



Legislation Text

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City of Alexandria, Virginia

MEMORANDUM

DATE: JANUARY 22, 2014

TO: THE HONORABLE MAYOR AND MEMBERS OF CITY COUNCIL

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

DOCKET TITLE:

Consideration of a Resolution in Support of the Virginia Railway Express Slaters Lane Crossover and Signals Project. [ROLL-CALL VOTE]

ISSUE: City Council consideration of a resolution in support for the Virginia Railway Express Slaters Lane crossover and signals project

RECOMMENDATION: That City Council adopt a resolution (Attachment 1) in support of the Slaters Lane crossover and signals project.

DISCUSSION: Virginia Railway Express's (VRE) Slaters Lane crossover and signals project will include the design and construction of a rail crossover and related signals in the vicinity of Slaters Lane, north of Alexandria's Amtrak/VRE station. The project will provide passenger rail and freight track connections between the easternmost, middle, and westernmost tracks between Alexandria and Crystal City. The project will also allow for passenger rail service to utilize all three tracks, which pass through Alexandria's Amtrak/VRE station. Existing conditions only allow for passenger rail trains to utilize the middle and westernmost tracks, which constricts how passenger and freight trains can operate through the station area.

As part of VRE's pedestrian tunnel project, which provides a direct connection to the King Street-Old Town Metrorail station from Alexandria's Union Station, major improvements will be made to eastern platform, including:

- Americans with Disabilities Act access improvements;
- A new stairway to the new pedestrian tunnel;

- Installation of an elevator which will connect to the new pedestrian tunnel; and
- Platform extensions, alternations, and reconfigurations.

Along with the improvements to the eastern platform, the Slaters Lane rail crossover and signals project will enable both VRE and Amtrak trains to utilize both sides of the eastern platform by making all three tracks at Alexandria's Union Station available for passenger boarding and alighting. The project will also enhance operational flexibility and performance on the railroad by allowing the movement of passenger and freight trains from one track to another to preclude conflicts between trains and minimize the potential for delays. Without the crossover, VRE trains will be unable to use the easternmost track at Union Station and to fully take advantage of the planned improvements to the eastern platform.

DISCUSSION: In December 2013, NVTA issued a call for projects for the first three years of a Six-Year Plan to be submitted by January 31, 2014. The VRE Operations Board has recommended that the Northern Virginia Transportation Commission and the Potomac and Rappahannock Transportation Commission approve the submission of the Slaters Lane Crossover and Signals project as one of several projects which increase transit capacity to the Northern Virginia Transportation Authority (NVTA) for consideration for NVTA 70% funding. VRE has also requested a resolution of support from the City to submit with the project.

The project construction period is estimated to be no more than 4-6 weeks in duration. VRE has committed that the work will adhere to any city or other requirements for time of day or other construction-related requirements. In addition, access to the construction site will be via existing railroad ROW access point at Slaters Lane. The signal equipment and rail crossover is preassembled off-site and brought in for installation in order to minimize the on-site construction period. The primary impact will be noise from the construction itself (e.g., typical sawing or hammering construction noises, as well as equipment noise), but it is not expected to be any louder than the noise from existing train operations and/or routine railroad maintenance activities.

FISCAL IMPACT:

VRE is seeking NVTA 70% funding for this project. HB2313 states that each locality's total long-term benefit shall be approximately equal to the proportion of the total of the fees and taxes that are generated by the locality. City staff is supportive of VRE seeking NVTA 70% funds if NVTA and its member jurisdictions agree that the project is one of regional significance and any "benefits" should be ascribed to VRE directly or shared equally across VRE's member jurisdictions.

ATTACHMENTS:

Attachment 1: - Resolution in Support of VRE's Slaters Lane Crossover and Signals Project Tunnel Project.

STAFF:

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