

City of Alexandria, Virginia

MEMORANDUM

DATE: FEBRUARY 20, 2019

TO: MEMBERS OF THE TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION

FROM: YON LAMBERT, DIRECTOR, T&ES

SUBJECT: AGENDA ITEM #7 – WMATA SUMMER SHUTDOWN UPDATE

ISSUE: Update on City and WMATA Planning efforts for closure of all Metrorail stations inside the City in Summer 2019.

BACKGROUND: 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. 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 in Fairfax County. WMATA is closing these stations to rebuild the platforms, some of which have major structural issues.

The City supports WMATA's decision to close these stations, as the maintenance is needed to prevent safety hazards and improve the customer experience. At the same time, both WMATA and the City expect disruption to travel patterns. WMATA estimates that there are 17,000 boardings per day at these six stations. Both WMATA and the City are working together and planning ways to move current Metrorail riders effectively with as minimal disruption as possible.

DISCUSSION: Given the impacts of the Metrorail station closure, both the City and WMATA are proposing plans that move people into, out of, and through the City. This plan, which City Council will consider in March, was developed based on four pillars and is available for public comment at www.alexandriava.gov/GOAlex.

Pillar 1 – WMATA Shuttles – The majority of displaced trips will be managed through WMATA's shuttle bus bridges. Two shuttle routes are express routes between the Pentagon and Huntington and between the Pentagon and Franconia-Springfield and do not enter the City.

The other two shuttles provide service to Alexandria, with headways expected to be approximately five-minute during peak periods. These shuttles include:

- *Blue Line Replacement* will provide service at the Franconia-Springfield, Van Dorn and King St-Old Town Metrorail stations, an intermediate stop at the intersection of King Street and Washington Street, and will terminate at Ronald Reagan Washington National Airport. This shuttle WILL NOT serve Braddock Road Metrorail station.

- *Yellow Line Replacement* will provide service at the Huntington, Eisenhower, King St-Old Town, and Braddock Metrorail stations, and will terminate at the Crystal City Metrorail station.

WMATA states publicly that the shuttles will move approximately 60 percent of displaced demand. This is a conservative estimate, and both staff and WMATA believe that up to 90 percent of existing passengers can be served with shuttles if standees and articulated buses are considered.

At the City's request, WMATA is providing other service enhancements and increased frequency on main routes including:

- Enhanced service on Metrobus routes that operate in the City, including the 10A, 11Y, and 8Z
- Midday, bidirectional service on the 11Y
- Additional resources for the 10E, which travels between the Crystal City Metrorail station, Old Town via Washington Street and Hunting Point

Pillar 2 – City/DASH Mitigation Efforts – The City and DASH will provide enhanced options for travel during this time:

- Additional DASH service on the AT3 and AT4, which serve the Pentagon Metrorail station
- Increased City Transportation Demand Management (TDM) measures, including carpool and vanpool formation, a park and ride lot and telework assistance
- Promotion of Potomac Riverboat Company's water taxi service which will likely begin morning service as a commute option during the shutdown. Details of this plan are still being considered and evaluated.

Pillar 3 – Mobility Alternatives – The City will promote alternative modes of transportation during the shutdown period. Examples include:

- Promotion of Capital Bikeshare, potentially including corrals for Capital Bikeshare bikes;
- Bicycle education, promoted through partners at the Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee (BPAC) and the Washington Area Bicycle Association (WABA);
- Enhancements to provide safer pedestrian access to transit as well as ADA upgrades at new bus stop locations.

Pillar 4 – Outreach and Communication – The City is committed to letting residents and workers know about their options through existing communication channels. Additionally, the City is organizing a robust employer outreach effort, open houses and graphic displays to more easily explain new commute options through the GO Alex program. The City is also exploring paid media opportunities and on-site street teams before and during the event.

FISCAL IMPACT – The City submitted a proposed budget to the Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transportation (DRPT) on February 15. DRPT may reimburse up to 80 percent of these mitigation costs. Elements of the final plan will be determined after a better understanding of the fiscal impact and reimbursement rates are provided by DRPT.