

City of Alexandria, Virginia

MEMORANDUM

DATE: NOVEMBER 15, 2018

TO: MEMBERS OF THE TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION

FROM: HILLARY ORR, DEPUTY DIRECTOR, AND T&ES STAFF

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. Funding Update:

Each year the City Manager presents a proposed City Budget to the City Council for consideration and action. As part of the budget process, a ten-year Capital Improvement Program (CIP) is developed to fund major capital projects in the City. Funding for the CIP comes from the City's general fund, grants, and other non-City sources such as developer contributions.

As part of this process, on November 13th, 2018 the City Manager proposed to City Council guidance for the FY 2020 General Fund Operating Budget and Capital Improvement Program for FY 2020 to FY 2029. The guidance from the City Manager to City Council is summarized below. The Draft memo from the City Manager is also available in Attachment I.

The City Council of Alexandria passed a resolution establishing Council's process for formulating the Operating Budget and the Capital Improvement Program (CIP) and requires that City Council set budget guidance for the City Manager and the School Board for the FY 2020 budget. The main topics for guidance from the City Manager are:

(a) Operating and Capital Improvement Program Expenditures

(b) Taxes, Fees, Fines and Service Charges

(c) Cost Saving Measures

(d) Use of Surplus

(e) CIP: The proposed FY 2020 through 2029 CIP shall incorporate the following:

1. Compliance with the City's adopted Debt Related Financial Policy Guidelines for any debt issuance planned for FY 2020 through FY 2029;
2. Consistency with the City's adopted cash capital investment policy of a General Fund cash capital transfer of no less than 2.0% with the goal of funding the FY 2020 General Fund cash capital reflected at the level in the current adopted CIP;

3. The optional use, as determined by the City Manager, of an additional General Fund operating budget surplus from FY 2019, if any, as commitment for capital projects in FY 2020 and beyond;
4. Specific descriptions of projects that can be funded within recommended levels of funding, their associated operating costs, estimated for all years of the CIP, and a description of the criteria used to prioritize the projects as Attachment 3 recommended by the Budget and Fiscal Affairs Advisory Committee (BFAAC);
5. Proposed funding for City and ACPS facility projects based on the recommendations of the Ad Hoc Joint City-Schools Facility Investment Task Force.

(f) ACPS Funding

(g) Outside Agencies

For more information related to the City Manager's guidance, please visit the City Council Docket in the following link:

http://legistar.granicus.com/alexandria/meetings/2018/11/1903_A_City_Council_Legislative_Meeting_18-11-13_Docket.pdf

B. WMATA Funding Update:

On November 1, WMATA presented the first draft of its FY 2020 Operating and Capital budgets at the Finance and Capital Committee. It is important to note is that *these are only preliminary figures*, and they will very likely change over the course of the next several months. WMATA is proposing a capital budget of \$1,375 million for FY 2020, and a total of \$9,265 million through FY 2025. In the FY 2019 budget, WMATA projected \$1,300 million for FY 2020. Assuming no modifications, this means that Alexandria will have to increase its expected capital contribution by approximately \$5 million. This is in addition to Alexandria's portion of the WMATA dedicated funding revenue which was passed by the General Assembly last spring. This portion totals approximately \$4.3 million. Another aspect of this dedicated funding is that \$2.2 million of Alexandria's NVTVA 30% funds is directed to the WMATA dedicated capital funding as well instead of coming directly to the City. A risk in the capital budget outlook is that the Passenger Rail Investment and Improvement Act of 2008 (PRIIA) is set to expire in October 2020. PRIIA provides a very important federal match for WMATA's capital budget, and if Congress does not reauthorize it, future capital projections will need to be recalculated. WMATA is confident that PRIIA will be reauthorized but has not provided any details.

WMATA is also requesting a total operating subsidy of \$1,162 million for FY20. According to the Virginia and Maryland dedicated funding legislation, increases in operating subsidies are capped at 3% per year with FY 2019 operating subsidies serving as the base year. Certain costs such as legal costs and federal mandates are excluded from this cap. The FY 2019 base subsidy has increased by a total of \$65.6 million from the approved budget last March due to collective bargaining agreement settlements and the unexpectedly high cost of MetroAccess contract negotiations. This, in addition to the FY 2018 costs of the collective bargaining agreement settlements of \$1 million, increase Alexandria's operating subsidy by \$2.7 million. \$1.7 million of this increase will be paid at the beginning FY 2020. This means that the FY 2020 operating subsidy is likely to rise approximately \$4 million, totaling \$48 million for the City.

