

City of Alexandria, Virginia

MEMORANDUM

DATE: FEBRUARY 20, 2019

TO: MEMBERS OF THE TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION

FROM: HILLARY ORR, DEPUTY DIRECTOR, AND T&ES STAFF

SUBJECT: AGENDA ITEM # 3 – ITEMS FOR CONSENT

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

RECOMMENDATION: That the Commission receive the items for consent.

A. Union Station Pedestrian Tunnel Status Update

Over the past several years, Virginia Railway Express (VRE) has been planning a project to improve ADA access to the platforms at Union Station while also considering a pedestrian tunnel to the King Street Metrorail station. The original Pedestrian Tunnel Project had five goals, with the primary goal to provide an ADA compliant alternative to the at-grade pedestrian crossings (across Tracks 2 and 3) to access the center platform and provide passenger access to trains on Track 1. Another goal was to provide a connection to the King Street Metrorail Station. One of the other project goals is that as part of any construction, VRE must not prohibit the host railroad (CSX is the host railroad, VRE and Amtrak are users of the railroad) to provide continuous service.

VRE completed a feasibility study between 2011 and 2013 that looked at issues and potential improvements to the station after WMATA had done their own study prior. VRE began engineering design, which included a connection to the King St. Metro station. The 60% design was completed in 2016 and the construction cost estimate was more than double the cost originally estimated (approximately \$30m total). To reduce costs, VRE considered other options such as a pedestrian bridge, but this alternative was deemed infeasible due to the compromised viewsheds from the George Washington Masonic Temple and the historic Union Station. VRE therefore re-evaluated the project based on the original goals and criteria. VRE surveyed the current passengers and determined that only 10% of the VRE passengers connect to local rail at the King St. Metro station. Consequently, VRE is proposing to move forward with a project that utilizes the existing tunnel under the tracks at Union Station but upgrade the tunnel to provide access to the Amtrak and VRE platforms to current ADA standards by providing elevators with stairs at each end. The design would not preclude a future tunnel extension to the King St. Metro station that would connect to the existing knock-out panel.

While the engineering design was underway, the DC2RVA High Speed Rail project began the environmental review (DEIS) process, with which VRE has been coordinating. While the DC2RVA – 4th track construction is not anticipated to be complete for at least 5-10 years, there is potential to have the DC2RVA project build the tunnel extension to King St. Metro. However, this proposal has not been included in the DC2RVA DEIS and DRPT has not agreed to include the tunnel extension at this time.

VRE will begin a task order for Preliminary Engineering, Final Design and limited Construction Administration in early 2019 for the tunnel project. VRE is planning to lead public engagement, hold a public meeting this fall and complete the final design in late 2019. Construction is anticipated to begin in early 2020.

B. Budget

The City Manager will release the proposed FY2020 Budget on Tuesday, February 19. Staff will be able to discuss during the meeting.

C. Central Alexandria Traffic Study

On February 4, staff hosted a public meeting for the Central Alexandria neighborhoods on several transportation-related topics. There were approximately 75 attendees. The main topic areas at the meeting were:

1. Status update on the short- and long-term recommendations from the [Central Alexandria Traffic Study](#) (CATS) Task Force
 - This included findings from the turn restrictions pilot at East Taylor Run Parkway and staff's recommendation to make the pilot permanent
2. Feedback on community concerns for the [Duke Street at West Taylor Run Parkway](#) intersection
 - This included review of the process and timeline for the short- and longer-term projects at this intersection
3. Presenting the City's [Smart Mobility Framework](#) to address concerns expressed during the CATS process.

The meeting was well attended, and the community consensus was to support making the turn restrictions at East Taylor Run Parkway permanent. Staff will bring this to the Traffic and Parking Board later this month to finalize. Staff will keep the Central Alexandria [website](#) updated with status reports on the recommendations so the residents can follow their progress. While there are a number of short-term recommendations to be implemented this spring, staff is shifting the focus to the [Duke at West Taylor Run project](#).

