

City of Alexandria, Virginia

MEMORANDUM

DATE: JULY 20, 2016
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 Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA)

Beginning in Fall 2016, the City will be working with WMATA and regional funding partners to develop a six-year Capital Funding Agreement (CFA). The CFA is a multi-year agreement to fund the capital needs for Metrorail, Metrobus, and MetroAccess. The current CFA expires in June 2017.

In June, the WMATA Finance Committee approved the initiation of a pilot bus service between the King Street Metro and the National Harbor. Funding for this service will be provided by the jurisdictions served and private developers. City Council passed a resolution on June 28, 2016 to pay Alexandria's share of the expenses in FY2017. This service is slated to begin in October 2016.

Northern Virginia Transportation Authority (NVTA)

The City submitted two applications for FY17 funds: \$66M for the Potomac Yard Metrorail station and \$7M for the West End Transitway. On July 14 the NVTA Board approved the final FY17 funding program, which includes twelve projects in Northern Virginia. The approved program provides \$66M for the Potomac Yard Metrorail station, but did not provide any funding for the West End Transitway. The reasoning for NVTA's selection of the projects include HB599 and NVTA project scores, congestion relative to cost, public comments, qualitative considerations, geographic diversity, and jurisdictional equity.

Northern Virginia Transportation Commission (NVTC)

At the July 2016 meeting, the Commission voted unanimously to endorse the staff recommendation for the Envision 7 project – Bus rapid Transit (BRT) from Tysons to the Mark Center via the East Falls Church Metrorail station. Project next steps include identifying funding to perform Conceptual Engineering work and continue coordination with corridor

jurisdictions. The Envision 7 project is an opportunity to leverage the City's investment in the West End Transitway and to support the growing network of high capacity transit services in Northern Virginia.

FAST Lane

On July 8, Governor McAuliffe announced that the Commonwealth was awarded \$165 million to fund several Atlantic Gateway projects along the I-95 / I 395 corridor. The grant leverages public and private sector investments and will fund rail, road, technology, and transit projects. Projects within the City include additional track connecting Alexandria to the Long Bridge, rail operational improvements that will enhance VRE service and providing safety and capacity improvements on I-395. Staff will continue to coordinate with Commonwealth staff as these projects advance. (<https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/dr-gridlock/wp/2016/07/08/what-to-expect-from-virginias-atlantic-gateway-projects/>)

The National Park Service (NPS) also received \$90 million for improvements to the Memorial Bridge, an important transportation link between Northern Virginia and the District of Columbia.

Background: The City's transportation program has many sources of funding from federal, state, regional, and local sources. City staff coordinates regularly with representatives from each agency listed above to discuss funding opportunities from state and regional sources and the City's funding obligations for WMATA.

B. TRANSPORTATION LONG RANGE PLAN

At the June 15, 2016 Transportation Commission meeting, the Commission recommended that two projects be swapped in their order, including Route 1 intersection improvements, and the Commonwealth Avenue non-motorized bridge. Attachment 1 is a revised priority ranking with these changes. In addition, one of the Commission members asked if staff could prepare a revised scoring methodology. The original scoring methodology—which has been used in previous years—summed the commissioners' scores to create a composite score for each project, and then ranked these composite scores. The requested revised methodology ranks each commissioner's individual score, creating a set of project rankings for each commissioner. The rank of each project is then determined by summing the ranks (not the scores) of each commissioner. The revised methodology resulted in similar project rankings, with an average difference (shift up or down in rank) of 1.79. Attachment 2 provides a comparison between the original rankings and revised rankings. To be consistent with previous years, the City will use the previous year's ranking system and input from June's meeting to establish project priority.

Background: Each year, the Transportation Commission provides input on an update to the City's Long Range Plan. The Long Range Plan is a financially-unconstrained list of capital improvement projects that have no dedicated funding source but have been recommended by City master plans, small area plans, or Task Force efforts. Should funding become available, the City will use this plan to inform its decisions on project priority.

