

City of Alexandria, Virginia

MEMORANDUM

DATE: APRIL 17, 2019

TO: MEMBERS OF THE TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION

FROM: CHRISTOPHER ZIEMANN, DIVISION CHIEF, TRANSPORTATION
PLANNING

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. WMATA Budget

On March 28, the Washington Metropolitan Area Transportation Authority (WMATA) Board of Directors [adopted of the FY2020 Operating budget, the FY2020-2025 CIP and Strategic Plan](#). The FY2020 Budget totals \$3.5 billion, including \$2.0 billion of operating expenses and \$1.5 billion in capital program spending in FY2020. The final budget includes extending the Yellow Line to Greenbelt to double rush-hour service at nine stations, running all Red Line trains to Glenmont to double service at an additional three stations and enhancing the value of Metro unlimited bus and rail passes. These customer service improvements are in addition to the “Rush Hour Promise” for unscheduled delays of 10 minutes or more and other initiatives like automatic train operation to give customers a smoother and more reliable ride.

The FY2020 Base Budget has no fare increases and includes new initiatives to grow ridership and revenue with extensions of Yellow and Red Lines as well as pass product changes. The recommended FY2020 Capital Budget of \$1.5 billion and six-year capital plan of \$9.2 billion include investment in ongoing projects, prioritized system preservation and renewal needs from the [Capital Needs Inventory](#).

Alexandria’s operating subsidy will be approximately \$48 million, and the capital subsidy will total approximately \$12 million. In addition, the City will contribute to Virginia’s portion of the dedicated funding approximately \$4 million.

B. WMATA Platform Work

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 to rebuild the platforms](#), some of which have major structural issues. 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 Stations in Fairfax County.

Given the impacts of the Metrorail station closure, both the [City](#) and WMATA have developed plans to move people in and out of the City. The plan discusses the following elements:

Five Free WMATA Shuttles, and One Free Potential DASH Shuttle – WMATA will deliver five free shuttles during the shutdown. [Map and routing information are found online](#). Two of these shuttles will be express services between the end of the Yellow and Blue lines and the Pentagon. Two lines will serve Alexandria Metrorail stations, and the remaining shuttles will run express between Landmark Mall and the Pentagon.

Traffic Mitigation – The City has highlighted a series of traffic mitigation strategies that can help shuttle buses and other traffic move throughout the City. Changes are as follows:

- HOV lane changes along Washington St.
- Signal timing and staffing of the traffic operations center

Transportation Alternatives and other Incentives – The City has developed several Transportation Demand Management (TDM) incentives, including the following:

- **Vanpool Incentives** – The City will offer up to \$200/month for *new* vanpool riders leaving from or coming to the City.
- **Park and Ride Lot at Landmark Mall** – The City is leasing space for up to 200 parking spaces at Landmark Mall. This is to create a “park and ride” where commuters can park, join a larger carpool, then take the HOV/HOT lanes along I-395.
- **Potomac Riverboat Company’s Water Taxi** – The Potomac Riverboat Company (PRC) is increasing runs of its Water Taxi service at its own cost. At present, they are planning up to four runs in the morning from Old Town Alexandria to the District Wharf.
- **Other private contributors** – While not City supported, several private entities are scaling up their operations in Alexandria during this period. Waze Carpool is currently in soft launch, and Via aims to introduce service by May 25.

Active Commuting – The City is promoting active commuting in a number of different ways including additional wayfinding for bicycle commuters, expanded bike corrals, rebalancing for Capital Bikeshare, and bike education courses.

Advertising Campaigns – The City has also invested in an awareness campaign, placing ads in the Alexandria Times and Gazette, as well as on social media. The City is launching a second campaign that outlines the mitigation plan.

C. Seminary Road Complete Streets Project Update

The [Seminary Road Complete Streets Project](#) is in the conceptual design phase. On March 25, 2019 from 7:00 – 9:00 pm, the City held a public meeting at St. Stephen’s and St. Agnes Upper School on St. Stephens Road. Staff showed the three design alternatives during an open house style meeting and a presentation with questions and answers after the presentation. Over 150 people attended the event. Materials including the informational boards, an FAQ document, a narrated presentation, and survey to gain feedback were posted on the project web page following that meeting. The comment period for this phase closed on April 10th. Staff is also available - as schedules permit - to meet with groups of the public to discuss the options and answer questions until the next public meeting occurs.

Staff is working to summarize input and will post a comment summary to the website. Staff will then work internally to determine a recommended alternative. This alternative will be presented to the community at a meeting in mid-May as well as posted online with a two-week comment period to follow. Comments will then be summarized and posted on the webpage.

If the recommended alternative involves substantial changes to traffic operations on Seminary Road, staff will present the alternative to the Traffic and Parking Board at its June meeting for approval. The roadway is scheduled to be repaved in September of 2019, and following the repaving, the recommendation will be implemented.