The discussion about the Duke Street at West Taylor Run Parkway intersection provided staff with a good deal of information on resident concerns with this location and confirmed many of the issues that the community has brought up through past feedback. The process and timeline for moving forward with this project are posted on the [project website](#). Staff is compiling community concerns and comments from the meeting and will post those to the website. This

spring, staff will begin to develop concept options to discuss with the community early this summer.

The [Smart Mobility presentation](#) was well received by the community. Staff will continue to develop this program and align City projects that fall under the umbrella of Smart Mobility this spring and summer. We will keep the community up to date on this project via the [project website](#).

D. Potomac Yard Metrorail Station

The project team has been continuing to provide updates and receive guidance from the Potomac Yard Metro Implementation Work Group (PYMIG). PYMIG is an ad-hoc committee consisting of community members and stakeholders. It serves as the primary forum for community engagement during the planning, design and construction of the Potomac Yard Metrorail Station.

Additional Funding for South Entrance

On November 13, 2018 the state announced \$50 million of funding for a new south entrance for the station, based on the projected increase in ridership associated with the recently announced plans for a new Amazon corporate headquarters and Virginia Tech Innovation Campus in National Landing. Funding was approved for inclusion in the final state partnership package presented to Amazon in late October 2018 and would not have been available without the increased ridership projected to accompany Amazon's move to the area and the \$1 billion Innovation Campus. The funds must be formally approved by the Commonwealth Transportation Board and the City is working with all project partners to integrate this new funding stream into the project.

Construction of the currently planned and approved station is expected to continue uninterrupted, with a scheduled opening date in early 2022. The City and WMATA are proceeding with the development of the current approved plan to continue the advancement of the project. On a parallel path, the project team has been developing concepts for an enhanced south entrance and will continue to work with the PYMIG for input and recommendations on a preferred concept.

Joint Permit Application

A revised joint permit application (JPA) was submitted to the Virginia Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ), Virginia Marine Resources Commission (VMRC) and the Army Corps of Engineers on February 6th. The revised JPA was submitted in response to requests from the permitting agencies for additional information. At the February 4, 2019 PYMIG meeting, an update was given on the environmental permitting, including a review of the project history, supplemental field work, compensatory mitigation and an outline of the project's revised JPA.

The project's revised limits of disturbance avoid tidal wetlands and include reductions in both permanent and temporary wetland impacts. (The original limits of disturbance were delineated prior to awarding a construction contract and were refined by the project Contractor as part of the project development).

The project team is preparing a wetlands restoration plan for the temporary impacts per DEQ guidance and will incorporate new ecology and tidal survey information. Approximately 2 acres of temporarily impacted wetlands must be restored to the same or better condition. Overall impacts will be reduced by just over one acre.

The JPA has been posted on the City website. The Army Corps and DEQ will take public comments, VMRC will review tidal wetland survey, and permits could be issued this summer.

E. Smart Scale Project Update

SMART SCALE is a state grant program that requires the Commonwealth Transportation Board (CTB) to develop and implement a quantifiable and transparent prioritization process for making funding decisions for capacity enhancing projects within the six-year improvement program. The goal of SMART SCALE is to ensure the state invests limited tax dollars into projects that meet critical transportation needs.

This past summer, the City applied for four projects for funding in FY2024-2025 under SMART SCALE: the West End Transitway, access improvements to the Landmark Mall Transit Hub, safety and capacity improvements at Duke/West Taylor Run/Telegraph, and Citywide TSP on Major Corridors.

In January, 2019, [Transportation Secretary Donahue released the initial project scoring](#) based on safety, congestion mitigation, accessibility, economic development, environmental quality, and land use, all measured against project cost. Of the 433 applications, the West End Transitway scored the in the top 4 projects in Virginia in terms of congestion mitigation, environment, land use, and accessibility. In the department's staff-recommended scenario, all four of Alexandria's applications would be funded.

This spring, the CTB will hold public hearings on proposed projects. In April, they will be included in the Draft Six-Year Improvement Plan (SYIP) to be finalized in June.

