City of Alexandria, Virginia

MEMORANDUM

DATE: JULY 10, 2013

TO: MEMBERS OF THE TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION

FROM: MARTI REINFELD, DIVISION CHIEF, TRANSIT DIVISION, TRANSPORTATION & ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES

SUBJECT: AGENDA ITEM #4 – ROUTE 1 TRANSITWAY UPDATE AND BRANDING

ISSUE: Update on the Route 1 Transitway Corridor (Crystal City/Potomac Yard Transitway) Design/Build Project.

RECOMMENDATION: That the Transportation Commission receives the attached update on the project including: the Transitway, the Station Concept design elements, and the branding of the service.

Background:

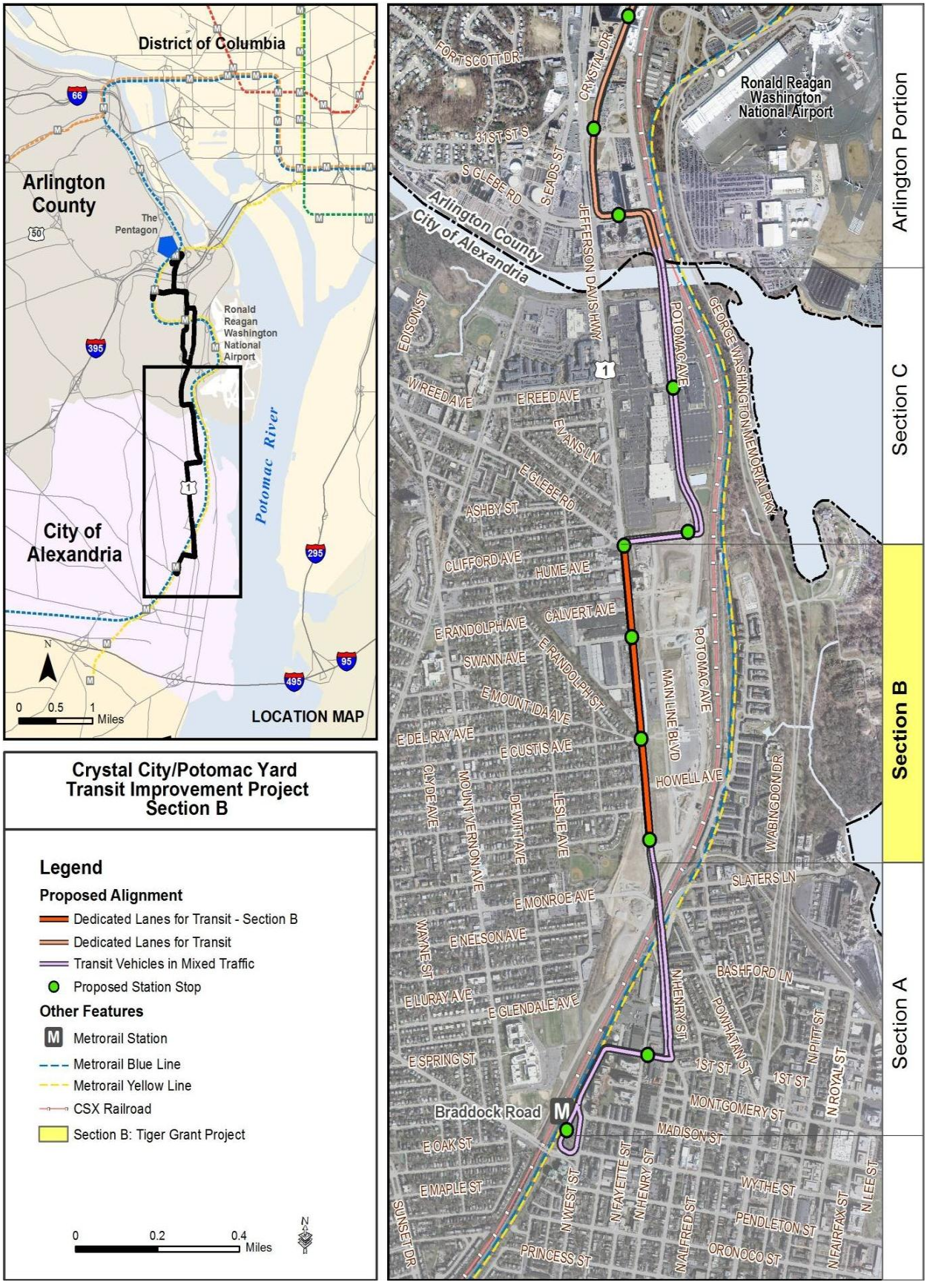
Since 1999, the City of Alexandria and Arlington County have been working jointly to develop and implement improved transit services in the Crystal City/Potomac Yard area based on recommendations of the *Crystal City/Potomac Yard Area Transportation Study*. In March 2003, the *Crystal City/Potomac Yard Transit Corridor Alternatives Analysis* was completed, which recommended that the project should be advanced with bus rapid transit (BRT) as the locally preferred alternative. This concept was further refined during the *Crystal City/Potomac Yard Transit Corridor Interim Transit Improvement Project*, completed in December 2005.

