

# *City of Alexandria, Virginia*

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## **MEMORANDUM**

DATE: FEBRUARY 17, 2016

TO: MEMBERS OF THE TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION

FROM: T&ES STAFF

SUBJECT: AGENDA ITEM # 2 – ITEMS FOR CONSENT

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

**RECOMMENDATION:** That the Commission receive the items for consent.

### **A. FUNDING UPDATE**

#### **Washington Area Transit Authority (WMATA)**

WMATA is evaluating the proposed budget that was presented at the WMATA Finance and Administration Committee meeting in December, 2015. A meeting has been scheduled for March 4, 2016 for jurisdictional and WMATA staff to discuss the proposed budget. The budget currently does not call for fare increases or subsidy increases for the basic operating budget at this time, but long term debt is expected to be issued in 2017, which will likely require a debt service payment.

The WMATA Comprehensive Funding Agreement (CFA) will be a simple one-year extension of the current agreement. This CFA extension calls for \$287.7 in long term debt to be issued by the region in FY2017 to support the program.

#### **Northern Virginia Transportation Authority (NVTA)**

NVTA staff is reviewing CMAQ/RSTP applications for funding for FY 2022. Jurisdictions are scheduled to consider a strawman for these funds in February 2016. VDOT is developing ratings for all 70% funds being proposed for FY 2017 in accordance with the provisions of HB599. The evaluations are scheduled to be completed by April, 2016.

#### **Northern Virginia Transportation Commission (NVTC)**

The low price of gasoline is heavily impacting the regional gas tax, which is collected to sustain public transit in Northern Virginia through allocations made by the Northern Virginia Transportation Commission and the Potomac and Rappahannock Transportation Commission. As the value of gasoline is taxed rather than the amount sold, revenues

have dropped so much that efforts are underway through the General Assembly to place a floor on the regional gas tax.

### **Department of Rail and Public Transportation (DRPT)**

Grant applications were submitted on February 1, 2016 through the Northern Virginia Transportation Commission (NVTC) for transit capital and operating state match assistance for the West End Transitway design, the Van Dorn Metrorail Station improvements, and the replacement of DASH buses.

**Background:** The City's transportation program has many sources of funding from federal, state, regional, and local sources. Many of these sources require that submissions be supplied in November, December, and January. The preceding discussion summarizes the significant deadlines that must be met during this time period.

### **B. POTOMAC YARD METRORAIL STATION**

**City and WMATA staff are working to address comments received on the Final Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) from the National Park Service (NPS) and the Federal Transit Administration (FTA). Once the document has been reviewed by the agencies and has been determined as meeting legal sufficiency requirements, it will be released for public review and comment, followed by Records of Decision (RODs) from FTA and NPS.**

**The design process for the Metrorail station is continuing. The latest meeting of the Potomac Yard Metrorail Implementation Work Group (PYMIG), held on February 11, 2016 included an update on the station design process, as well as discussion of design concepts for Potomac Greens Park and Potomac Yard Park.**

**City staff are also working on preparation of an application for a loan through the federal Transportation Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Act (TIFIA) program. A TIFIA loan would benefit the project through flexible repayment terms and a favorable interest rate, similar to the Virginia Transportation Infrastructure Bank (VTIB) loan that the City was awarded in 2015.**

**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](http://www.alexandriava.gov/potomacyard).

### **C. METROWAY**

**Metroway continues to show strong ridership growth. Ridership grew 10 percent between September and October 2015. In December 2015, Metroway carried an average of 1,544 riders each weekday, 18 percent higher than the previous December. On-time performance for Metroway buses is 96 percent.**

**Phase II of Metroway is expected to open in spring 2016. This phase will include dedicated lanes in the Arlington portion of the corridor to 26th Street, with**

**additional bus-only lanes during rush hour from 26th Street to the Crystal City Metrorail Station. Phase II will also see the service extended to Pentagon City.**

**Background:** During the first round of TIGER grants, the City received \$8.5 million to design and construct the Route 1 Transitway between Monroe Avenue and East Glebe Road. The City compiled additional grant funding and \$5.2 million in local funding to design/construct various elements of the Transitway project. The total cost of the Transitway including vehicles is approximately \$20 million. The Alexandria portion of the facility, also known as the Crystal City/Potomac Yard Transitway, opened in August 2014.