The General Manager also proposed approximately \$20 million in unfunded service improvements and fare decreases. Because of the state-mandated 3% cap on operating expenses, Virginia and Maryland jurisdictions have no way to fund these changes.

The general timeline for the WMATA budget process is:

- December 2018: Board Authorization of Public Hearing and Budget Deliberations
- January – February 2019: Budget Deliberations, Public Outreach and Public Comment Period
- March 2019: Board Adoption of FY 2020 Budget

C. Alexandria Transit Vision Plan

The Alexandria Transit Vision (ATV) Plan will redraw the city's bus network to better serve current and future transit demands and to better reflect community priorities for transit service. The plan is anticipated to be completed in summer 2019.

A joint Transportation Commission / Alexandria Transit Company (ATC) Board meeting was held on September 27 to provide an overview of the project and discuss choices and tradeoffs. On Saturday, September 29, a stakeholder workshop was held to receive input from key stakeholders and discuss choices and tradeoffs. Several other civic engagement activities have been completed during the first round of civic engagement this fall, including:

- Pop up outreach at various community events and transit stations in October
- Two Public Workshops focusing on transit priorities and trade offs
 - October 16, 7:00-9:00pm, Durant Arts Center
 - October 18, 7:00-9:00pm, Samuel Tucker Elementary School
 - An online and hard copy transit choices survey in English and Spanish

The ATV Plan will involve two more rounds of civic engagement to ensure that concerns and ideas of the Alexandria community are heard, recognized and incorporated into the development of a future transit network.

D. Holmes Run Trail pedestrian and bicycle bridge

To improve safety, access, and comfort on the Holmes Run Trail, the City of Alexandria has installed a new pedestrian and bicycle bridge across Holmes Run at North Ripley Street. The bridge replaces a fair-weather crossing that was a barrier to pedestrians and cyclists during unsafe high-water levels.

Construction of the bridge was completed in September 2018. The bridge was identified as a priority project in the Pedestrian & Bicycle Master Plan, which was adopted by City Council in 2016 and implement the goals established in the 2014 Citywide Parks Improvement Plan. It is one of several projects planned to enhance bicycle and pedestrian access and safety in the City of Alexandria.

E. Seminary Road Transurban Project

On Thursday, November 8th the City Manager submitted a memo to City Council with background on the previously-agreed upon restrictions to south-facing ramp from the 1-395 median lanes to

Seminary Road, to provide an update on Transurban's proposal to modify operations of that ramp, and to describe planned staff actions to address this issue and incorporate s necessary into the Complete Streets analysis of Seminary Road.

The Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) in October notified the City that Transurban, the 1-395 Express Lanes concessionaire, is proposing to evaluate the current use of the Seminary Road high-occupant vehicle-only (HOV) ramp and to consider potential operational changes at the ramp for express lane/high-occupancy toll (HOT) traffic. This new information prompted city staff to postpone the planned October 18, 2018 community meeting on the Seminary Road Complete Street project to evaluate the Transurban request and seek additional information.

Moving forward, staff will continue to work with Transurban and VDOT to ensure a reliable study is conducted that will provide information on the potential traffic impacts of the contemplated change. The City was provided the opportunity to comment on the scope of the study area and specific study intersections. Staff will, in all communications with the public, emphasize that the staff role is solely to coordinate and review the analysis and that the City's official position is that it is opposed to this change. The obligation to analyze the impacts, engage with the public, decide how to proceed, and mitigate any impacts lies with VDOT and Transurban.

The Complete Streets project staff has paused work on the Seminary Road analysis until VDOT and TransUrban provide a reliable forecast of potential changes to Seminary Road traffic. The project team will then conduct a revised traffic analysis of the conceptual alternatives. Staff will also consider feedback from Council during an update on the project on October 23 and will proceed when more information is available about the timing of the TransUrban/VDOT study.

It is important to note that the City continues to oppose any change to the allow HOT users to access the south-facing ramp at Seminary Road and will remain involved with the traffic study to ensure the methodology used and data analysis is accurate.

For more background information on this project please visit: <https://www.alexandriava.gov/106630>

For the City Manager's Memo:

<https://www.alexandriava.gov/uploadedFiles/tes/info/Memo%20to%20Council%20-%20TransUrban%20Update.pdf>