



Legislation Text

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City of Alexandria, Virginia

MEMORANDUM

DATE: OCTOBER 18, 2017

TO: THE HONORABLE MAYOR AND MEMBERS OF CITY COUNCIL

FROM: MARK B. JINKS, CITY MANAGER /s/

DOCKET TITLE:

Consideration of a Resolution to Endorse Staff Comments Related to the D.C. to Richmond (DC2RVA) Southeast High Speed Rail Project - Tier II Draft Environmental Impact Statement. [ROLL-CALL VOTE]

ISSUE: Potential impacts of the proposed D.C. to Richmond (DC2RVA) Southeast High Speed Rail Project.

RECOMMENDATION: That City Council adopt the attached resolution concerning the DC2RVA Tier II Draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS).

BACKGROUND: The DC2RVA project corridor is a proposed 123-mile stretch of railroad between Richmond, Virginia and the Potomac River crossing in Arlington, Virginia. Both freight and passenger rail services operate along the corridor, with Amtrak providing intercity passenger rail service and Virginia Railway Express (VRE) providing commuter rail service.

The DC2RVA project corridor is a segment of the federally-designated Southeast High Speed Rail Corridor (SEHSR) in the northernmost part of a five-state network of a high speed rail corridor under development, stretching southward from Washington D.C. through Richmond to Raleigh, Charlotte, Atlanta and Jacksonville.

The overall goals of the DC2RVA project are to:

- Improve reliability and on-time performance
- Reduce travel time and improve trip times
- Increase frequency by adding up to 9 Amtrak round-trips daily between DC and Richmond from the current service of 10 trips per day

DISCUSSION: Currently, the Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transportation (DRPT) is engaged in a Tier II Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) process that evaluates the benefits, costs, and environmental

effects of several possible alternatives. The Tier II Draft EIS (DEIS) identifies a preferred rail alignment and a series of improvements for the corridor. DRPT held public scoping meetings (November 2014 in Arlington), preliminary alternative process development public meetings (June 2015 in Alexandria) and an alternatives review meeting (December 2015 in Springfield). DRPT has also provided two updates to the Alexandria Transportation Commission (June 2016 and January 2017).

The DEIS was released in September 2017. A 60-day comment period began on September 8, 2017 and ends on November 7, 2017. A Public Hearing took place October 17 at the Hilton Alexandria Old Town. Staff has reviewed the Draft EIS and comments are included in Attachment 1. Some key high level concerns include:

- Impacts related to shifting (albeit minor) of existing tracks toward residential areas
- Property acquisition
- Noise and vibration impacts and mitigation
- Alexandria Union Station parking capacity
- Proposed retaining walls along the corridor

FISCAL IMPACT: The Commonwealth of Virginia has received \$165 million through a federal FASTLANE grant to construct the 4th track and modify the existing tracks in Alexandria. The project to add fourth rail infrastructure and improve bridges does not require any City funding. However, the EIS is silent on the funding needs for parking facilities that would be desirable at Alexandria Union Station should a stop be added in this location. Such parking facilities may be able to be funded on a fee revenue basis.

ATTACHMENTS:

Attachment 1: Resolution

Attachment 2: Draft Cover Letter

Attachment 3: Draft City of Alexandria Questions and Comments

Attachment 4: Presentation

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