



Legislation Text

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City of Alexandria, Virginia

MEMORANDUM

DATE: APRIL 2, 2014

TO: THE HONORABLE MAYOR AND MEMBERS OF CITY COUNCIL

FROM: RASHAD M. YOUNG, CITY MANAGER/s/

DOCKET TITLE:

Consideration of a Partnership with Arlington County to Jointly Procure Fare Collection Equipment for the Crystal City Potomac Yard Transitway.

ISSUE: Consideration of a proposal to pursue a joint procurement with Arlington County for off-board fare collection equipment to be utilized on the Crystal City Potomac Yard Transitway.

RECOMMENDATION: That City Council authorize the City Manager to sign a Memorandum of Understanding substantially in the form attached with Arlington County to jointly procure off-board fare collection equipment.

BACKGROUND: The Crystal City Potomac Yard Transitway is the first segment in a five-mile high-capacity transit corridor connecting Pentagon City and Braddock Road Metrorail stations. Service is expected to start in summer 2014. Much of the service will operate in dedicated transit lanes, providing residents, workers, and visitors with a fast, convenient, and comfortable connection to the regional Metrorail network, the emerging Potomac Yard developments, and key employment nodes.

The initial segment of the corridor is under construction along Route 1 between Potomac Avenue and East Glebe Road. Transit vehicles will operate in an exclusive right-of-way along this segment. The project includes enhanced stations, off-board fare collection, transit signal priority, and real-time information signage. The Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA) will operate new premium transit service under the brand *Metroway*.

Off-board fare collection is a key component of the new service. It will allow passengers to pay their fare before boarding vehicles and board at any door, reducing the time it takes to load and unload passengers, and enhancing the speed and reliability of the service overall.

DISCUSSION: The Crystal City Potomac Yard Transitway will be the first corridor in the region to use off-board fare collection. Because one of the goals of the system is to enhance connectivity to the regional transit network, it is imperative that the fare collection be compatible with the regional SmarTrip system. SmarTrip, which has been implemented throughout the region by WMATA, DASH, and other local transit providers, is a proprietary technology owned by Cubic Transportation Systems. The City and Arlington County have worked with Cubic and WMATA to identify the most appropriate technology to accept fares at station platforms. The strategy agreed upon by all parties includes the installation of both Cubic equipment as well as a multi-space parking meter at each station platform. The Cubic equipment will accept payment via SmarTrip cards and produce a receipt as proof of payment. The multispace parking meter will accept coins and credit cards for riders that do not have a SmarTrip card. A similar approach has been implemented along New York City's Select Bus Service corridor and the Cubic equipment has been proven there.

In the initial phase of the transitway, 63 Cubic machines (Alexandria 32 machines, Arlington 31 machines) are eventually needed for the length of the corridor. If either the City or the County moved forward with the procurement on their own, the equipment purchase would be half as large and the cost per machine would likely increase. The City and Arlington County staff are proposing a joint procurement with the goal of receiving a better price from the vendor.

FISCAL IMPACT: Staff expects that given Cubic's proprietary technology this will be a sole source procurement and will develop sole source justification documentation in partnership with County staff to meet local jurisdiction and Federal Transit Administration requirements. Both the City and County currently have funding for fare collection equipment accounted for in their project budgets. Alexandria has \$1.3 million in federal and state funds budgeted for fare collection equipment, including the multi-space parking meters that will be repurposed for cash fare payment. No additional funding is projected to be needed at this time. Maintenance of the machines may either be done by City and County forces or by contract, dependent on cost comparison. Ongoing maintenance costs have been incorporated in the transitway operating budget, which will be funded by planned NVTAA 30% funds.

ATTACHMENT:

Attachment 1:

Memorandum of Understanding Fare Collection Machine Procurement

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