

City of Alexandria, Virginia

MEMORANDUM

DATE: JANUARY 25, 2021

TO: MEMBERS OF THE TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION

FROM: HILLARY ORR, DEPUTY DIRECTOR, T&ES

SUBJECT: WRITTEN UPDATE

ISSUE: Staff update to Transportation Commission on various projects.

RECOMMENDATION: That the Commission receive the items for consent. If there are any questions or comments on these items, Commissioners may raise them at the February meeting or email staff due to time constraints at the January meeting.

A. 2021 Transportation Commission Work Plan

See Attachment 1 for the revised 2021 Work Plan, which has been updated since the December meeting to add a trails update, the City's Climate and Energy Action Plan, the City's Long Range Work Program, Landmark Mall development as well as Visualize 2045, the Transportation Planning Board's federally required fiscally constrained long range transportation plan. In addition, staff have added consent items prior to requests for endorsements as discussed.

B. WMATA FY22 Budget Outlook

In the Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations Act of 2021, signed into law in early January, the region received \$830 million for transit funding. The funding includes apportionment to WMATA, the Potomac and Rappahannock Transportation Commission, and VRE. Of that amount, \$610 million is designated for WMATA after WMATA allocates a portion to local transit providers.

On January 14, the WMATA General Manager presented to the WMATA [Board](#) an FY21 budget amendment to allocate \$95 million of that funding to prevent layoffs and reductions in service, as well as an FY22 revised budget for public hearing, which allocates the remaining \$515 million. The FY21 budget amendment will add additional bus service to the region, and Alexandria specifically, instead of severely cutting service as initially planned. Region-wide, bus service will increase from about 75% of pre-pandemic levels to over 80% of pre-pandemic levels. While almost all routes in Alexandria will be running, many will have reduced service

levels, and some will have modified routes. Under the FY22 budget proposal, the increased service will continue through December 2021.

Unless additional revenue is identified, WMATA will have a \$119 million budget deficit for the second half of FY22. The current proposal will require, starting in January 2022, closure of 22 stations including Eisenhower and Van Dorn, reduced rail service, as well as eliminating most bus service in Alexandria, except for modified service on 7A/F, 10B, 28A, and 29K/N. Limited weekend rail service will still be available. These cuts would result in over 2,561 layoffs.

The Transportation Commission can endorse a letter to WMATA at the February meeting. The budget is anticipated to be adopted in April.

C. Visualize 2045

At its December meeting, the Transportation Planning Board (TPB), the region's Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO), which receives federal funding for the region, officially kicked off the development of the region's long-range transportation plan, [Visualize 2045](#).

In 2018, the TPB adopted seven transportation initiatives. The TPB noted that these ideas, if funded and enacted, would have the potential to significantly improve the region's transportation system performance compared to current plans and programs. If the region can make these ideas a reality, they can be part of a comprehensive strategy to meet climate resiliency goals.

The seven Aspirational Initiatives are:

- Bring Jobs and Housing Closer Together
- Expand Bus Rapid Transit and Transitways
- Move More People on Metrorail
- Provide More Telecommuting and Other Options for Commuting
- Expand Express Highway Network
- Improve Walk and Bike Access to Transit
- Complete the National Capital Trail Network

Alexandria staff are currently working to respond to the request for technical information for this effort. The deadline for agencies to submit their inputs is February 12, 2021. After that, staff will review the information provided and prepare it to be shared with the public. A 30-day public comment period will take place from April 2, 2021 to May 3, 2021. During this time, TPB members, stakeholders, and the public will have an opportunity to comment on the inputs, including whether and how they support shared regional goals and priorities. At its June meeting, the TPB will be asked to approve the inputs for use in the air quality and other analyses.

D. Interdepartmental Long Range Work Program

Each year, the City departments involved in long range planning collaborate on development of a planning work program for the upcoming fiscal year. For reference, you can view last year's (and previous years') approved work program [on the City's website](#).

Staff presented an initial draft for discussion at Planning Commission on January 5 and City Council on January 12. Materials are posted to the [Planning Commission docket](#). Feedback is welcome through May 2021, when City Council will vote to approve a long-range planning work program for FY 2022.