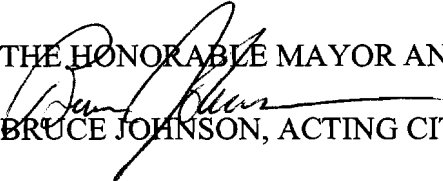


## City of Alexandria, Virginia

## MEMORANDUM

**DATE:** JUNE 22, 2011

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

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

**SUBJECT:** CONSIDERATION OF IMPLEMENTATION OF PLANNED  
TRANSPORTATION INITIATIVE FUNDING BY INCREASING THE  
FREQUENCY OF KING STREET TROLLEY SERVICE

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**ISSUE:** Consideration of increasing the frequency of the King Street trolley service.

**RECOMMENDATION:** That City Council:

1. Approve the implementation of proposed service enhancements which would improve headways from 20 minutes to 15 minutes for the King Street Trolley to be started on July 11, 2011; and
2. Approve an allocation of \$188,000 of transportation initiative funding for this service enhancement.

**DISCUSSION:** In November 2007, as part of the National Harbor-related City initiatives, Council approved the implementation of a rubber-tire trolley service along King Street, connecting the City's waterfront to the King Street Metrorail Station. Since its inception in April 1, 2008, the King Street Trolley service has been a major success, attracting over 1.6 million passengers to date. Initially from April 2008 until December 2008, the trolley operated from 10:00 AM to 10:00 PM utilizing 15-minute headways which complemented the start time of Potomac River Boat Company's water taxi service to National Harbor. Starting in January 2009, because of budget constraints caused by a faltering economy, the King Street Trolley's start time was changed to 11:30 AM and the headway time was changed from 15 minutes to 20 minutes. Funding for the current King Street trolley service initially was enabled because of an increase in the transient occupancy tax rate.

In May 2011, as a part of FY 2012 budget, Council reserved 2.2 cents of real estate tax rate paid by all property owners for transportation projects. One of those projects included in the June 14, 2011 Council-approved project list for FY 2012 transportation initiative operating funding was an unspecified enhancement in trolley service. Staff has evaluated alternatives that could be implemented to enhance the King Street Trolley operations to help economic development, reduce automobile usage, improve parking availability and increase ridership. Staff met with representatives of business and civic associations to solicit input on the enhancement alternatives under consideration. While most of the transportation initiatives are capital projects that have multi-year implementation schedules, the increase in King Street trolley frequency can be implemented almost immediately.

The primary factors considered for modifications of the King Street trolley included headway and hours of operation. Staff recommends the implementation of a service enhancement which would reduce the current headway from a 20-minute headway to a 15-minute headway. The 15-minute headway will make the Trolley a frequent and more reliable alternative to private automobiles. T&ES projects ridership to increase 15% to 20% from the current 437,000 to between 500,000 and 525,000 riders per year. The recommended service frequency modification will help increase the use of this alternative mode of transportation. The improved frequency is a first service enhancement step. With this type of shuttle service, frequency is a major issue for riders, such as tourists, business travelers, residents, and those in the D.C. area who come to Old Town to shop and dine. A change in frequency will result in better service and will increase ridership as indicated above.

The current trolley contractor, Martz, has the capability of putting one additional King Street trolley back in service to achieve the improved 15-minute headways. This will increase the trolleys used for service from three trolleys to four trolleys. When the five federally-paid for but City-owned new hybrid trolleys are delivered by the manufacturer and are put in service in January of 2012, there will be sufficient trolleys on hand to provide this 15-minute headway service. It is planned that the Alexandria Transit Corporation will be the operator of the King Street trolley as of January 2012.

During the summer, staff will be conducting service evaluations and will be expanding the stakeholder outreach program to develop additional King Street service change recommendations, such as increased hours of operations, which will be brought to Council for review and approval during the fall of 2011. Consideration will focus on moving the trolley starting time to earlier than 11:30 a.m., and/or moving the trolley ending time to later than 10:00 p.m. (including consideration of later ending times on Friday and Saturday nights).

**Table 1: King Street Trolley Proposed Extended Service**

	<b>Name of Service</b>	<b>Start</b>	<b>End</b>	<b>Description</b>
Existing Service	20 minute headways, 11:30 AM - 10:00 PM	11:30 AM	10:00 PM	Use 3 Trolleys to Operate Every <b>20 Minutes</b> from 11:30 AM - 10:00 PM - 7 Days a Week
Proposed Service	Existing Hours, 15 Minute Headways	11:30 AM	10:00 PM	Use 4 Trolleys to Operate Every <b>15 Minutes</b> from 11:30 AM - 10:00 PM - 7 Days a Week

The transportation initiative funding plan had \$700,000 allocated for trolley enhancements for FY 2012. This included not only King Street Trolley enhancements, but also the concept of the establishment of a new trolley service serving Del Ray and possibly the Carlyle area. T&ES plans to work with the affected communities and associated stakeholders this fall to help design this proposed new trolley service. A specific proposal, when it is completed, will be brought forward to Council for consideration. Implementation would likely be in the spring of 2012. It is contemplated that the rolling stock for this new service would be provided by the private sector via an operating contract. The current operator, Martz, as of January will have the King Street trolley vehicles available for this purpose once the City's new trolleys are put in service.

**FISCAL IMPACT:** The proposed King Street Trolley decrease from 20-minute to 15-minute headways is expected to cost \$188,000 per year, thereby raising the annual cost of the King Street trolley service from \$700,000 to \$888,000. This \$188,000 increase in cost will be funded through real estate tax revenues reserved for transportation projects. With \$700,000 in new funding set aside in the recently Council-adopted transportation initiatives project list for expanded trolley service in FY 2012, this \$188,000 allocation will leave \$512,000 remaining to be allocated in FY 2012 for the to-be-planned Del Ray and Carlyle trolley service.

**STAFF:**

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King Street Trolley  
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**Alexandria Visitors Center at Ramsay House**  
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Alexandria, Virginia 22314  
t: 703.746.3301 | toll free: 800.388.9119

June 21, 2011

Bruce Johnson  
City Manager  
City Hall  
Alexandria, VA 22314

Dear Mr. Johnson:

The King Street Trolley has been a terrific addition to Alexandria, drawing visitors and expanding their access to a wider range of businesses. The trolley has helped brand the City as environmentally friendly and walkable – two assets that are increasingly important for successful destinations.

The ACVA supports returning the trolley to its original service levels, including 15 minute headways. We look forward to the conclusion of the study that will guide the hours of operation. And, we are excited about marketing a trolley that connects Old Town and Del Ray.

Thank you for your support of the trolley and recognition of its effectiveness as an economic development tool.

Sincerely,

Stephanie Pace Brown  
President & CEO

Corporate Sponsors:  
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