For more information on the Route 1 Transitway project please see visit:

<http://www.alexandriava.gov/tes/info/default.aspx?id=58644>

#### **D. PEDESTRIAN AND BICYCLE MASTER PLAN UPDATE**

**Staff released a draft of the Pedestrian and Bicycle Master Plan to the public on January 14, 2016 through AlexEngage, at which time the Plan was also transmitted to the Ad Hoc Pedestrian and Bicycle Master Plan Advisory Committee. The Ad Hoc Committee provided comments at its January 19, 2016 meeting and the AlexEngage survey had over 400 responses. City staff have also received additional comments from the public. The draft plan will be revised to address the comments received, and will be presented to the Ad Hoc Advisory Committee at its February 25, 2016 meeting, at which time staff will be asking for endorsement from the Committee. The updated draft will be presented to the Transportation Commission for endorsement in March, followed by the Planning Commission and Council later in the spring.**

**Background:** The City is conducting an update of the Pedestrian and Bicycle Master Plan, and developing Complete Streets Design Guidelines, which will be completed in early 2016. 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 vision of the Transportation Master Plan, which encourages transportation options and reduced dependence on the private automobile;
- Develop both a bicycle network and pedestrian case study areas
- Develop a framework for implementing non-motorized policies and projects citywide

More information is available at: [www.alexandriava.gov/pedbikeplan](http://www.alexandriava.gov/pedbikeplan)

#### **E. KING STREET METRORAIL STATION**

**This project's design team had been meeting weekly in anticipation of a submittal to the City in February, 2016. Meetings have been held with WMATA and DASH to establish temporary locations for the transportation services currently using the**

**facility, and to begin the process of informing the general public of the changes prior to and during the construction.**

**Background:** The King Street Metrorail Station is Alexandria's largest transit facility and requires significant updates, expansions, and safety improvements. The City began addressing these needs by requesting that WMATA conduct a feasibility study for rebuilding the access facilities at the lot in 2006. The result of this study was released in March, 2008. Through an extensive vetting process with the general public and stakeholders, the City developed a design for the station that improves non-motorized access, bus access, shuttle and taxi access, short term rental car access, and aesthetics. In 2012, the design was endorsed by the Transportation Commission, the City Council, and the Planning Commission. After approval, the design was refined, and the City determined that some of the features of the facility needed to meet City standards rather than WMATA standards. A long discussion between WMATA and the City resulted in a decision that allowed the facility to be designed using City standards. WMATA gave the City a permanent easement to construct a transit facility, if the City maintained the facility in perpetuity. After this agreement, a more detailed design was produced for the facility, and the cost was higher than budgeted. The improvement was placed in the FY 2016 CIP budget process, and eventually acquired sufficient funding to be constructed.

**F. EISENHOWER AVENUE METRORAIL STATION**

**The Eisenhower Avenue Metrorail Station is proceeding as the City's Department of Project Implementation (DPI) is assembling all of the information needed for the project design consultant to develop a set of 60% plans for the improvements, which will be submitted to WMATA for review in spring 2016.**

**Background:** The Eisenhower Avenue Metrorail Station project will use Federal Transit Authority (FTA) and Commonwealth funds to reconstruct the Eisenhower Metrorail station entrance to include improved amenities for transit patrons such as better weather protection and a prominent plaza. This improvement is necessary to accommodate all of the high-intensity growth adjacent and/or in close proximity to the station.

**G. SEMINARY ROAD/QUAKER LANE SPEED LIMIT PILOT PROJECT**

**T&ES and the Alexandria Police Department (APD) proposed an initiative to the Traffic and Parking Board on February 1, 2016 to reduce speed limits, from 35mph to 25mph, and to increase enforcement for both Seminary Road and Quaker Lane. While increased fines for offenders was an option proposed by the community, it was ultimately agreed that this initiative should not include additional fines at this time. With the proposed initiative, the streets will be monitored to evaluate the effectiveness of the speed limit reduction and increased enforcement efforts before an increased fine would be considered.**

**At the February 1, 2016 Traffic and Parking Board meeting, the Board recommended to the City Manager that the speed limits on these roadways be lowered to 25mph and that staff evaluate the effectiveness of the speed limit reduction by measuring actual speed and crash reductions six months after the speed limit reduction occurs.**

**To support the program, in FY 2016, APD will relocate officers from other areas of the City to provide increased enforcement on Seminary Road and Quaker Lane or will allow officers to volunteer for overtime pay.**

**Background:** In the summer of 2015, residents of both Seminary Road and Quaker Lane requested that the City create a program to help reduce speeds on Seminary Road between Kenmore Avenue and Janney's Lane and Quaker Lane between Duke Street and West Braddock Road. Staff attended meetings with the community in June, July and December 2015 to discuss these concerns with the residents and work toward a solution. In a survey with 575 respondents, 47% supported reducing the speed limit and adding an additional fine while 37% opposed. Over 250 residents who live along this corridor signed a petition in favor of this solution. At the most recent public meeting on December 7<sup>th</sup>, 2015, nearly 100 people who live in the area attended, and the response to reducing the speed limit, and increasing enforcement was generally positive. The Department of Transportation and Environmental Services (T&ES) and the Alexandria Police Department (APD) have been working together collaboratively to assess the impact of this community request.

