

City of Alexandria, Virginia

MEMORANDUM

DATE: APRIL 15, 2015

TO: MEMBERS OF THE TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION

FROM: SANDRA MARKS, DEPUTY DIRECTOR, T&ES

SUBJECT: AGENDA ITEM # 7 – EISENHOWER WEST SMALL AREA PLAN /
TRANSPORTATION STUDY

ISSUE: Provide an update to the Transportation Commission of the Eisenhower West Small Area Plan and Transportation Study.

RECOMMENDATION: That the Commission receive the following update and confirm consistency with the Transportation Master Plan.

BACKGROUND: The City is conducting the Eisenhower West Small Area Plan (SAP), and related Eisenhower West Transportation Study. The FY 2014 Interdepartmental Work Program approved by City Council on May 29, 2013 identified the Eisenhower West SAP as the next major land use planning effort which began in Spring 2014, with an anticipated completion and Council approval scheduled for late 2015. City Council directed staff to begin this initiative in order to have an up-to-date plan for how the area can take advantage of its location near transit and regional road networks, and improve connectivity and the quality of life in the plan area. The Eisenhower West SAP is a long range plan for the southwest portion of the City (bounded by the city boundaries on the west and south, Holmes Run to the east, and Duke and S. Pickett Streets to the north, see **Attachment 1**) that will result in a new plan that outlines the community's vision for Eisenhower West and steps to achieving this vision. The SAP will include a land use plan, a framework of roads, bicycle/pedestrian connections and parks, community facilities, and implementation strategies.

Eisenhower West Transportation Study

Prior to the launch of the Eisenhower West Small Area Planning effort, T&ES began the associated Eisenhower West transportation study which includes the following key components:

- 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;
- Conduct additional analysis of the Multi-modal bridge concept that was recommended in the Landmark/Van Dorn Corridor Plan (adopted in 2009);

The transportation study boundary is much more extensive than the Small Area Plan boundary, and is bordered by the city boundary to the south, Holland Lane to the east, Duke Street to the north, and the city boundary to the west (See **Attachment 1**).

Eisenhower West Steering Committee

The City Manager appointed 12 members of the community to the Eisenhower West Small Area Plan Steering Committee, which was established by City Council on December 10, 2013. The Committee will provide guidance on the Eisenhower West Small Area Plan process, specifically focusing on the civic engagement process, agenda setting, outreach and communications, and some technical content elements, such as the project scope as well as development scenarios for consideration in the Eisenhower West Transportation Study. Commissioner Wasowski is the Transportation Commission representative on the Steering Committee.

Civic Engagement

The City has held to date a total of ten (10) Steering Committee meetings, all of which are open to the public, and five (5) community meetings. The input from the meetings will play an integral part in drafting the final plan.

DISCUSSION: The transportation study will include an analysis of existing conditions, 2040 baseline conditions (which includes only approved or programmed transportation improvements and land uses), and 2040 build conditions. It will ultimately identify the impacts associated with each scenario, and will identify the multi-modal transportation improvements needed for the Build scenario, including a proposed street network, pedestrian and bicycle facilities / connections, and transit improvements.

Existing Conditions

The existing conditions report summarizes an extensive review of the current state of the traffic operating conditions, transportation infrastructure (including pedestrian and bicycle facilities), transit service (bus and Metrorail), and freight and passenger railroad operations. In general, the study area has limited connectivity due to major east-west barriers including Backlick Run, the Norfolk Southern railroad, the CSX railroad, and Interstate 495. These barriers limit north-south connectivity for both vehicles and non-motorized users. Connectivity is also inhibited due to large superblocks and a general lack of a street grid, with the exception of the Cameron Station neighborhood. The Van Dorn metrorail station has approximately 3,400 discreet riders per weekday (equivalent to about 6,800 trips per weekday). Approximately 70% of daily riders arrive by car (personal, or dropped off), or shuttle. There is little additional room to accommodate more of these types of riders, as the existing parking lot at the Van Dorn Station is at capacity. There is also limited capacity for additional shuttles. Future density in land use surrounding the station would likely be able to be accommodated within the station. Therefore, the best way to accommodate additional riders to the station would be through conversion of existing vehicular trips to walking, biking and bus. Improving pedestrian and bicycle connectivity from surrounding areas to the station would help to encourage access to the station for these modes.

The results of the traffic analyses of the existing traffic operations during the AM and PM peak hours show that most intersections, overall, operate at satisfactory levels of service (that is, level

of service (LOS) D or better). However, many of these intersections still have minor street approaches or individual turning movements that operate worse than LOS D.

