

City of Alexandria, Virginia

MEMORANDUM

DATE: NOVEMBER 19, 2014
TO: MEMBERS OF THE TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION
FROM: T&ES STAFF
SUBJECT: AGENDA ITEM # 2 – ITEMS FOR CONSENT

ISSUE: Staff update to Transportation Commission on various ongoing projects.

RECOMMENDATION: That the Commission receive the items for consent.

A. FUNDING UPDATE

Washington Area Metropolitan Transit Authority (WMATA) and Northern Virginia Transportation Commission (NVTC) continue to hold meetings with regional partners in October and November to review substantive issues regarding the WMATA Capital Funding Agreement to fund WMATA capital activities from FY 2016 through FY 2020. Meetings among the jurisdictional partners will be scheduled weekly to develop this agreement. The fifth agenda item for this Transportation Commission meeting describes the Metro 2025 program, which is the subject of these deliberations.

On October 14, 2014, City Council approved a resolution to accept some of the Northern Virginia Transportation Authority (NVTA) regional transportation 70 percent funds awarded in FY 2014, in preparation for a formal application later in the year. Current plans are to file this application and have it considered by the NVTA Board on December 11, 2014. NVTA is evaluating all projects proposed with the evaluation methodology approved on October 9, 2014. The initial results are forecasted to be released at the December 11, 2014 NTVA meeting.

The Commonwealth has been collecting less funding for transportation than originally projected. As a consequence, the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) and the Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transportation (DRPT) have developed a modified six-year improvement plan. The Commonwealth Transportation Board (CTB) held a set of hearings on these proposed modifications to the Six-Year Plan, as well as to determine transportation needs for the Commonwealth. Based upon the results of the hearing, VDOT passed an amended Six Year Improvement Plan on November 12, 2014. While this plan retained funding for all of the key programs affecting Alexandria in FY 2015, cuts in funding are forecasted in future years.

B. POTOMAC YARD METORAIL STATION EIS

The Draft Environmental Impact Statement is nearing completion. The City, WMATA,

the Federal Transit Administration (FTA), and the National Park Service are currently reviewing the document and it will be released to the public early next year.

Background: The Potomac Yard Metrorail Station project is an infill Metrorail station located between the National Airport and Braddock Road Metrorail stations on the Blue and Yellow lines in the vicinity of the Potomac Yard Development.

For more information on the project, please visit www.alexandriava.gov/potomacyard.

C. METROWAY (ROUTE 1)

Metroway service continues between the Braddock Road and Crystal City Metrorail stations and ridership remains strong with daily ridership at 30 percent above the average daily ridership on the 9S route, which Metroway replaced. Staff is continuing to work on implementing additional elements including real-time bus arrival information and off-board fare collection. Phase 2 of the Crystal City Potomac Yard Transitway is scheduled to open next spring when the dedicated lanes from the Arlington County line to the Crystal City Metrorail Station are complete.

Background: During the first round of TIGER grants, the City received \$8.5 million to design and construct the Route 1 Transitway between Monroe Avenue and East Glebe Road. The City compiled additional grant funding and \$5.2 million in local funding to design/construct various elements of the Transitway project. The total cost of the Transitway including vehicles is approximately \$20 million.

For more information on the Route 1 Transitway project please see visit:
<http://www.alexandriava.gov/tes/info/default.aspx?id=58644>

D. WEST END TRANSITWAY (WET)

At the October 15, 2014 Transportation Commission meeting, Chairman Macek asked about whether 50 percent of transit lanes in the West End Transitway would need to be dedicated lanes in order for the project to receive FTA funding. In response, staff researched this requirement and found that it applies only to FTA New Starts applications. The proposed funding source for the West End Transitway is Small Starts funding, not New Starts funding, and for Small Starts funding there is not a minimum percentage requirement for dedicated transit lanes.

A public meeting was held on October 22, 2014, attended by approximately 35 people, and included an introductory presentation, followed by two breakout sessions, and concluded with a report out from each group. The consultant team is preparing a memo that will include the feedback gathered at the public meeting. The primary areas of concern included: congestion and parking near the intersection of Sanger and Van Dorn, incorporating land use and transportation considerations, person throughput as an important evaluation measure, and frequent service connecting the major transit centers along the corridor.

The third Policy Advisory Group (PAG) meeting was held on October 23, 2014 and focused on the technical information presented at the public meeting and the feedback

from the public. In addition, the PAG supported the proposal to remove the stop at Edsall / Van Dorn and add two other stations: Pickett / Van Dorn and Stevenson / Van Dorn. The benefits of the two stations include: less property acquisition, improved pedestrian access to existing and proposed development, and better station spacing along the corridor. The next PAG meeting will be held on Thursday, December 18, 2014 from 6:30 to 8:30 P.M.

A pop-up information session was held on Sunday morning November 9, 2014 at the Queen of the Apostles academy and was attended by approximately 40 people. The primary audience was Spanish-speaking residents from along the corridor. The flyer advertising the pop-up session, project handout, and presentation was presented in Spanish. Attendees were very engaged and provided feedback about the project and the elements most important to them.

A briefing on the West End Transitway was provided at the Eisenhower West Small Area Plan Steering Committee meeting on Monday, November 10, 2014. The theme of the Steering Committee was transportation and included updates about other transportation planning initiatives in the Study Area.

Background: In December 2013, the City kicked off an Alternatives Analysis / Environmental Assessment (AA/EA) for the West End Transitway (also referred to as Corridor C) as part of the Federal NEPA Process. The AA/EA will analyze and refine the alignment as defined by the CWG and City Council and to identify any impacts and potential mitigation associated with the recommended alternative. The study is partially funded by a grant from the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) and is the first step towards applying for a federal Small Starts grant for project design and construction.