Design and construction of the Transitway between the Pentagon City and Braddock Road Metrorail stations is underway. The five-mile corridor will offer reliable, premium transit service by providing dedicated transit lanes, frequent service, transit signal priority, off-board fare collection, level boarding, boarding at all doors, and real-time passenger information. The service will be operated by WMATA and will be the first BRT service implemented in the metropolitan Washington region.

Project Description:

The Crystal City/Potomac Yard corridor runs north-south between Pentagon City and Braddock Road Metrorail stations. **Figure 1** shows the project location in a broader, regional context; as well as an enlarged view of the alignment within the City of Alexandria. The City is currently constructing a 0.8 mile segment of the Transitway along Route 1 between Potomac Avenue and East Glebe Road where transit will operate in dedicated lanes. In the interim alignment, buses will operate in mixed traffic in the portions of the Transitway both north and south of the dedicated lanes.

Figure 1: Transitway Alignment



This project required the widening of Route 1 northbound to the east (currently being completed by the Potomac Yard South developer). The former northbound lanes are being repurposed for the Transitway and will be dedicated for transit-only usage. Landscape medians are located on either side of the transit-only lanes (**Figure 2**) and designed to enhance the pedestrian and transit user experience. The median will be reduced at specific intersections to allow for a left turn lane in either direction from the northbound and southbound general purpose lanes. The transit stations are located in the medians on either side of the Transitway.

Figure 2: Cross Section of Route 1

Construction of the Transitway is anticipated to be substantially complete by Winter 2013/2014. Start of the new premium transit service will be coordinated with the opening of the Arlington County portion of the Transitway in Spring/Summer 2014. Existing service in the corridor (e.g., Metrobus 9A) will be able to begin utilizing the dedicated lanes – and benefitting from reduced travel times – as soon as construction is complete and the Transitway is accepted by the City.

Branding of the Corridor

City of Alexandria, Arlington County, and WMATA staff have been cooperating on an effort to develop a branding scheme for the corridor and for the new premium transit service that will operate along the Transitway. WMATA retained Pulsar Advertising to conduct the study and to develop a brand identity that would communicate the unique attributes of the service. The brand could be expanded throughout the region as premium transit service is implemented in other jurisdictions.

Pulsar developed several naming concepts for the service and the corridor based on interviews with members of a study group and background research on existing WMATA and regional transit brands. Following feedback from the study group, Pulsar proposed design schemes for the vehicles for each concept. These elements were then tested with three focus groups: corridor riders, regional riders, and jurisdictional stakeholders.