The Existing Conditions report is available at

[http://www.alexandriava.gov/uploadedFiles/planning/info/EisenhowerWest/EWTS%20Existing%20Cond%20Rpt%20-%20REV%20FINAL%20-%202001.21.2015%20\(1\).pdf](http://www.alexandriava.gov/uploadedFiles/planning/info/EisenhowerWest/EWTS%20Existing%20Cond%20Rpt%20-%20REV%20FINAL%20-%202001.21.2015%20(1).pdf)

2040 Baseline Conditions

The 2040 baseline traffic conditions report is in the process of being completed, which will identify the traffic impacts associated with planned and approved transportation improvements and land uses assumed to be completed by the year 2040. A series of transportation improvements are assumed in the 2040 baseline model, that have a direct impact to traffic operations, including:

- Transitway corridors A (Route 1 Metroway), B (Duke Street) and C (West End Transitway);
- Improved transit service frequencies recommended in the DASH Comprehensive Operations Analysis, and proposed transit circulators (Van Dorn circulator; Eisenhower East circulator) recommended in the DASH Comprehensive Operations Analysis;
- Planned roadway and transit projects including:
 - Eisenhower Avenue improvements (near Holland Lane)
 - Future High Street
 - Multimodal bridge
 - Intersection improvements at S. Pickett / Edsall Road
 - Elizabeth Lane extension
 - Farrington Avenue connection to Edsall Road
 - Roadway grid identified in the Landmark Van Dorn Corridor Plan (Pickett Place)
 - Existing developer mitigation projects, including intersection improvements at Van Dorn Street at Edsall Road, and Van Dorn Street at S. Pickett Street;

The draft 2040 Baseline conditions report has been completed and is being reviewed by the City and Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT). It is anticipated that the 2040 Baseline Conditions report will be finalized by early May 2014.

2040 Build Conditions

The 2040 future build conditions analysis will be completed after the 2040 Baseline conditions is completed. The 2040 Build model will include the transportation improvements identified in the 2040 Baseline, and will build in additional proposed land uses and streets. Through the civic engagement process, the project has developed a draft land use, a street network, and proposed bicycle and pedestrian improvements for the Small Area Plan. These are shown in **Attachments 2 thru 4**. The primary streets within the future street network will be included in the 2040 Build model. The results of the traffic analysis will provide a preliminary measure to determine if additional transportation improvements are needed to support the proposed land use, and or if a lower intensity land use scenario is needed for additional analysis. The 2040 Build analysis is anticipated to be completed in Summer 2015.

Multimodal Bridge Analysis

A multi-modal bridge was proposed in the 2008 Landmark Van Dorn Corridor Plan. Extensive field work and analysis was conducted to identify potential alignments for a future multimodal bridge. The analysis will ultimately identify a preferred alignment and cross-section for the multimodal bridge. The purpose of the multimodal bridge is to provide improved pedestrian, bicycle and transit connectivity between the Van Dorn Metrorail station, and areas to the north of the Norfolk Southern railroad, including Cameron Station and future development areas. The analysis initially identified seven alignment options, which were then narrowed to five alignment options because two of the options did not improve pedestrian and bicycle connectivity.

The bridge is assumed to include one transit lane in each direction, which would be the future routing of the West End Transitway, sidewalks on both sides of the bridge, and an enhanced bicycle corridor. In addition, the bridge could potentially include a general purpose travel lane in each direction. The maximum width of the bridge would be approximately 100 feet. Preliminary traffic analysis was conducted to determine the likely traffic impacts associated with allowing general purpose traffic to use the bridge. The analysis determined that approximately 11,000 vehicles per day would use the bridge, and would provide some benefit to the intersection of Eisenhower Avenue and Van Dorn Street. For the purpose of evaluation, it is assumed that the bridge will include one general purpose lane in each direction. The project team has met with all of the potential affected property owners to discuss impacts and their plans, and the alignment options are in the process of being evaluated using criteria related to walkability and bikeability, traffic / transportation, environmental, property impacts and cost. In addition, Norfolk Southern Railroad is also reviewing the alignment options to determine any impact to the railroad's near or long term operations plans. The bridge alignment analysis is anticipated to be completed by early May, 2015. The multimodal bridge options are shown in **Attachment 5**.

Next Steps

The City will be completing the 2040 Baseline conditions, and multi-modal bridge analysis over the next month, and then begin the 2040 Build scenario analysis. A Steering Committee meeting is scheduled for April 27, 2015, which will focus on open space and infrastructure (stormwater, sewer and energy). Another future Steering Committee, likely in May (date to be determined) will focus on transportation issues. A community meeting is scheduled for July 2015, which will present the draft plan.

ATTACHMENTS:

- Eisenhower West boundaries
- Eisenhower West proposed land use concept (Draft)
- Eisenhower West proposed street network (Draft)
- Eisenhower West proposed bicycle facility network (Draft)
- Multimodal Bridge Alignment Options