

City of Alexandria, Virginia

MEMORANDUM

DATE: MAY 11, 2015
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) – WMATA continues to hold meetings to discuss the proposed FY 2016 Operating and Capital Budgets, which were proposed in December 2014, and since modified. A public hearing was held at WMATA’s offices on April 7, 2015. This hearing was held to gather testimony for the following items: the pricing of a few Metrorail station parking lots is proposed to be changed; the TransitLink card is proposed to be eliminated; and the proposed Capital Improvement Plan is being reviewed. No serious concerns were voiced. WMATA is proposing to adopt its budget on May 28, 2015.

WMATA continues to hold discussions with regional funding partners to determine the capital funding for FY 2016, and if a Comprehensive Funding Agreement (CFA) should be signed at this time.

Northern Virginia Transportation Authority (NVTA) - NVTA approved the FY 2015 and FY 2016 recommendations for funding 70% projects which are regionally significant on April 23, 2015. The following amounts were approved for Alexandria projects in FY 2015 and FY 2016:

- Potomac Yard Metrorail station - \$1,500,000
- West End Transitway - \$2,400,000
- Implementation of Transit Signal Priority (TSP) on Duke Street - \$190,000

Virginia House Bill 2 (HB 2) - The Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) staff continued developing proposals for a rating system for major projects funded by Commonwealth funds as prescribed by HB2.

House Bill Two (HB2) is about investing limited tax dollars in the right projects that meet the most critical transportation needs in Virginia. At the heart of the new law is scoring projects based on an objective process that involves public engagement and input. Once projects are

scored, the Commonwealth Transportation Board (CTB) will have the best information possible to select the right projects for funding.

The following are the guiding principles for HB 2 measures:

- Analyze what matters to people and has a meaningful effect
- Ensure fair and accurate benefit-cost analysis
- Transparent and understandable
- Must work for both urban and rural areas
- Must work for all modes of transportation
- Minimizes overlap measures

The following were comments which have been developed to review VDOT's current HB 2 proposal:

- **Clarifications need to be made in who can submit project nominations for HB 2 funds.**
 - Projects must be in Corridors of Statewide Significance, Regional Networks, and Urban Development Areas.
 - Can localities submit for all types of funding?
 - What are the boundaries of Corridors of Statewide Significance?
 - Who are regional entities and what are their roles?
- **Evaluation measures**
 - Congestion mitigation
 - Since this factor must be the highest rated measure in Northern Virginia, it is necessary to establish exactly which model must be used, which must be normalized throughout the Commonwealth.
 - A definition of peak hour is needed.
 - Safety
 - While fatalities and severe injuries are important criteria, safety should not be limited to these factors
 - Environmental Quality
 - Economic Development
 - Accessibility
 - Regional transportation and land use.
- **Weighing Schemes**
 - Northern Virginia is very different from the rest of the Commonwealth.
- **The cost-benefit analysis required by HB 2 should only use the cost of state funding from HB2.**
- **Analysis Required if there is a Change in Scope**
 - Policy Guide's threshold for rescoring is 10% of the total cost, for the largest projects, with a total cost of at least \$5 million.
 - This threshold may be too low in Northern Virginia, which has many very large projects.

Commonwealth Transportation Board (CTB) - VDOT and the Department of Rail and Public Transportation (DRPT) have evaluated the proposals for grant funding for FY 2016. These are contained in a draft Six-Year Program, which was approved by the CTB on April 15, 2015. The CTB held its Northern Virginia public hearing on the program at the VDOT Northern Virginia offices on April 28, 2015, and the Chair of the Transportation Commission

provided the City's comments. The CTB is currently planning to adopt the final Six-Year Program on June 16, 2015.

FY 2016 – 2025 Capital Improvement Program (CIP) – The City Council held their Add-Delete session on May 4, 2015. At that meeting, they voted to restore funding to the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) and fund the Transportation Commission's highest priorities. Council also directed staff to work with City Council and the Transportation Commission to identify priorities for funding in the fall.

B. PEDESTRIAN AND BICYCLE MASTER PLAN UPDATE

The vision, goals and objectives, existing conditions and progress report have been completed for the Pedestrian and Bicycle Master Plan. The bicycle network is in the process of being developed, and the proposed draft network for the west side of Alexandria was presented at the April 16, 2015 Ad Hoc Advisory Committee meeting. The project consultant is also in the process of conducting field work for the development of recommendations within the pedestrian case study areas. The next Ad Hoc Advisory Committee meeting will be held on May 14, 2015 at Cora Kelly Center at 7:00 p.m., and the draft bicycle network for the east side of the City will be presented, along with revised project prioritization criteria, and additional information on the case study areas. A walking tour will be held prior to the meeting starting at 6:00 p.m.

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

C. EISENHOWER WEST TRANSPORTATION STUDY

The transportation analysis of existing conditions and future (2040) baseline conditions has been completed. Staff has met with a number of property owners that may be affected by the proposed multi-modal bridge. On April 17, 2015 the City received a letter from the Norfolk Southern Corporation that stated that Norfolk Southern will not permit any type of bridge encroachment within the limits of its Thoroughbred Bulk Transfer (TBT) facility (See letter in Attachment 1). City officials are seeking additional information from Norfolk Southern and plan to have meetings to discuss the issue.

The City is committed to finishing the Eisenhower West Small Area Plan and documenting the community's preferred vision. The City will look at options moving forward based on the feedback from Norfolk Southern, and will also work to develop an interim plan for Eisenhower West. A steering committee meeting is scheduled for May 13, 2015 to discuss the built environment. On May 19, 2015, the Steering Committee will meet to discuss circulation and connectivity.

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

D. WEST END TRANSITWAY (WET)

The Project Team's ongoing activities include: continuing work to develop the Environmental Assessment documentation, including coordination with Virginia state environmental agencies; refining capital and operating costs; development and review of conceptual engineering documents, and coordination with internal and external stakeholders.

Technical work for the West End Transitway will be completed by Summer 2015; endorsement by City Commissions and adoption of a Locally Preferred Alternative (LPA) by City Council is scheduled for fall / winter 2015.

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. OLD TOWN AREA PARKING STUDY

The OTAPS Work Group was reconvened in 2015 to review parking meter restrictions and residential parking policies in Old Town. Four meetings have been held monthly since January and at these meetings the Work Group has reviewed the results of the 2014 Old Town parking occupancy study, parking meter restrictions and occupancy trends in Old Town, and residential parking restrictions and occupancy trends. The Work Group has also discussed tools to best manage parking in metered and residential areas and will be prioritizing recommendations for the City Council at future meetings.

At their April 29th meeting, the Work Group voted and approved a short term recommendation to change the meter hours from two to three hours for meters west of Alfred Street. This recommendation will be reviewed by the Traffic and Parking Board in May and the City Council in June. The Work Group will meet again May 27th and June 24th to finalize their recommendations regarding management of meter and residential parking in Old Town.

Background: The Old Town Area Parking Study (OTAPS) Work Group was formed to develop consensus on strategies identified by the Waterfront Small Area Plan and recommendations from the 2009 Old Town Area Parking Study. The final 2012 OTAPS report was submitted to Council in February 2013, and reports are posted online at alexandriava.gov/ParkingStudies.