



VIRGINIA RAILWAY EXPRESS

Agenda Item 9-B
Action Item

To: Chairman Smedberg and the VRE Operations Board

From: Doug Allen

Date: October 20, 2017

Re: Approval of Preferred Site for Crystal City Station for Further Analysis and Design

Recommendation:

The Virginia Railway Express (VRE) Operations Board is asked to approve the Option 2 site as the preferred station location on which to proceed with more detailed design and evaluation including preliminary engineering and environmental investigations for the Crystal City Station Improvements.

Summary:

VRE conducted a technical analysis of three possible station locations using a two-step evaluation process. The process integrated extensive public outreach and stakeholder coordination. The technical evaluation of the three potential station locations determined that, when compared to other options, Option 2 provides the highest level of connectivity with local and regional transportation, a comparable level of community and environmental impacts, and can be accomplished at moderate cost. Based on the technical analysis and feedback received, VRE staff recommends Option 2 as the station location for further analysis and evaluation.

Background:

Crystal City Station—one of the busiest in the VRE system—was designed 25 years ago. Ridership has significantly increased since that time requiring longer VRE trains. There is an immediate need to extend the station platform to accommodate the longer VRE trains operating today. A second platform edge is also needed to allow greater operational flexibility in this heavily trafficked segment of the CSXT RF&P Subdivision. The project also provides an opportunity to better align VRE with Crystal City's vision for growth.

The current phase of the project, initiated in December 2016, focused on identifying the optimal location of the station and its access points. Objectives include better job access through enhanced pedestrian and bicycle connectivity, improved intermodal connections (Metrorail, Metroway, local buses, and Department of Defense shuttles) and consideration of community impacts.

Determining the location of the new VRE platform is needed prior to the start of engineering for the new fourth track through Crystal City, which is fully-funded as part of DRPT's Atlantic Gateway/FASTLANE project and currently anticipated to begin in 2018.

VRE conducted a technical analysis of three possible station locations using a two-step evaluation process. The process integrated extensive public outreach and stakeholder coordination. A project website provided ready access to technical information and event materials. The analysis was reviewed by a stakeholder working group comprised of JBG Smith and Equity Residential (property owners of land adjacent to the railroad), the Crystal City Business Improvement District, the Metropolitan Washington Airports Authority, the National Park Service, and the Department of Defense Transportation Management Program Office at the Pentagon (significant destination for VRE riders). Working with Arlington County staff, VRE also provided briefings to County Commissions and the County Board.

Steps were taken to gather and address input received from residents, riders, the business community, and the general public. Five public events were held between November 2016 and June 2017, that involved the Crystal City Civic Association (CCCA), a residents' group, and were attended by up to 80 individuals. Based on concerns expressed by Crystal City residents and other stakeholders, additional analyses were performed regarding noise, vibration, and visual impacts associated with each option that would have been otherwise performed in a later phase of project development.

VRE's evaluation of the three potential station locations determined that, when compared to other options, Option 2 provides the highest level of connectivity with local and regional transportation with a comparable level of community and environmental impacts. An analysis of rough order of magnitude costs for major elements associated in each option (e.g., pedestrian bridges and tunnels, and track relocations) showed this option is expected to have a moderate cost compared to the other options.

County staff, riders and representatives of the business community expressed a preference for Option 2. Based on the technical analysis and the feedback received, the VRE staff recommends Option 2 as the station location on which to focus further analysis and design. The CCCA expressed a preference for Option 3.

In September, VRE presented its staff recommendation to the Arlington County Planning Commission, Transportation Commission, Transit Advisory Committee, and the County Board. The Arlington County Board accepted Option 2 as VRE staff's preferred station location, and expressed an interest in receiving continuing updates and opportunities to comment as the design and analysis progresses.

Upon approval of the Option 2 site station location by the Operations Board, VRE staff will proceed with more detailed design and evaluation of that location including preliminary engineering and environmental investigations. That effort will include negotiating preliminary agreements with private property owners, where appropriate, for access across their property to Crystal Drive.

Fiscal Impact:

There is no fiscal impact due to this decision. Funding for the current planning study is provided through a grant from the Northern Virginia Transportation Authority.

**Virginia Railway Express
Operations Board**

**Resolution
9B-10-2017**

**Approval of Preferred Site for Crystal City Station
for Further Analysis and Design**

WHEREAS, VRE has initiated a station expansion at Crystal City Station to rectify currently observed deficiencies and develop a design that meets future needs; and,

WHEREAS, VRE conducted a technical analysis of three possible station locations using a two-step evaluation process that integrated extensive public outreach and stakeholder coordination; and,

WHEREAS, the technical analysis determined, when compared to other options, Option 2 provides the highest level of connectivity with local and regional transportation, a comparable level of community and environmental impacts; and,

WHEREAS, an analysis of rough order of magnitude costs for major elements showed this option is expected to have a moderate cost compared to the other options; and,

WHEREAS, based on the technical analysis and in consideration of the feedback received, from stakeholders and interested parties, VRE staff recommends Option 2 as the preferred station location;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT, the VRE Operations Board does hereby approve the Option 2 site as the preferred station location on which to proceed with more detailed design and evaluation including preliminary engineering and environmental investigations for the Crystal City Station Improvements.

Approved this 20th day of October 2017

Paul Smedberg
Chairman

Katie Cristol
Secretary