#### **H. MOTORCOACH TASK FORCE**

**The City Manager has appointed representatives to the Motorcoach Task Force representing a number of groups such as citizen associations, citizens at-large, the tourism/motorcoach industry, and the hotel industry. In addition, three of four Commission and Board representatives have been selected. The Task Force's first meeting is tentatively scheduled for February 24, 2016. This meeting will include an overview of the group's charter and the scope of its mission. The meeting will also include a discussion of potential loading and unloading locations, as well as evaluation criteria used to select the locations.**

**Background:** Due to pending development along the Waterfront and within Old Town, the City faces the loss of all three of its current short-term motorcoach parking locations (15 spaces total), as well as the loss of an unloading and loading location on the Strand. This loss necessitated a re-examination of motorcoach parking and loading/unloading spaces. The Ad Hoc Motorcoach Task Force, which operated 2004-2005 and 2008-2010, will provide input to staff regarding future short-term parking and loading/unloading locations.

#### **I. OLD TOWN NORTH SMALL AREA PLAN**

**In December 2015, the Council directed staff to proceed with the Study and Testing phases of the Old Town North Small Area Plan update. During these phases, staff and the Advisory Group will be analyzing ideas that were generated during the November 2015 charrette for potential inclusion in the ultimate Plan update. The Advisory Group has broken into subcommittees to explore specific topic areas in more detail. The Infrastructure and Environmental Sustainability/Transportation Subcommittee will be reviewing transportation related ideas. Their first meeting was held on February 10, 2016 and they will report back to the Advisory Group later in the month.**

**As part of these Study and Testing phases, staff will be conducting analyses of parking and traffic conditions in the planning area to determine the impacts of proposed development, mitigation strategies that could be considered, and areas of opportunity for transportation improvements. This analysis is expected to occur in phases over the next twelve months.**

**Background:** The current Old Town North Small Area Plan was adopted in 1992. The planning effort to update this small area plan began in September 2015 with the appointment of an Advisory Group and is anticipated to conclude in January 2017 with the Plan adoption. As part of this process, a week-long charrette was held in November to identify issues, needs and ideas for a broad range of categories including transportation, housing, land use, and open space. For more information on the Old Town North Small Area Plan, please visit: <http://www.alexandriava.gov/86032>

**J. OLD TOWN AREA PARKING STUDY**

**At their legislative meeting on February 9, 2016, the Council voted to receive the revised parking management work plan that summarizes the recommendations of the OTAPS Work Group and outlines the timeline for consideration of each recommendation. This action allows staff to begin review and work on the short term recommendations. Although the OTAPS Work Group recommended no changes to the process to amend the residential parking permit districts, the Council felt there could be some benefit to implementing a staff initiated process and directed staff to include this as a task in the Citywide parking work plan.**

**Background:** The Old Town Area Parking Study (OTAPS) Work Group was reconvened in 2015 to review parking meter restrictions and residential parking policies in Old Town and updated results of the 2014 Old Town parking occupancy study. The Work Group met eight times between January and August 2015 and discussed a number of tools to address residential and commercial parking issues in the study area. A summary of the Work Group's recommendations was presented to the Transportation Commission in September. All of the 2015 OTAPS Work Group meeting materials are posted online at: <http://alexandriava.gov/tes/info/default.aspx?id=77053>.

**K. AD HOC ADVISORY GROUP ON CONFEDERATE MEMORIALS AND STREET NAMES**

**The Ad Hoc Advisory Group on Confederate Memorials and Street Names (Advisory Group) has met on two occasions. At its first meeting, the Advisory Group reviewed previous public input on the issue as well as an inventory of confederate memorials and street names within the Office of Historic Alexandria also provided background on the City's experience during the Civil War. The group determined plans for comment at future public meetings, and held initial discussions about 1) the cost of changing street signs; 2) the impact such action would have on the US Postal Service; 3) the Reconstruction Period following the Civil War; 4) Current African American heritage activities and assets; 5) the origin of the name of Forrest Street; and, 6) how other cities have handled this issue. At its**

**second meeting, the group held further discussion on the aforementioned issues, and held a public comment period.**

**Background:** On September 29, 2015, City Council unanimously passed a resolution to establish an Ad Hoc Advisory Group on Confederate Memorials and Street Names. The resolution directed the City Manager to appoint the seven members of the Advisory Group, with two members appointed at-large and one member appointed from each of the Alexandria Human Rights Commission, the Historic Alexandria Resources Commission, the Alexandria Society for the Preservation of Black Heritage, the Alexandria Planning Commission, and the Alexandria Transportation Commission. The purpose of the group is to develop recommendations on actions, if any, that the City should consider with respect to 1) the status of the Appomattox statue on South Washington Street; 2) the name of Jefferson Davis Highway within the City of Alexandria; 3) the names of the many streets within the City that are named after Confederate generals and military leaders; and, 4) a specific policy on flying any flags on property owned or under the control of the City. Agendas, meeting summaries, and record of the public comment can be accessed via: <http://www.alexandriava.gov/manager/info/default.aspx?id=87599>

Attachment 1 – City of Alexandria Grant Request Tables