

# *City of Alexandria, Virginia*

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## **MEMORANDUM**

DATE: DECEMBER 18, 2019

TO: MEMBERS OF THE TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION

FROM: HILLARY ORR, DEPUTY DIRECTOR, T&ES

SUBJECT: AGENDA ITEM # 7 – 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. Potomac Yard Metrorail Station**

The City of Alexandria will hold a public groundbreaking ceremony for the new Potomac Yard Metrorail Station on December 19, from 2 to 3 p.m. The event will take place at the future location of the station's northwest entrance (3601 Potomac Ave.) adjacent to the Regal Potomac Yard movie theater.

### **B. WMATA**

#### **WMATA Proposed Budget – Bus Changes**

In November, staff presented an overview of the proposed changes in fares and services in the WMATA proposed budget, including an increase in Metrorail late night and weekend hours, fare changes, and the announcement that there will be significant bus changes, but without details on which bus routes would be affected. On December 12, WMATA presented the docket item of all proposed changes that will require a public hearing for the FY 2021 budget, including details on the proposed bus changes.

The draft FY 2021 budget includes approximately \$33 million in cuts to bus service and approximately \$4 million in improvements to weekend bus services.

Alexandria was not impacted as much as others from the proposed cuts. The bus changes that impact Alexandria include:

- 7A,7F Lincolnia-North Fairlington  
Sunday: Increase frequency to match Saturday (every 30 minutes)

- 28A Leesburg Pike  
Sunday: Increase frequency to match Saturday (every 20 minutes)
- 7Y Lincolnia-North Fairlington  
Eliminate route segment from Pentagon to Farragut Square
- 22A, 22C, 22F Barcroft-South Fairlington  
Eliminate all 22A trips, convert all 22C trips to 22F trips. This will eliminate the route segment from Wakefield and 24th Streets to Ballston and the segment through Parkfairfax. Also, all off-peak service will be eliminated.
- NH2 National Harbor- Alexandria  
Eliminate route segment from King St.-Old Town to Huntington. Reduce frequency
- 10A, Alexandria-Pentagon  
Fri / Sat / Sun: Eliminate the last 10A trip each direction.

Public hearings will be held in January/February before the budget is finalized.

### **Blue/Orange/Silver Study**

Metro launched a two-year BOS Study in early 2019 to identify the best and most cost-effective solutions to address future ridership, service, and reliability needs on these Metrorail lines. The goals of the study are to:

- Serve Ridership Needs
- Maintain and Improve On-Time Performance
- Increase Flexibility
- Meet Sustainability Targets

While Alexandria is not in the study area, it may be impacted by some of the alternatives (especially proposed Blue Line changes) that are assessed and proposed as part of this effort. Alexandria and other jurisdictions on these lines have been participating on technical teams to provide initial feedback at each stage of the planning process. Metro is now beginning its public outreach to request similar feedback from the public through an online survey and four public open house meetings.

The intent of these outreach efforts is to gather preliminary reactions to the project concepts, and to encourage participants to submit their own ideas. Options range from turnbacks along the Orange/Silver line to new Metro Routes through Fairfax, Arlington and Alexandria. The online survey is available at <https://BOSstudy.questionpro.com>. The public open houses will be held at four locations across the Blue/Orange/Silver corridor. See the study webpage ([www.wmata.com/BOSstudy](http://www.wmata.com/BOSstudy)) for more information.

### **Bus Transformation Project**

On December 9, WMATA released the Bus Transformation Project Action Plan on its [website](#) to supplement the Strategy document that was released in September. The Action Plan details the steps involved to implement the 26 strategies laid out in the Bus Transformation Project Strategy. In January, the Bus Transformation Project Team will be presenting the highlights from the strategy and will be seeking Commission endorsement of the principles in the plan.

### **C. I-395 / Seminary Road HOV Ramp**

The Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) is considering removing the High Occupancy Vehicle (HOV) only restriction from the southern Seminary Road ramp to the I-395 High Occupancy Tol (HOT) lanes. This ramp was constructed to mitigate Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) generated traffic. In 2012, VDOT made a commitment to the City that the ramp was to remain HOV/Transit only, in response to concerns that the ramp would increase traffic on Seminary Road east of I-395. Despite this commitment, the “Amended and Restated Comprehensive Agreement” relating to the I95/I395 HOV/HOT Lanes project, executed June 2017, 95 Express Lanes, LLC (Transurban) retains the right to pursue the conversion of the ramp for HOV Only to HOV/HOT after the I-395 Express Lanes are operational.

