

# *City of Alexandria, Virginia*

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## **MEMORANDUM**

DATE: JULY 22, 2015

TO: MEMBERS OF THE TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION

FROM: SANDRA MARKS, DEPUTY DIRECTOR, T&ES

SUBJECT: AGENDA ITEM #7 – WEST END TRANSITWAY

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**ISSUE:** Update on the West End Transitway Alternatives Analysis and Environmental Assessment

**RECOMMENDATION:** That the Transportation Commission (Commission) receive the update.

**DISCUSSION:** The City's Transportation Master Plan, adopted by Council in 2008, identified three priority corridors that would offer high-quality, high capacity, and reliable transit service along three corridors, including: US 1 (Corridor A), Duke Street (Corridor B), and Van Dorn/Beauregard (Corridor C), now referred to as the West End Transitway.

In 2012, the City completed Transitway Corridors Feasibility Study which resulted in recommendations such as route alignment, cross-sections, methods of operation, vehicle type, land use, ridership, and early-stage cost estimates for all three corridors.

In December 2013, the City kicked off an Alternatives Analysis (AA) and Environmental Assessment (EA) for the West End Transitway to analyze and refine the alignment as defined by the Feasibility Study 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.

City Council created the West End Transitway Policy Advisory Group (PAG) to provide feedback and project guidance to City staff and the project team. All PAG meetings have been open to the public and have been the venue for public feedback and dialogue. Feedback from the PAG and the public has influenced design and operating decisions made throughout the AA / EA process.

The West End Transitway project has made significant progress since the last Transportation Commission briefing on October 14, 2014, including:

- Two Policy Advisory Group (PAG) meetings to receive input on the conceptual engineering drawings, including multi-modal facilities along the corridor such as bike facilities, methods to ensure compliance with new stormwater regulations, traffic signal operations at key intersections, parking impacts, and Transitway operations along the entire corridor;
- Extensive internal coordination between City departments as part of the conceptual engineering task including: Planning and Zoning, T&ES , and Department of Project Implementation (DPI);
- Coordination with the VA Route 7 Corridor Study being conducted by Northern Virginia Transportation Commission (NVTC) – providing data and feedback to ensure that any proposed transit improvements along the VA Route 7 corridor are complimentary to the West End Transitway and City priorities;
- Updating the Interagency Technical Advisory Committee (ITAC), composed of technical staff from local, regional, and Federal project stakeholders; and
- Coordination with the Federal Transit Authority (FTA) and State Environmental Agencies regarding the development of the EA.

On July 8, 2015, City staff and members of the Project Team met with Commission members and representatives from the Alexandria Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee (BPAC) to discuss pedestrian and bicycle safety and design concerns. The project team will incorporate the feedback received into the conceptual engineering work.

The West End Transitway Project Team continues to coordinate with all internal and external stakeholders to advance the project towards a Locally Preferred Alternative (LPA) decision by City Council in early (Winter) 2016.