


City of Alexandria, Virginia

MEMORANDUM

DATE: NOVEMBER 3, 2009

TO: THE HONORABLE MAYOR AND MEMBERS OF CITY COUNCIL

FROM: JAMES K. HARTMANN, CITY MANAGER 

SUBJECT: NAMING THE NEW DASH MAINTENANCE FACILITY IN HONOR OF THE LATE WILLIAM B. HURD

ISSUE: Naming of the new DASH Maintenance Facility at 3000 Business Center Drive in honor of the late William B. Hurd.

RECOMMENDATION: That City Council:

- (1) Hold a public hearing on Tuesday, November 10 on the proposal to name the new DASH Maintenance Facility, located at 3000 Business Center Drive, in honor of the late William B. Hurd; and
- (2) Following the public hearing, approve the recommendation of the City Council Naming Committee to name the new facility in honor of the late William B. Hurd. The Council dedication of the new DASH building is scheduled for Saturday morning, November 21 before Council's public hearing meeting.

DISCUSSION: The completion of the new DASH Bus Maintenance Facility comes more than 25 years after the founding of the City's DASH bus system. The Alexandria Transit Company (ATC) Board of Directors, which oversees the DASH system, has recommended that the new building be named after the late William B. Hurd (Attachment). The City Council Naming Committee (Councilwoman Del Pepper, Councilman Frank Fannon and City Manager Jim Hartmann) recommends that Council hold a public hearing on the proposal on November 10, and following the public hearing, approve the naming of the new DASH Maintenance Facility in honor of the late William B. Hurd.

Mr. Hurd chaired the ATC Board of Directors for 23 years and was instrumental in the planning, design and implementation of the DASH system. He retired from the ATC Board in 2006 and died in October, 2008 at the age of 93.

Mr. Hurd worked tirelessly and without pay to make the DASH system a reality. For two decades he oversaw the system and its expansion into the system we have today. He was recognized as an expert in the transit industry and received national recognition for his many contributions to the development of transit programs in Virginia.

In past years he served on the Alexandria School Board, the Planning Commission, and the Northern Virginia Regional Planning District Commission (now known as the Northern Virginia Regional Commission). He also worked as a federal employee from 1938-1972, and for his last ten years of federal service he was the Associate Administrator of the Urban Mass Transit Administration.

The naming of the new DASH Maintenance Facility in honor of Mr. Hurd would recognize his many contributions to the City. At its October 29, 2009, meeting the City Council Naming Committee voted unanimously to recommend to Council that the new facility be named after the late William B. Hurd.

ATTACHMENT: “Bill Hurd –Living Legend”

STAFF: Michele R. Evans, Deputy City Manager

Bill Hurd – Alexandria Living Legend

Alexandria Transit Company (ATC) is in the process of moving in to its newly constructed facility at 3000 Business Center Drive. The ATC Board of Directors has requested that the new facility be named after its first and long time Chairman, Mr. William B. Hurd. Along with his leadership and oversight in the development and policy direction of the DASH bus system, Mr. Hurd was a dedicated, tireless, community leader involved in many different facets of City government. The Board and staff of Alexandria Transit Company believe that the information provided in the following paragraphs justify the naming of the new DASH facility after this great man.

William B. "Bill" Hurd, the former Chairman of the Alexandria Transit Company's (DASH) Board of Directors for 23 years, passed away on October 25, 2008, at the age of 93. Hurd retired from the DASH Board in 2006. Even prior to the creation of the DASH system in 1984, his role as a transit leader was instrumental. He chaired the City's Transitional Task Force and led the City into the reality of planning and operating a fledgling bus system, created to be responsive to local needs and to meet certain community objectives.

