

# *City of Alexandria, Virginia*

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## MEMORANDUM

DATE: SEPTEMBER 21, 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 Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA):** WMATA reported on the results of the year end financial analysis at the Board meeting of September 8, 2016. While revenues were down considerably, expenses were also brought down by WMATA actions. WMATA estimates that FY 2016 will result in a positive cash flow of \$0.7 million. All indications are that the coming year's budget will be a challenging one for WMATA.

**Northern Virginia Transportation Authority (NVTA):** NVTA passed a program for FY 2017 on July 14, 2016 which included \$66 million to construct the Potomac Yard Metrorail station.

**Smart Scale (Previously referred as HB2):** At their September 13 meeting, City Council provided authorization to apply for the list of prioritized projects approved by the Transportation Commission at their July 2016 meeting. Staff will submit applications by the September 30, 2016 deadline.

**I-395 HOT (High Occupancy Toll) Lanes Project:** On August 31, 2016 the Virginia Secretary of Transportation notified elected officials (see Attachment 1) from Alexandria and Arlington and Fairfax Counties that the Commonwealth has committed to providing a minimum Annual Transit Payment (Payment) of \$15 million per year. The Payment is contingent on the Commonwealth implementing the HOT lanes project. Payment funds would be used to expand transit and Transportation Demand Management (TDM) options along the I-95 and I-395 corridor. Further details will become available as the project advances.

**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. POTOMAC YARD METRORAIL STATION**

**City staff is currently working with WMATA, the Federal Transit Authority (FTA), and National Parks Service (NPS) to finalize the Records of Decision (ROD). FTA and NPS have provided their first round of comments, which staff and consultants are working to address. Once the RODs have been signed, WMATA will advertise the design-build contract for the station.**

**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. KING STREET METRORAIL STATION**

**WMATA will be holding a public hearing on October 5, 2016 to solicit feedback on the permanent removal of short-term metered parking at the King Street Metrorail Station. . The WMATA Compact requires a public hearing prior to any significant changes to WMATA-owned capital facilities. The removal of this parking is required in order to accommodate the additional bus bays and dedicated Kiss & Ride and shuttle bus spaces that are part of this project. The purpose of the hearing is to provide feedback to the WMATA Board of Directors. The public hearing will be held from 6:30 – 8:30 p.m. on October 5, at the Durant Arts Center. Although the purpose of the hearing is to solicit feedback on the removal of short-term metered parking, WMATA and City staff will also provide information and accept comments about station and bus access during construction, construction phasing, impacts to nearby streets, and the planned improvements. The feedback is scheduled to go to the WMATA Board of Directors this winter.**

**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, and the City agreed to maintain 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.

**D. NORTH POTOMAC YARD SMALL AREA PLAN AMENDMENT**

Two development concepts have been prepared for Landbay F as part of the Plan Amendment, including Option 1 which aligns Potomac Avenue along the eastern side of the development adjacent Landbay K and the Potomac Yard Park, and Option 2 which aligns Potomac Avenue through the center of the development on its current alignment. Throughout the summer, the Advisory Group held public meetings and worksessions to provide input on two different street framework options. Staff recommended Option 2 at the August 29, 2016 Advisory Group meeting because it provides an additional 1.5 acres of open space, creates a more active and pedestrian friendly space at the future Potomac Yard Metro station (north entrance), allows for a phased development of the Potomac Avenue and Transitway, maximizes ridership for the Metroway, and provides flexibility of for continued study of the design and character of Potomac Avenue. At their August 29, 2016 meeting, the North Potomac Yard Advisory Group recommended moving forward with Option 2. The Planning Commission held a worksession on September 8 to provide input on the options. The transportation analysis will be conducted over the fall / winter to identify the impacts of the build scenario. To view the two options and learn more about the process, schedule, and input to date please see: <https://www.alexandriava.gov/PotomacYardPlan>

**Background:** The North Potomac Yard Small Area Plan was approved in 2010. The North Potomac Yard developer recently indicated a desire to begin the process for redevelopment of the North Potomac Yard, which may necessitate amendments to the 2010 North Potomac Yard Small Area Plan and Design Standards. A North Potomac Yard Advisory Group was established by Council in February 2016. The Advisory Group will serve as the community engagement forum to review the Plan and proposed amendments.

**E. WMATA SAFETRACK PLAN**

SafeTrack surges #1 through #8 have been completed and #9 is underway. Following the derailment at East Falls Church and additional Federal Transit Administration (FTA) guidance, WMATA has developed an updated SafeTrack program for the remaining surges in 2016 and the first quarter of 2017. The next surges to directly impact the City are listed below and will take place in 2017. *Note: Specific dates will be announced in December.*

Early January	Continuous single tracking with weekend shutdowns	Braddock Road to Huntington
Late January to Early February	Complete segment shutdown	Rosslyn to Pentagon
March	Continuous single tracking with weekend shutdowns	Braddock Road to Huntington

As expected, SafeTrack has had a significant impact on both bus and rail ridership. Attachment 2 is a memo to City Council describing the City’s mitigation efforts during Surges #3 and #4 and an overview of ridership impacts. Following each surge, WMATA posts a progress report at the following website: <http://wmata.com/rail/safetrack.cfm>.

**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>

**F. CITY STRATEGIC PLAN**

**The strategic planning process continued over the summer with a number of in-person and online opportunities for residents to prioritize goals by selecting indicators that they thought the City should focus on in the next 6 years. Staff is currently working to incorporate this work into the draft plan, which will be released this fall. Following the public comment period, the plan will be brought to City Council for adoption.**

**Background:** In the fall of 2015, City Council approved the general outline for a proposed spring 2016 process to draft an updated City Strategic Plan. The current Alexandria City Strategic Plan was intended to be in effect until 2015. The new Plan will use community input as the foundation to define the results of community values; communicate a clear direction to the public and City Government; include measures and targets to more easily track progress, share success, and identify and solve problems; set a six-year plan from FY 2017-2022 with a mid-point check-in/refinement in FY 2019; and align with the City's performance management system, Results Alexandria. The draft City Strategic Plan will be considered for adoption by City Council in the fall of 2016.

**ATTACHMENTS**

Attachment 1 – Letter from Virginia Secretary of Transportation

Attachment 2 – SafeTrack Memo to City Council