For more information on the West End Transitway, please visit:
<http://www.alexandriava.gov/westendtransitway>

E. LOWER KING STREET MULTIMODAL FEASIBILITY STUDY

Since the May 29 public meeting, where four functional alternatives were presented, staff has refined alternatives to incorporate public input, and prepared an additional alternative that would open the street to traffic, and include widening of the sidewalks while still preserving some on-street parking. Staff has presented the refined alternatives to representatives of the Old Town Civic Association on August 11, 2014, to representatives of the business community on October 1, 2014, to the Old Town Business and Professional Association on October 21, 2014, and to the Old Town Civic Association on November 12, 2014. The report will be finalized in 2014 and provided to the Transportation Commission when completed. Funding for a specific alternative will not be requested until the Old Town Area Parking Study Work Group has reconvened and reviewed results from a recently completed study of an 85-block area of Old Town to document existing, on-and off-street public parking, to assess utilization.

Background: In response to the Waterfront Commission recommendation on the Union Street Corridor Study, the City began the Lower King Street Multimodal Feasibility Study in January 2014. The purpose of the study is to analyze and identify impacts associated with various shared street concepts for the 100 block (Union to Lee Streets) of King Street,

including limited vehicular access, and improved pedestrian access. The study will identify traffic and circulation improvements, operational and maintenance needs, an implementation timetable and process, and budgetary requirements to convert the 100 block of King Street into a shared street to allow the public to enjoy as a meeting and gathering place, and for dining, shopping, and a range of programmed activities. The study will be coordinated with the other projects in the vicinity including the unit block of King Street. The study will include an analysis of circulation (vehicular, pedestrian, bicycle), trolley access, bus (including tour bus) circulation and pick up/drop off, loading access, parking (on-street, garage access, valet, passenger drop off/pick-up areas), and emergency vehicle access.

F. PEDESTRIAN AND BICYCLE MASTER PLAN UPDATE

The project consultant, Toole Design Group, has completed an analysis of existing conditions, and has received initial feedback on issues and needs through an online survey and wikimap, through a public meeting held on September 30, 2014, and through a meeting with the Ad Hoc Pedestrian and Bicycle Master Plan Advisory Committee (Ad Hoc Committee) on October 9, 2014. The consultant is in the process of developing draft pedestrian and bicycle goals and objectives, and developing a progress report to show what projects, goals and benchmarks have been completed since the 2008 Pedestrian and Bicycle Mobility Plan was completed. The next Ad Hoc Committee meeting will occur on December 3, 2014.

Background: The City is conducting an update of the Pedestrian and Bicycle Master Plan, and development of the Complete Streets Design Guidelines, which will be completed in late 2015. The City completed both the Transportation Master Plan, and a Pedestrian and Bicycle Mobility Plan in 2008 which is data rich and serves as an implementation tool for the Transportation Master Plan. Since that time, staff has completed many important projects to improve walking and bicycling in the City, and many more are currently underway. In 2011, the City adopted a Complete Streets Policy which expanded staff to include a full time Complete Streets Coordinator, and initiated a Capital Bikeshare Program (Bikeshare Program), both of which continue to expand citywide. Given the many pedestrian and bicycle projects and initiatives completed over the past five years, including the Bikeshare Program, as well as the adoption of the Complete Streets Policy, the City will undertake an effort to incorporate these additions into an updated Pedestrian and Bicycle Master Plan and development of a Complete Streets Design Guidelines.

The purpose of this update to the City's Pedestrian and Bicycle Master Plan and development of a Complete Streets Design Guidelines will be to:

- Develop a non-motorized system that addresses the needs of all users (pedestrians, bicyclists, vehicles, and transit riders) and is consistent with the Transportation Master Plan that encourages transportation options, reducing dependence on the private automobile;
- Develop both a bicycle and pedestrian network and hierarchy, based on identification of major activity centers or destinations (including existing and projected development and Metrorail and fixed transit stations); and
- Develop a framework for implementing non-motorized policies and projects citywide

More information is available at: www.alexandriava.gov/pedbikeplan

G. EISENHOWER WEST TRANSPORTATION STUDY

The transportation study consultant is continuing to analyze multimodal bridge options, which have been narrowed to five alignment options. Staff has met with a number of property owners that may be affected by the bridge alignment options. Over the winter, the consultant will be analyzing the 2040 baseline alternative. A steering committee meeting was held on November 10, 2014 where staff presented an update on the West End Transitway, an update on existing transportation conditions, and analysis of the multimodal bridge. The next community meeting will occur on December 8, 2014 at 7:00 P.M. at Beatley Central Library.

Background: The Eisenhower West Transportation Study is being conducted in conjunction with the Eisenhower West Small Area Plan (SAP). A Steering Committee has been formed for the SAP and Transportation Study to provide guidance on various issues, including the identification of future land use thresholds within the SAP area. The Transportation Study began in spring 2014 and is anticipated to be complete by spring 2015. The Transportation Study will serve as the transportation element/analysis of the SAP, which will include the analysis of various land use scenarios to be further explored in the SAP, and will conduct additional analysis of the multi-modal bridge concept that was recommended in the Landmark/Van Dorn Corridor Plan (adopted in 2009) to identify a more specific alignment. The multi-modal bridge would provide a direct connection between the Van Dorn Metrorail station and Pickett Street, and serve future anticipated development. In addition, the Transportation Study will include an update to the 1993 Clermont Avenue Interchange with I-95 Environmental Assessment (EA). The update will re-analyze a “No Build” alternative of the Clermont Avenue connector (Eisenhower Avenue to Duke Street) to determine if the connector is still needed, based on current planned land uses and transportation improvements.

More information is available at: www.alexandriava.gov/eisenhowerwest