



## ARLINGTON COUNTY, VIRGINIA

<p><b>County Board Agenda Item</b> <b>Meeting of October 13, 2007</b></p>
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**DATE:** October 9, 2007

**SUBJECT:** Request to Advertise an Amendment to the County Comprehensive Plan by adding thereto a Master Transportation Plan (MTP) Goals and Policies Summary, Dated October 2007, and Transportation Plan Map, dated July 2007 (two pages) to the existing Master Transportation Plan.

**C. M. RECOMMENDATION:**

Authorize the advertisement of an amendment to the County Comprehensive Plan by adding thereto a document entitled the Master Transportation Plan (MTP) Goals and Policies Summary, dated October 2007, and the Transportation Plan Map, dated July 2007, (2 pages) to the Existing MTP, which consists of the documents listed in Attachment A of this Board Report. The MTP Additions, defined in Attachment A, shall be the governing documents in the event of any conflict or inconsistency with the Existing MTP. The proposed amendment will be advertised to be heard by the Planning Commission at its October 29, 2007 meeting and by the County Board at its November 13, 2007 meeting.

**ISSUES:** None

**SUMMARY:** MTP Additions have been developed to guide transportation policy for Arlington through the year 2030. The Amended MTP will be comprised of MTP Additions and the Existing MTP. In the future, six supplemental modal element documents (Transit, Streets, Pedestrian, Bicycle, Transportation Demand Management, and Parking and Curbspace Management) will be adopted by the County Board. At that time, such Future MTP will supercede the Amended MTP.

It is recommended that the Future MTP be adopted in two phases. The first phase would be the adoption of the Amended MTP (i.e. the goals and policies summary and map,) which together with the Existing MTP (as defined in Attachment A) will constitute the Amended MTP. With the phase one adoption, the MTP Additions shall be the governing documents in the event of any conflict or inconsistency with the Existing MTP. The second phase would be the adoption of the six supplemental modal element documents to create the Future MTP.

<p>County Manager: _____</p>
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<p>County Attorney: _____</p>
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<p>Staff: Ritch Viola, DES, Transportation Planning</p>
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Recent review of the MTP Map by County advisory committees has identified a few aspects of the map that require further refinement and clarification. County staff is currently working on technical revisions to the map that will address those concerns. The revised map will be made available for public review prior to the scheduled hearings on the MTP by the Planning Commission and County Board.

**BACKGROUND:** In 1941, Arlington adopted its first long-range, countywide transportation plan: Major Thoroughfares for Arlington, Virginia. Approximately 20 years later, a new thoroughfare plan was adopted, this time in concert with Arlington's General land Use Plan. Thereafter in the mid-1970s, Arlington's long-range transportation plan became multimodal, with four elements adopted for bikeways, streets, transit and walkways. Ten years later, a new countywide plan was developed, bringing together the streets, bikeways and walkways into one document. That was approximately 20 years ago, and since then a new element was adopted for paratransit, and the portions of the 1986 plan for bikeways (now, bicycling) and walkways (now, pedestrians) have been updated. The current transportation components of the County Comprehensive Plan are the following five documents, including all subsequent supplements and amendments thereto:

- Master Transit plan (adopted in 1976)
- Master Transportation Plan – Part I (1986)
- Paratransit Element (1989)
- Bicycle Transportation Plan (1994)
- Pedestrian Transportation Plan (1997)

The County and its transportation policies and planning goals have evolved greatly since 1986 and the Existing MTP does not adequately provide the policy guidance needed for current decision-making and future transportation planning.

In October 2004, the Arlington County Board tasked County staff to undertake a complete revision of the County's Master Transportation Plan (MTP). The development of the draft MTP Additions has been undertaken with a public process directed by the Arlington Transportation Commission. The public process was initiated with a community transportation survey that generated responses from about 800 Arlington residents. There was also a series of focus group sessions with stakeholders (such as recent immigrants, persons with disabilities, area businesses, and neighboring jurisdictions) not traditionally heard at local meetings. Additional public input for the plan amendment development was obtained during two public forum sessions held in the fall of 2005.

