

City of Alexandria, Virginia

MEMORANDUM

DATE: FEBRUARY 20, 2019

TO: MEMBERS OF THE TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION

FROM: HILLARY ORR, DEPUTY DIRECTOR

SUBJECT: AGENDA ITEM #5 – WMATA SHUTDOWN UPDATE

ISSUE: Update on City and WMATA Planning efforts for closure of all Metrorail stations inside the City in Summer 2019

BACKGROUND: In May 2018, the Washington Metropolitan Area Transportation Authority (WMATA) announced closure of all Metrorail stations south of Ronald Reagan Washington National Airport between May 25th and September 2nd of this year. This closure affects all stations in the City (Braddock Rd, King St-Old Town, Eisenhower Ave and Van Dorn), as well as Huntington and Franconia-Springfield in Fairfax County. WMATA is closing these stations to rebuild the platforms, some of which are structurally unsound.

The City supports WMATA's decision to close these stations, as the maintenance is needed to prevent safety hazards and improve the customer experience. At the same time, both WMATA and the City expect disruption to travel patterns. WMATA estimates that there are 17,000 boarding a day at these six. Both WMATA and the City are working together and planning ways to move current metro riders effectively with as minimal disruption as possible.

DISCUSSION: Given the impacts of the Metrorail station closure, both the City and WMATA are proposing a plan that moves people into, out of, and through the City. This plan, which City Council will consider in March, was developed based on four pillars.

Pillar 1 – WMATA Shuttles – The majority of displaced trips will be managed through WMATA's shuttle bus bridges. Two shuttle routes (Shuttles 1 and 3) are express routes between the Pentagon and Huntington or Franconia-Springfield and do not enter the City.

The other two shuttles provide service to Alexandria, with up to five-minute headways during peak periods. Among these shuttles include:

- *Shuttle 2* will provide service at the Franconia-Springfield, Van Dorn and King St-Old Town Metrorail stations, an intermediate stop at the intersection of King Street and Washington Street, and will terminate at Ronald Reagan Washington National Airport.
- *Shuttle 4* will provide service at Huntington, Eisenhower, King St-Old Town, and Braddock Metrorail stations, and will terminate at Crystal City Metrorail station.

WMATA states publicly that the shuttles will move approximately 60 percent of displaced demand. This is a conservative estimate, and both staff and WMATA believe that up to 90 percent of people can be served with shuttles if standees and articulated buses are considered.

At the City's request, WMATA is providing other service enhancements and increased frequency on main routes including:

- Enhanced service on all Metrobus services inside the City, including the 10A, 11Y, and 8Z
- Midday, bidirectional service on the 11Y
- Additional resources for 10E, which travels between Crystal City Metrorail station, Old Town via Washington Street and Hunting Point
- A shuttle between the potential Landmark Mall park-and-ride facility and the Pentagon.

Pillar 2 – City/DASH Mitigation Efforts – The City and DASH will provide enhanced options for travel during this time:

- Additional DASH service on the AT3 and AT4, which serve Pentagon Metrorail station;
- Increased City Transportation Demand Management (TDM) measures, including carpool and vanpool formation, a park and ride lot and telework assistance;
- Promotion of Potomac Riverboat Company's water taxi service which will likely begin morning service as a commute option during this period only. Details of this plan are still being considered and evaluated.

Pillar 3 – Mobility Alternatives – The City will promote alternative modes of transportation during the shutdown period. Examples include:

- Promotion of Capital Bikeshare, potentially including corrals for Capital Bikeshare bikes;
- Bicycle education, promoted through partners at the Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee (BPAC) and the Washington Area Bicycle Association (WABA);
- Enhancement to provide safer pedestrian access to transit as well as ADA upgrades at new bus stop locations.

Pillar 4 – Outreach and Communication – The City is committed to letting residents and workers know about their options through existing communication channels. Additionally, the City is organizing a robust employer outreach efforts, open houses and graphic displays to more easily explain new commute options through the GO Alex program. The City is also exploring paid media opportunities and on-site street teams before and during the event.

FISCAL IMPACT – The City submitted a proposed budget to the Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transportation (DRPT) on February 15. DRPT may reimburse up to 80 percent of these mitigation costs. Until talks conclude in March, staff will not know what the final reimbursement amount. Elements of the final plan will be determined after a better understanding of the fiscal impact and reimbursement rates are provided by DRPT this winter.