The conversion process requires VDOT to submit an Interchange Modification Report (IMR) to the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) for approval. City staff reviewed the IMR and found the analysis methodology is consistent with good industry practice and there were no fatal flaws in the assumptions, projections or results. The analysis found converting the ramp to High Occupancy Toll (HOT) operation slightly improves travel times for the northbound I-395 AM peak both in 2020 and 2040. No improvements were noted for other times. However, no increase in the number of people or vehicles moved through the corridor was identified. Furthermore, the analysis did not identify any travel time improvements or other benefits to the local roadway network by allowing the conversion of the ramp. Based on the results of the IMR, the City staff found no compelling reason to convert the Seminary ramp for High Occupancy Vehicle (HOV) to HOT. There are still many unknowns and staff does not believe the risk is worth the minimal benefit. Additionally, the Alexandria City Council adopted a resolution in 2012 stating the City position with respect to the operation of the Northbound I-395/Seminary Road HOV/Transit Ramp.

VDOT/Transurban held a community meeting on December 9, 2019 to share the findings of the IMR and solicit input from the public. The Mayor, Vice Mayor and several other members of Council were in attendance, as well as City staff. The community was concerned the proposed ramp modification would do nothing to encourage public transit or carpooling and there needed to be protection against increased traffic on the local streets. Although VDOT will ultimately make the conversion decision, they stated they wanted to work with the City. There will be further coordinating between VDOT and the City on this matter.

### **D. Dockless Mobility Pilot Update**

The Dockless Mobility Pilot Evaluation has been completed and is available on the City’s Dockless Mobility [website](#). Staff presented draft recommendations to the community through a feedback form in October 2019, at the October Transportation Commission meeting as well as to

City Council at the Legislative Session on November 26. Since then, staff modified certain draft recommendations based on Council and community input. Staff presented final recommendations to City Council at the Legislative Session on December 10, and at the Public Hearing on December 14. Staff can provide an oral update of the outcome of the December 14 meeting at the Transportation Commission Meeting.

## **E. Alexandria Transit Vision Plan**

### **Alexandria Transit Vision Plan Update**

Staff presented an overview of the draft recommended 2022 and 2030 Alexandria Transit Vision (ATV) networks to the Transportation Commission at its November 20, 2019 meeting. The networks presented included a Final 2030 Transit Vision Plan, and three potential 2022 ATV Networks based on different growth assumptions ranging from 0% to 8% growth in service hours by FY 2022. The draft networks emphasize frequent, all day bus service along key corridors where more people will be able to enjoy the benefits of the more useful transit service.

One major area of concern identified through the outreach was a draft recommendation to discontinue AT2 service on Seminary/Janneys Lane between King Street Metrorail Station and Howard Street. At its November 13, 2019 meeting and public hearing, the ATC Board asked staff to maintain weekday AT2 service along this segment.

Based on public feedback and input from DASH and City leadership, staff developed the Final ATV Networks for 2022 and 2030, which were presented to the Board at its December 11, 2019 meeting. Based on uncertainties with the City budget and the impact of the proposed changes on the WMATA regional subsidy, the Board was encouraged to take a more policy-oriented approach and evaluate the final 2022 and 2030 recommendations which is less specific on cost projections and more specific on how successful the plans would be in achieving the basic goals of the ATV Plan. Ultimately, the Board adopted the final 2030 ATV Network Plan (20% added service hours), and the 2022 major growth (8% added service hours) ATV Network Plan.

In regard to the AT2 segment on Seminary Road and Janneys Lane, the Board supported the inclusion of the proposed route N12 in the final ATV networks, but recommended that the additional cost should be funded through other service reductions, such as reducing peak headways on the “N1” route along Eisenhower Avenue from every 15 minutes to every 30 minutes in the Final 2022 scenario. Further, the Board recommended that a ridership benchmark should be used to monitor future performance of Route N12. The average weekday boardings between Howard Street and King St-Old Town Metro should increase by a goal of 20% by the year 2025. DASH staff would be required to report to the Board annually on its performance with a final recommendation for continuation / discontinuation no later than the December meeting in 2025.

The final implementation of the 2022 ATV Network plan will be summarized in the FY 2022 DASH Transit Development Plan (TDP) process, which informs the annual DASH budget request to City Council. If adopted by City Council and pending coordination with WMATA and neighboring jurisdictions, the new ATV network could be launched by July 2021.

The long term 2030 ATV network implementation is anticipated to take place incrementally throughout the next decade through the DASH Transit Development Plan (TDP) process, which will inform the DASH subsidy request to the City and the allocation of funding by City Council through the City's Annual Budget processes.

The ATV project website can be found at [www.dashbus.com/transitvision/](http://www.dashbus.com/transitvision/). In addition, the ATC Board memo can be found at: <https://www.dashbus.com/events/atc-board-directors-meetings>