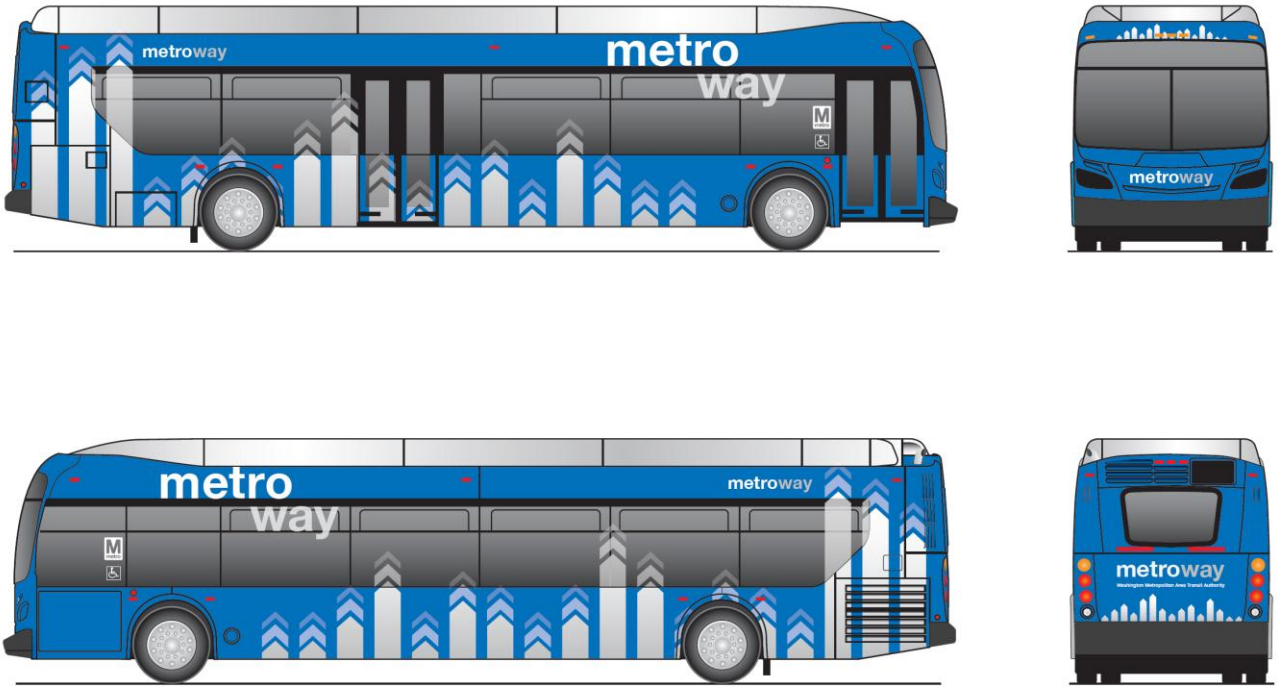
Pulsar further refined the branding concepts based on the feedback received from the focus groups and staff. Beginning in March 2013, WMATA hosted an online survey to solicit broader feedback on the proposed concepts. The survey was completed by 3,717 respondents, 18 percent of whom were from the City.

Key takeaways from the online survey included:

- **Service Names:** Respondents preferred the name *MetroWay*, which conveys dedicated lanes, frequent service, and a fast or convenient "way."
- **Vehicle Designs:** Respondents showed a clear preference for the color blue, which is often associated with comfort, stability, and reliability.
- **Station Signage:** Respondents preferred signage that features the Metro "M."
- **Corridor Name:** Respondents preferred geographically-based corridor names that identify where the service runs.

Based on feedback from the online survey and in coordination with the study group, Pulsar developed a recommended branding scheme (**Figure 3**) featuring the name *MetroWay*, with a bold blue vehicle design using an implied arrow motif. The solid color easily distinguishes the vehicle from other services in the area, while the implied arrow expresses movement using an iconic design that will be easily recognizable as part of a marketing campaign. The branding concept represented in the vehicle design will be extended to station signage and a marketing campaign.

Figure 3: Recommended Branding Scheme for Transitway



Transitway Station Platforms

There are eight transitway station locations in the City of Alexandria. Design elements and passenger amenities improve both the rider and pedestrian experience and are a critical component of the operation of the new transit service.

1. **Off-board fare collection:** Riders will pay their fare before boarding the vehicle, using a proof of payment system and periodic enforcement checks through the corridor. This will allow for passengers to board all doors of the vehicle, decreasing vehicle dwell times at the stations and resulting in a more efficient service and shorter

travel times. Off-board fare collection equipment on the station platforms will be fully integrated with the regional SmartTrip card. Additional equipment will be provided that accepts coins and credit cards. WMATA will provide one FTE for fare enforcement along the Transitway.

2. **Real-time passenger information**: Transitway stations will include electronic signage displaying predictions about bus arrival times, as well as system or emergency information, as needed. Real-time information displays attract riders by providing greater and more reliable information.
3. **Near-level boarding:** The station platform height is set at 10-inches (rather than 6-inches as a regular curb). This additional height reduces the need for the vehicle to kneel to allow passengers to board, thus reducing dwell times at stations and improving the efficiency of the service.
4. **High visibility crosswalks:** The crosswalks within the dedicated portion of the Transitway and adjacent to Transitway stations, will include colored (brick red) concrete. The crosswalks will be 10 feet wide and will be lit to an average 2.0 foot candle to ensure visibility and a safe pedestrian environment (**Figure 4**).
5. **Pedestrian signals:** The existing pedestrian signal call buttons will be upgraded to allow for audible message capability rather than audible chirping.
6. **Colored concrete:** Colored concrete will distinguish the Transitway from the surrounding roadway. A representation of rail lines from the rail yard will be incorporated at Transitway stations (**Figure 4**).

Figure 4: Station Overview