C. WMATA SAFETRACK PLAN

The City has engaged in an extensive outreach and communications program in

coordination with WMATA and Arlington County, including regular eNews, social media, and website updates. Additional Metrobus, DASH, and ART (Arlington County's transit system) service was provided to supplement the rail shuttle service used to bridge each rail closure.

WMATA will provide a complete report of the activities completed during Surges #3 and #4. Staff will continue to work with WMATA and DASH to plan for later surges that will impact the City. The next surge is scheduled for August 20 to September 5, 2016.

Background: SafeTrack is an initiative of the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA), which operates the Metrorail, Metrobus, and MetroAccess system in the District of Columbia, Maryland, and Virginia. The focus of SafeTrack is a work plan to address safety recommendations and rehabilitate the Metrorail system to improve safety and reliability. SafeTrack accelerates three years' worth of track work into less than a year, mostly from June 2016 through March 2017. As a result, the plan significantly expands maintenance time on weeknights, weekends and midday hours. A key element of SafeTrack is that the entire Metrorail system will close at midnight, seven days a week. For more information, please visit: <https://www.alexandriava.gov/SafeTrack>

D. EISENHOWER WEST - LANDMARK VAN DORN IMPLEMENTATION

The Ad Hoc Advisory Group will hold its first meeting on September 13, 2016 (location TBD). Staff is currently developing the scope of work for the infrastructure plan. The Infrastructure Plan Concept Design Phase will require a full survey, utility investigation, right of way, geotechnical report and a 20 percent roadway concept plan for the required streets. In addition, staff is in the procurement process for the air quality analysis related to concerns regarding the future construction of tall buildings near the Covanta facility. This modeling exercise will provide more specific height and dispersion areas and, in coordination with Covanta, identify potential mitigation strategies to reduce impacts or constraints.

Background: In order to achieve the vision for the area encompassed by the Eisenhower West Small Area Plan and Landmark/Van Dorn Corridor Plan, a number of studies and analyses are needed to initiate implementation. On March 29, 2016 the City Council established an Ad Hoc Eisenhower West/Landmark Van Dorn Implementation Advisory Group. The mission of this group is to provide guidance to staff on the infrastructure and funding plans and related follow-up studies.

E. MOTORCOACH TASK FORCE

The Motorcoach Task Force held its third meeting on July 11, 2016. At this meeting, Task Force members reviewed and discussed the viability of four different enforcement policies, reviewed demand at existing loading locations, and reviewed the vehicular parking data for potential future motorcoach loading locations. The four enforcement policies discussed included 1) a continuation of the ambassador program; 2) changes to Call.Click.Connect that will allow staff to collect and monitor motorcoach issues; 3) updates to the City ordinance to bring allowed idling time and fine amounts into alignment with State regulations, and; 4) formal quarterly outreach to operators and school systems that make use of the City's existing motorcoach facilities.

During its third meeting, the Task Force agreed to a revised schedule, which potentially adds a fifth meeting to its workplan. The fourth meeting will be devoted to discussions of pricing and management strategies, and the fifth meeting will be devoted to voting on draft recommendations for both locations and policies if they cannot be done during the fourth meeting.

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 space used for unloading and loading on the Strand where queuing occurs during the peak season. 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. More information is available at <https://www.alexandriava.gov/MotorcoachTaskForce>

F. POTOMAC YARD METRORAIL STATION

On June 16, City Council unanimously approved the Development Special Use Permits, Master Plan Amendment, and Map Amendment (rezoning) necessary for the station to move forward.

The review period for the Final Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) ended on July 11, 2016. Now that the review period has ended, the National Park Service (NPS) and the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) may each prepare and issue a Record of Decision (ROD). These documents are expected in the next several months. WMATA will advertise the design-build contract following issuance of the NPS ROD.

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

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment 1 – 2016 Long Range Plan Revised Project Priorities

Attachment 2 – 2016 Long Range Plan Revised Scoring Methodology