



Legislation Text

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City of Alexandria, Virginia

MEMORANDUM

DATE: OCTOBER 16, 2019

TO: THE HONORABLE MAYOR AND MEMBERS OF CITY COUNCIL

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

DOCKET TITLE:

Consideration of Support Letter for the Long Bridge Project Environmental Impact Statement

ISSUE: Council Consideration of Support for Action Alternative A as identified in the Long Bridge Environmental Impact Statement (EIS)

RECOMMENDATION: That City Council approve a letter (Attachment 1) in support of Action Alternative A in the Long Bridge EIS for submission to the project by October 28, 2019.

BACKGROUND: The District of Columbia Department of Transportation (DDOT), in coordination with the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA), is completing a comprehensive study for the rehabilitation or replacement of the Long Bridge over the Potomac River. The existing two-track railroad bridge, owned by CSX Transportation (CSXT), has been in use since 1904 and currently serves freight, Amtrak and VRE. The 1.8-mile study area runs between Long Bridge Park in Arlington County and L'Enfant near 10th Street SW in Washington, DC (Attachment 2).

While the current bridge does not need replacing, there is currently insufficient capacity, resiliency and redundancy to accommodate projected demand in future railroad services. Operators plan to increase passenger and freight train volumes across Long Bridge by 153 percent by 2040. The proposed project would double the corridor's capacity.

DDOT has completed a DRAFT Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) in compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA). The process includes analysis of alternatives, including the No Action Alternative, and identification of a Preferred Alternative.

DISCUSSION: In the DRAFT EIS, the FRA and DDOT identified two potential action alternatives. The preferred alternative (Action Alternative A) would construct a new two-track railroad bridge but retain the

existing Long Bridge. Action Alternative B would also construct a new two-track bridge, but it would replace the existing Long Bridge. The project estimates Action Alternative A would cost \$1.9 billion with a construction duration of five years. Action Alternative B is estimated to cost \$2.8 billion with a construction duration of eight years and three months.

The FRA and DDOT selected Action Alternative A because it can fulfill the purpose and need of the project to expand rail capacity and the regional transportation network while minimizing costs, construction time and impacts to the surrounding area. Construction of a new, two-track bridge would align with station and rail infrastructure improvements planned by the Commonwealth of Virginia and VRE to expand the number of commuter and intercity trains.

Furthermore, the parallel bridge configuration proposed under Action Alternative A would reduce disruption during construction, which are essential to the mobility of Northern Virginia and the region. In addition to enabling improved commuter rail service, this project would increase rail service and improve connectivity between the National Capital region and Richmond because of its relationship to the DC2RVA high-speed rail project.

DDOT and the FRA are considering a bike-pedestrian crossing and evaluated multiple multimodal options. Following safety and engineering analysis and railroad operator coordination, FRA and DDOT selected a bike-pedestrian crossing option on an independent bridge over the Potomac River. The crossing would be located between the existing Metrorail (Yellow Line) bridge and a new upstream railroad bridge. FRA and DDOT are considering this option as potential mitigation for property impacts.

FISCAL IMPACT: None directly to the City of Alexandria. Indirectly, increased passenger rail service whether intercity or commuter service will have a positive long-term benefit to the City.

ATTACHMENTS:

Attachment 1: Long Bridge DRAFT letter of support
Attachment 2: Long Bridge Project Location Map
Attachment 3: Long Bridge Project Action Alternatives

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