



VIRGINIA RAILWAY EXPRESS
OPERATIONS BOARD

Agenda Item 9-B
Information Item

To: Chairman Smedberg and the VRE Operations Board

From: Doug Allen

Date: June 16, 2017

Re: Crystal City Station Improvement Project Update

The Virginia Railway Express (VRE) Crystal City Station, one of the busiest in the system, was designed at the beginning of the VRE service. Ridership has grown significantly since that time, requiring longer and a greater number of VRE trains. The current platform is too short to efficiently serve our longer trains and only allows service from one track. These inefficiencies can cause an operational bottleneck in the middle of the most heavily-trafficked segment of the CSX Transportation RF&P Subdivision.

To help mitigate these inefficiencies, there is a need for a longer platform to accommodate full-length VRE trains that should be configured as an island platform serving two tracks. Additional key project goals include improved intermodal transfers to Metrorail, Metroway, local bus, and DOD Shuttles, enhanced bicycle and pedestrian connectivity, and minimizing community impacts. The improved station would also provide opportunities to better align VRE service with Crystal City's vision for growth.

There is an immediate need to progress this project. The Atlantic Gateway Fourth Track project, which is sponsored by the Commonwealth, has been funded through a recent Federal Fastlane grant and the design and engineering for the improved Crystal City Station project needs to be incorporated into the Fourth Track project.

The current phase of the VRE Crystal City Station Improvement Project is evaluating the location of the station and its access points, advancing the conceptual design through preliminary engineering, and environmental documentation. This work is funded through the Northern Virginia Transportation Authority and the Commonwealth of Virginia.

The current phase of the VRE Crystal City Station Improvement Project was initiated in December 2016. Three platform location options were identified, including the existing location and two other locations further south in Crystal City. An initial public meeting was held in March 2016 to introduce the options under consideration and the evaluation



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criteria that will be used for selecting the station location. Another round of public outreach is scheduled in June 2017, including another set of public meetings on June 7, focused on evaluating the proposed options.

Major factors used to evaluate the three station locations included connections to local and regional transportation networks, community and environmental impacts, and elements with significant cost impacts. The detailed evaluation and the summary rankings were shared with stakeholder organizations and the public for feedback.

Next steps involve collecting and incorporating input received into the evaluation, and selecting a single station location to advance into preliminary engineering and environmental documentation. Staff anticipates returning to the VRE Operations in July for endorsement of a preferred option for more detailed development and design.