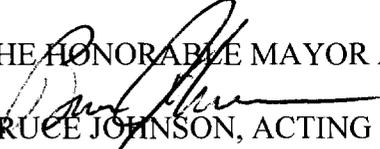


City of Alexandria, Virginia

MEMORANDUM

**DATE:** SEPTEMBER 7, 2011

**TO:** THE HONORABLE MAYOR AND MEMBERS OF CITY COUNCIL

**FROM:**  BRUCE JOHNSON, ACTING CITY MANAGER

**SUBJECT:** CONSIDERATION OF PARTICIPATION IN THE NORTHERN VIRGINIA REGIONAL COMMISSION'S MARKET ANALYSIS FOR COMMUTER BOAT SERVICE ON THE OCCOQUAN, POTOMAC, AND ANACOSTIA RIVERS

**ISSUE:** Northern Virginia Regional Commission (NVRC) market analysis for commuter boat service on Occoquan, Potomac, & Anacostia Rivers.

**RECOMMENDATION:** That the City Council approve an allocation in the amount of \$5,000 from the FY 2012 Year of the FY 2012 to FY 2021 Ten Year Transportation Project Plan to participate in NVRC market analysis for commuter boat service on the Occoquan, Potomac, and Anacostia Rivers.

**DISCUSSION:** As a member of NVRC, the City of Alexandria participated in the NVRC's first stakeholder meeting for a Commuter Ferry Service on the Potomac on September 23, 2010. There were 75 participants at the meeting.

The meeting was attended by representatives of the Joint Force Headquarters National Capital Region (JFHQ-NCR); the Naval District of Washington; military installations including: Fort Belvoir, Marine Corps Base Quantico, Naval Support Facility at Indian Head, the Coast Guard, numerous local and elected government officials from Maryland and Virginia; trade groups, and the private sector.

This proposed market analysis is one in a series of studies that will be required to determine the viability of reliable commuter ferry service in the National Capital Region (NCR). This study comes on the heels of the 2009 technical feasibility study. There is a need to reduce the number of single occupant vehicles, congestion, and offer an alternative multimodal solution that connects the entire region with Intelligent Transportation Systems applications for connectivity and enhances the livability for all communities within the region.

The commuter boat service market analysis is expected to assist the stakeholders with the analysis necessary to make well-informed planning, policy and budgetary decisions regarding the future of commuter ferry passenger transportation in the NCR. Commuter ferry service is intended to supplement, not compete with, existing transit services, including Virginia Railway Express (VRE) and local and long-distance commuter bus service.

The Potomac River corridor represents a largely untapped potential major commuter transportation route. The City is being requested to fund \$5,000 of the \$300,000 study because the City could be a drop off and pickup point along a future commuter ferry route. As was the case with the Virginia Railway Express, the City will likely be a beneficiary of future commuter ferry service, but not as much of a beneficiary as other jurisdictions.

An affordable and financially sustainable commuter ferry service could offer additional capacity as an alternative to the increasingly gridlocked road system, provide enhanced access to recreation and tourist sites, and enable improved emergency preparedness capabilities on the river system. It is likely that any commuter ferry will require significant federal and state capital and potentially operating assistance to be financially feasible. Local subsidies largely coming from the southern served localities may also be needed.

Preliminary studies indicate that the following sites are possible origin and destination points:

- Woodbridge, Harbor Station, Belmont Bay, Mount Vernon Estate & Gardens, Old Town Alexandria, Reagan National Airport, Virginia;
- Naval Support Facility Indian Head, National Harbor/Gaylord, Maryland;
- Town of Quantico, US Army Fort Belvoir, Fort Leslie McNair and the Pentagon military installations; and
- Washington Navy Yard, City-owned docks near the new baseball stadium and Anacostia Waterfront in Washington, DC.

The budget for the market analysis study is estimated to be \$300,000 with \$180,000 already committed from local and state jurisdictions as well as from the private sector.

The Town of Indian Head	\$ 20,000
Charles County	\$ 25,000
Town of Quantico	\$ 5,000
Prince William County	\$ 75,000
VDOT	\$ 50,000
Private Sector	\$ <u>5,000</u>
Committed To Date	\$180,000

**FISCAL IMPACT:** The cost of the study is estimated to be \$300,000 and the request for the City's participation totals \$5,000. It is proposed that the \$5,000 be funded from the FY 2012 funding year of the City's FY 2012 to FY 2021 Ten Year Transportation Project Plan that Council adopted in June. Specifically, the monies can be carved out of monies set aside in FY 2012 to fund a transportation planner/engineer for project implementation (initially for high capacity transit corridor "C"). Hiring for this position has not yet been initiated.

**STAFF:**

Mark Jinks, Deputy City Manager

Richard J. Baier, P.E., LEED AP, Director, T&ES

Sandra Marks, Division Chief, T&ES