable. All outside members of the committee indicated that it was impossible to develop relatively homogeneous groups of similar transit providers in Virginia. There was too much variation in the properties to make this choice defensible. As an alternative, it was proposed that criteria be established to show progress towards a transit authority's own goals.

The April 22, 2013 TSDAC meeting discussed several items. The first was a discussion of the outcome which is being sought. This matrix is looking at the amount of transit service quality which is sought to be provided and the amount of effectiveness and efficiency used in providing transit services. In a similar fashion it was asked whether the key outcomes/objectives for transit are: [1] Increase congestion relief; [2] Increase transit dependent options and reliability; and [3] Increase economic development with transit options). A discussion was held regarding other possible factors. The committee further discussed possible ways of allocating funds. There appear to be three primary

methods:

- An allocation structure similar to SJR297 which employs peer groups within Virginia.
- An allocation structure using a self-comparison
- An allocation structure employing national standards

Staff also provided an asset management presentation, and the committee discussed options for the timing of awards of FY2014 funds.

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)

At the April 17, 2013 TPB meeting, the Board was briefed by TPB staff that under MAP-21 funds need to be allocated in response to sets of performance metrics. Also, 25% of CMAQ funds going to this area must be used to improve PM2.5 (particulate matter of 2.5 microns in diameter) emissions. The TPB Board received a presentation from WMATA which indicated the efforts WMATA is taking to increase Metrobus ridership. The Board also received a presentation on a revised Aspirations Scenario, which needed to be modified due to several changes since it was first disseminated. The TPB has been developing a series of scenarios to predict changes in various demographic, economic, and travel factors as a result of hypothetical land use and transportation scenarios. This is the latest one, involving BRT routes on most major limited access roads, and turning some limited access roads into toll roads. One of the provisions in MAP-21 prohibits the conversion of existing free lanes to toll lanes, making the old Aspirations scenario invalid.

Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA)

The WMATA Board passed its FY2014 operating and capital budget. The capital budget included additional funds to build the replacement bus garage for the WMATA Royal Street garage, since the Virginia Supreme Court ruled in WMATA's favor on April 18, 2013, and the garage construction can proceed.

Northern Virginia Transportation Commission (NVTC)

At the NVTC meeting on April 4, 2013, VRE projects were discussed, including a pedestrian tunnel from Alexandria Union station to the King St-Old Town Metrorail station. The preliminary feasibility study indicates that more funds are needed to build it, than originally projected. More grant funds have tentatively identified to fill this gap, but a local match is required. Alexandria will place this request in our regional NVTA request. New transportation legislation was also reviewed. Progress on the Crystal City-Potomac Yard Transitway was provided in a written staff update.

Northern Virginia Transportation Authority (NVTA)

The NVTA Board met on April 25, 2013, and received a briefing by Secretary of Transportation Sean Connaughton. A brief summary was provided of the new transportation bill which was signed by the Governor. NVTA organized itself into five

working groups to implement the new transportation legislation. They are Financial, Legal, Project Implementation, Public Outreach, and Organizational. NVTA staff had collected a set of projects which would be candidates for FY2014 funds. These were referred to the Project Implementation and Legal working groups. The City's projects are listed below. The regional project listing is attached to this item.

- DASH bus expansion- Five buses at \$650,000 per bus (3.25M) to provide additional service and increased headways to regional centers including BRAC-133 at Mark Center and VRE Station at King Street
- AMTRAK/VRE Parking Lot Improvements- Pave the gravel lot at Union Station to increase access to the VRE/Amtrak station
- Traffic Signal Upgrades/Transit Signal Priority- Upgrade signals and install queue jumps on major arterials including Duke and Beauregard to include Transit Signal Pre-emption. This project scalable. (\$500-\$750 per corridor)
- Shelters and Real-Time transit information for DASH/WMATA- Real time transit data infrastructure at 25 high ridership stops. This project is scalable- \$25,000 per location.
- Potomac Yard EIS- Funding for additional work associated with the Potomac Yard EIS
- VRE/King Street Metrorail Pedestrian Tunnel- Local match for pedestrian tunnel project- \$1.3M

Federal: Funding Updates and Grant Notices of Awards

The federal announced that another round of TIGER funds will be available for major projects of over \$10 million. These grants must be filed by June 3, 2013.