

City of Alexandria, Virginia

MEMORANDUM

DATE: JUNE 17, 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 passed an operating and capital budget on May 28, 2015. This capital budget did not include funds to exercise the potential options to purchase 220 rail cars, and/or rail traction power equipment. Since the rail car options must be exercised in July, the WMATA Board must amend the FY2016 capital budget in June to do so. There is an expectation that the WMATA Board will revisit the capital budget in June 2015.

Since there are several new members on the WMATA Board of Directors who need time to understand the organization's capital needs, WMATA has decided to operate under the current Comprehensive Funding Agreement (CFA) until June 30, 2016, when it expires. Even if WMATA does exercise the options to buy additional 7000 series rail cars, this can still be done under the existing CFA.

Northern Virginia Transportation Authority (NVTA) – The City will begin to draft Standard Project Agreements for the following three FY2015-FY2016 projects approved by the NVTA in April 2015:

- 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.

In May 2015, staff submitted comments to the Commonwealth Transportation Board (CTB) on the draft Implementation Policy Guide. At its June meeting, the CTB is expected to approve the factors which include congestion mitigation, economic development, accessibility, safety, environmental quality, and land use as well as the weights assigned to

each factor across all four categories - A, B, C, and D. Northern Virginia is in Category A along with Hampton Roads. The other categories are used in less populated portions of the Commonwealth, which have different mixes of factors used in their evaluations. Since Northern Virginia is in Category A, it is proposed that 35% be attributed to congestion mitigation, 10% to economic development, 25% to accessibility, 10% to safety, 10% to environmental quality, and 10% to land use. It should be noted that congestion mitigation is weighted the highest among the factors in the prioritization process only for Northern Virginia and Hampton Roads.

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 is currently planning to adopt the final Six-Year Program on June 16, 2015, after receiving comments from public hearings.

FY 2016 – 2025 Capital Improvement Program (CIP) – The City Council adopted the FY 2016-2025 CIP at meeting held on May 7, 2015.

B. EISENHOWER WEST TRANSPORTATION STUDY

The transportation analysis of existing conditions and future (2040) baseline conditions has been completed, and the results of the 2040 baseline scenario were presented to the Steering Committee on May 19, 2015. The 2040 Build scenario modeling is currently underway, and will be analyzed both with and without the multimodal bridge, as a response to the letter (dated April 17, 2015) the City received from Norfolk Southern which noted its opposition to the bridge. Following the results of the 2040 Build scenarios, mitigation projects will be identified and also tested. The analysis of the 2040 Build scenarios is anticipated to be completed this summer. City staff met with representatives of Norfolk Southern on June 3, 2015 to discuss the multimodal bridge. Norfolk Southern agreed to continue to share information and discuss the issue further to determine if a workable solution to the City’s satisfaction could be developed regarding the feasibility of the bridge. A memo (attached) was provided to the City Council providing a summary of the meeting with Norfolk Southern.

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

C. POTOMAC YARD METORAIL STATION EIS

The Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) was released for public review and comment on March 27, with the comment period ending on May 18. On April 24, City staff released its report recommending that City Council select Alternative B as the preferred alternative. The selection of Alternative B received unanimous support from the Board of Architectural Review (Old and Historic District), the Planning Commission, the Transportation Commission, the Environmental Policy Commission, the Park and Recreation Commission, and the Potomac Yard Metrorail Implementation Work Group. The Beautification Commission and the Alexandria Chamber of Commerce also submitted letters to City Council supporting the selection of Alternative B, and the Mount Vernon Group of the Sierra Club spoke in favor of Alternative B at the public hearing on May 16.

On May 20, City Council selected Alternative B as the preferred alternative, with construction access Option 2 (no access from the George Washington Memorial Parkway). City Council also authorized the City Manager to negotiate a Net Benefits Agreement with the National Park Service (NPS) based on the mitigation framework for impacts to the George Washington Memorial Parkway that was outlined in the staff report.

Staff has started work on the Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS). Public release of the FEIS is anticipated in late 2015, with Records of Decision from the Federal Transit Administration and NPS in the first quarter of 2016. City staff is currently working with the Washington Metropolitan Transit Authority (WMATA) to determine roles and responsibilities during the design-build process, and including definition of the roles of City boards and commissions. Staff will update City boards and commissions on the outcome of these discussions in fall 2015. Also in the fall 2015, City staff will recommend to City Council revisions to the charter and makeup of the Potomac Yard Metrorail Implementation Work Group, as the project moves from the environmental phase to the design-build phase. The reconstituted PYMIG would be expected to see the station through design and construction to opening.

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.

D. 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. Five 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 a number of tools to best manage parking in metered and residential areas and will be prioritizing recommendations for the City Council at their final two meetings in June (11th and 24th).

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. All of the 2015 OTAPS Work Group meeting materials are also posted on this website.

E. PEDESTRIAN AND BICYCLE MASTER PLAN UPDATE

The vision, goals and objectives, existing conditions and progress report have been completed. The draft citywide bicycle network has been completed, following input received from the Ad Hoc Advisory Committee at their April 16 and May 14 meetings. Individual projects are being developed for the bicycle network, and will be prioritized using evaluation criteria reviewed by the Committee. At the June 8, 2015 Ad Hoc Advisory Committee meeting, the draft pedestrian “engineering” strategies were presented, along with issues and recommendations identified for the five pedestrian case study areas. The next step will be to develop policy and program strategies. The next Ad Hoc Advisory Committee meeting will be held over the Summer (date to be determined), and staff will present the policy and program strategies, and the bicycle project prioritization results.

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