D. Potomac Yard Metrorail Station Update

The City and WMATA are currently working on design changes to accommodate the southwest entry, based on additional funding from the state as part of the Amazon package. The City is working with the State to secure the funding through various grant sources. In the meantime, WMATA is moving forward with the current approved design, but will seek a Development Special Use Permit (DSUP) amendment in summer 2019 to refine the design to add the southwest entry . The station is on schedule to begin operation in early 2022. The Potomac Yard Metrorail Implementation Work Group (PYMIG) met on March 18, and an update was provided by the contractor on the work anticipated this year, including permits, design, construction staging, and the placing of fill for the station. In addition, an update was given on the alternatives being considered for an enhanced southwest entry. This spring, WMATA will advance the engineering for the alternatives to allow for independent cost estimates and impacts to the schedule. The alternatives will be evaluated using a number of criteria, such as cost, schedule risks, distance traveled, impacts to the community, travel experience, and sense of arrival. The PYMIG provided feedback on the criteria, and the updated criteria will be discussed at the next PYMIG meeting scheduled for April 22. More information is available at <https://www.alexandriava.gov/PotomacMetroWorkGroup>

E. Resident Parking Permit (RPP) Refresh

The City is currently in the process of reviewing and updating the residential permit parking (RPP) program under the [RPP Refresh project](#). This program is established in the City Code

in the late 1970s but has not been comprehensively reviewed since it was created. The objectives of the RPP *Refresh* project are to update the program to (1) better address current residential parking issues, (2) improve the city's ability to proactively manage parking, and (3) be easy to understand, enforce, and administer.

Earlier this year, staff issued a questionnaire to get feedback on the top issues to address as part of this project. Based on over 800 responses, the top three issues were (1) Posted Restrictions, (2) Permit Fees and Limits, and (3) Process. In addition, consideration of a staff-initiated process to proactively designate streets in the RPP program before they meet the requirements, is also included in this project since the City Council directed staff to explore such a process as part of the Parking Work Plan. Staff has been meeting with a subcommittee of the Traffic and Parking Board to discuss these issues. These meetings are open to the public.

Another questionnaire was issued in April to gather feedback on specific options related to these issues. The results of this questionnaire will be discussed at the April 22nd subcommittee meeting. The subcommittee will be making a recommendation to the full Traffic and Parking Board this spring/early summer, who will forward a recommendation for consideration by the City Council in early fall. More details about the project can be found at www.alexandriava.gov/ParkingStudies.

F. Residential Pay-by-Phone

On March 16, City Council approved an ordinance to make the [Residential Pay by Phone Pilot Program](#) a permanent program within the Special Parking District Area (blocks east of Washington Street to the Potomac River, between Princess Street and Wolfe Street). The program allows hourly fees to be charged for on-street parking on residential streets to parkers without a residential parking permit for the appropriate district. Parkers were previously allowed to park for free for two hours in these zones.

New blocks can be added to the program through a resident-initiated petition process. In order to be eligible for the program, a block must have meters, be adjacent to a metered block, or be adjacent to an approved residential pay by phone block. In addition, the block must already have residential permit parking signage posted (e.g. timed restrictions noting District 1 or 2 vehicles are exempt).

Parkers without a district permit who choose to park on the block can use the City's pay-by-phone app, ParkMobile, call the ParkMobile toll-free, or purchase a receipt from a meter on an adjacent block.

City staff are continuing to explore recommendations on pay station placement within the program area, alternative payment method options, and program signage based on direction from City Council. Recommendations on these items will go before the Traffic and Parking Board at a public hearing on Monday, April 22.

G. Alexandria Repaving Schedule and Processes FY19-FY20

The City of Alexandria maintains and manages more than 560 lane miles of paved streets to ensure the safe and efficient movement of people, goods, and access to services. The City's FY 2019 CIP includes \$5.26 million in funding for the reconstruction and resurfacing of City streets.

In March, T&ES welcomed Contractor Dynatest to the City to start the assessment and evaluation of the streets, alleys, trails, and parking lots that are maintained by the City. This assessment will result in a new PCI score for City streets and will be used to develop the paving schedule in the coming years. This evaluation is performed every three years, with previous evaluations occurring in 2010, 2013, and 2016.

The FY 2019 paving season started last summer and will continue in April as the contractor continues working through the current list of streets to be paved. Currently approximately 75% of the streets on the FY19 schedule have been resurfaced. Concrete work (i.e. sidewalk repairs, curb ramps) has started on the streets identified in the FY 2020 paving schedule and the paving of those streets will occur later in the summer. The current paving schedule and the two week look ahead are available on our website at www.alexandriava.gov/publicworks.

H. Alexandria Mobility Plan – Transportation Master Plan Update

Staff is holding the second meeting of the Advisory Committee for the Alexandria Mobility Plan on April 17. The purpose of the meeting was to introduce the new project manager, provide a status update on the plan, and discuss background material that will be important to the development of the plan. Phase I of the plan, which will include an update to the Streets chapter, an expansion of the Transportation Demand Management section into a standalone chapter, and a framework for a new chapter on Smart Mobility is anticipated to be complete by the summer of 2020. Phase II of the Plan will include an update to the Transit chapter, a Parking and Curbside Management chapter, and a complete Smart Mobility chapter.