As chairman of the DASH system, Hurd devoted over two decades of extraordinary leadership, unparalleled service and vision of public transit to the City of Alexandria. His knowledge and experience was instrumental in Alexandria Transit Company being named as the winner of the APTA Outstanding Achievement Award for small bus systems, only three years after the system began operating. In 1988, Hurd's tireless efforts and his outstanding contributions to the public transit industry were recognized by his nomination and induction into the American Public Transportation Association (APTA) Hall of Fame -- a distinguished honor reserved for uncommon transit professionals and policy board members. His leadership, guidance, and commitment to transit in Virginia helped to shape a number of transit systems in the Commonwealth, in addition to Alexandria, including those in Richmond, Roanoke, and Lynchburg. The Virginia Transit Association awarded Hurd the "Outstanding Contribution by a Public Official, Lifetime Achievement Award" in 2005.

Hurd was an extraordinary individual, who selflessly dedicated much of his adult life to the advancement and improvement of public transportation in the City of Alexandria, in the Commonwealth of Virginia, and throughout the country. His commitment to the transit industry led to the successful development of numerous transit programs. "Hurd instilled this public service mentality in all of us who worked for him, recalls Sandy Modell, ATC General Manager. Hurd was a mentor to many in the transit industry. He touched our hearts. To this day, there are transit managers and professionals who remember Mr. Hurd as the role model for how to operate our business, lead people, and gain respect from political leaders and local officials – in short - how to be the best public servant you can be."

Hurd's service to the transit industry was only one of his legacies, as his service to the City of Alexandria reached far wider. Over the years he has remained very active in local community affairs, serving in such key organizations as the Alexandria Transportation Planning Board, the Alexandria Planning Commission, the Alexandria School Board, and the Northern Virginia Regional Planning Commission. He served on the Alexandria School Board for five years, and was its chairman during the period when the City's elementary schools were integrated. Hurd ensured that integration in all Alexandria schools was accomplished without a court order. He also served on the Alexandria Planning Commission from 1981-2001, serving as chairman when he stepped down. His reason for spending so much time in public service was simply, he would say, "I enjoyed doing it."

Hurd had a long and illustrious career as a federal employee between 1938 and 1972. When the Housing Act of 1961 included transportation funding for capital loan programs and demonstration projects, he became one of the first employees of the newly created Office of Transportation, the predecessor to the Urban Mass Transportation Administration (UMTA). As such, he was instrumental in the establishment of a number of federal transit programs and, for the last ten years before retiring from federal service, he was the Associate Administrator of UMTA.

Hurd played an integral part in the birth and development of the federal public transportation program in the United States. His legacy lies in the hundreds of millions of dollars of transit improvements -- buses, railcars, maintenance, and other physical facilities, computer systems, etc. -- that were directly attributable to his administration of funding programs during the critical, formative years of UMTA.

Some of the first projects he administered were a capital loan for Philadelphia to purchase commuter rail cars and the Diablo, California, test track for BART. Several years later the Urban Mass Transportation Act of 1964 (UMTA), for the first time, included capital grants to purchase buses, facilities, and other transit capital projects. Hurd administered the financial assistance program and the subsequent technical studies grant program until his retirement in 1972. During his tenure with the Office of Transportation and UMTA, Hurd approved grants which assisted almost every city in the United States to acquire and improve its transit system. Much of his time during this period involved site visits to localities to assist them in the development of plans and programs to receive federal financial assistance.

His professional career includes the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, as well as the U.S. Departments of Interior, Housing and Urban Development, and the U.S. Housing and Home Finance Agency.

Born in Lynn, Massachusetts, on August 27, 1915, Hurd earned a BA in Political Science from the University of New Hampshire in 1937 and served as an intern at the National Institute of Public Affairs in Washington, DC, from 1937 to 1938. He did post-graduate work in Public Administration at The American University, while working at the Department of the Interior. From 1942 to 1946, he served on active duty in the United States Army Corps of Engineers, rising from 1st Lieutenant to Major.

Hurd lived in Old Town, Alexandria for 56 years, in a home he shared with his late wife of 36 years, Mariette.