F. Dockless Mobility Update

On November 13, 2018, City Council approved Staff's proposal to conduct a pilot program to evaluate dockless mobility in Alexandria. In late December, Lime was the first vendor to receive approval to operate under this pilot program. As of February 6, 2019, four other permit application packages have been received from dockless mobility vendors and are being reviewed by City staff. An additional two dockless mobility vendors have indicated that they intend to submit a permit application package. It is therefore possible that seven vendors could be providing dockless mobility services within the City of Alexandria by springtime.

City Staff have also been providing input on a range of legislative proposals around dockless mobility that were introduced at the current session of the Virginia General Assembly. In its work with legislators on the various legislative drafts provided for review, City Staff consistently advocated for several core principles: Preserve local authority to regulate dockless mobility, allow localities to continuing carrying out pilot programs, and to not dramatically change other

aspects of the code until localities have had a chance to learn more about this evolving field. The current legislation that has advanced through the House of Delegates (House Bill 2752) appears to meet these principles.

As spring approaches, City Staff is planning to conduct outreach to educate users to not ride on the City's sidewalks. Those plans include placing variable message signs in targeted areas of the City, working with dockless mobility vendors on safety messaging for the City to use in its varied education efforts, and partnering on closed-course riding events for people to learn how to ride the devices safely. Vendors currently provide safe-riding reminders in their smartphone apps and are developing direct safety outreach email messages for their users.

The City has also begun planning the formal evaluation of the pilot program and plans to include field observations of riding behavior in high-pedestrian areas to observe user behavior, including where they ride. This pilot evaluation will help the City make an informed, data-driven recommendation to City Council to modify or continue (or not continue) permanent scooter and dockless mobility rules in the City of Alexandria, including if and how sidewalk riding rules should change.

G. I-395 Grant Update

This spring, the Northern Virginia Transportation Commission (NVTC) will be administering the grant process to distribute revenues from the I-395 HOT Lane operations under the Commuter Choice Program. [The Program](#) supports projects that maximize person throughput and implement multimodal improvements. Tolls provide the revenue necessary to fund new projects well into the future. NVTC, OmniRide/PRTC, DRPT, VDOT and the Commonwealth signed a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) that will provide a minimum of \$15 million annually to fund transit related improvements in the I-95/395 corridor as early as 2019.

For this first round of applications, the program will prioritize projects that would be able to start on or around Toll Day 1, now estimated at October 23rd. The City and DASH are currently considering potential eligible projects that meet this condition, as well as other criteria such as congestion mitigation, diversion mitigation, and applicant priority. Projects can include both capital and operating costs. The application window is between April 5 and May 15. The City will bring application proposals to the Transportation Commission in March or April.

H. Transportation Branch Reorganization

The Transportation Branch in the Department of Transportation and Environmental Resources has reorganized. The duties of the Transit Services Division now fall under the Transportation Planning Division. The new Mobility Services Division will be handling the former parking/curbside management planning responsibilities, as well as Transportation Demand Management, Paratransit, and Taxis and TNCs. The Complete Streets and Long Range Planning Programs will continue under the Transportation Planning Division. In addition to its former responsibilities, the Traffic Engineering Division will also oversee the Smart Mobility Program. The chart below outlines other programs and responsibilities.

Transportation Branch Structure & Teams

Transportation Planning	Mobility Services	Traffic Engineering
Complete Streets Program	TDM/TMP & Commuter Services	Smart Mobility Program
Vision Zero Program	Parking Program	Traffic Operations Center
Traffic Calming Program	Freight & Delivery	Traffic Studies & Planning
Regional Coordination	Parklets, Food Trucks & Curbside Amenities	Traffic & Parking Board
Transportation Commission	Taxis & TNCs	Signal Engineering
Shared Mobility & Bikeshare	DOT/Paratransit	
Transit Planning		
Long Range Planning		
	Development & ROW Services	Operations
	Development Review	Street Maintenance
	Capital Projects Program	Traffic Signs Installation & Maintenance
		Pavement Marking Maintenance