The information collected from the community was presented to the 24-member MTP Plenary Group which was comprised of representatives from several County advisory commissions, local partnerships, the Arlington Civic Federation and other community organizations. Over the course of a year-and-a-half of regular meetings, the MTP Plenary Group assisted the County staff and a consultant team with the development of the first draft of the MTP Additions. The first MTP Additions draft was presented to the public in June 2006 at another public forum, on the County's website and through nearly two dozen presentations made to advisory committees and civic groups over the following two months.

Community comments received on the first draft were incorporated into a second draft released in November 2006. Like the first draft, the second underwent a three-month-long public comment period during which an additional 20 public presentations were made by County staff and about 100 persons and organizations submitted written comments. In December 2006, the County Board held a work session to review major policy issues of the plan with representatives of the Transportation Commission, Planning Commission and County staff. A public forum on major policy directives of the draft MTP Additions was held in March 2007 and additional meetings with the Planning Commission and the Transportation Commission were held in the past two weeks. The final draft plan reflects the input and comments made by the Arlington community during this three-year-long effort.

With regard to the map, issues have been raised on format and interpretation of several elements, such as the names proposed for the new arterial street typology and the representation of buildings in the sample street cross-section illustrations, some of which will require more time to address but do not appear to impact recommended policies or facilities. However, in an attempt to address some of the issues, the map has been revised with the addition of a note adjacent to the sample street cross-sections that explains that the buildings shown in the images are to represent the spatial relationship between streets and building edges and do not necessarily represent the actual buildings that would be constructed on those streets. In addition, the note explains that building height and mass are determined by land use and zoning regulations and not by the Master Transportation Plan. Staff is also currently working on additional revisions to both sides of the map that should make the map easier to understand. Those revisions, to be made prior to the final printing of the map, will include the elimination of some of the text currently printed on the back side and the addition of a statement as to how the map relates to the other components of the MTP. The proposed arterial street type designations are also being fully reviewed to ensure that there are no conflicts with the General Land Use Plan designations. The revisions also include some minor formatting adjustments that should present the information in an easier to understand manner. The intended revisions will not amount to substantial changes to the content of the proposed map and can be accommodated within the scope of this proposed advertisement.

**DISCUSSION:** The MTP is Arlington's principal means of establishing policy for transportation matters. The MTP Additions have been developed to incorporate the transportation policy directives established by the County Board in recent years. Moreover, the MTP Additions seek to guide the implementation of a multimodal transportation system that will serve the future Arlington as envisioned by the County's General Land Use Plan (GLUP). By the year 2030 Arlington's residential and employment populations are expected to grow by as much as 30%. Arlington will experience increased travel demands not only from its new growth, but also from greater amounts of pass-through travel.

The MTP Additions will capture the many changes in Arlington's transportation policies that have been applied, but not formally adopted since the MTP was last comprehensively revised. The MTP Additions also put forth a new vision for all of Arlington's transportation system. While the policies in both the current and new plans place great importance upon the connection between land use and transportation, with a strong emphasis upon creating greater opportunities for use of Metrorail and public transit, the policies in the two plans differ in significant ways. The table below summarizes some of the most significant policy changes between the two plans.

<b>Policies regarding</b>	<b>Current MTP approach</b>	<b>Proposed MTP approach</b>
<i>Vehicle Capacity</i>	Plan includes many projects to widen arterial streets and expand limited-access design. Maintenance of Level of Service “C” or better is desired.	No expansion projects or performance measure proposed; instead, plan seeks to manage travel demand through shifts away from driving, rather than increased capacity for vehicular traffic. Measures that enhance travel efficiency are proposed provided they are built within the existing right-of-way.
<i>Street Connectivity</i>	Plan does not direct addition of new streets. Permits street closures and access restrictions to manage traffic in neighborhoods.	Plan discourages the closure (i.e. vacation or abandonment) of streets and calls for enhancement of the street network through construction of new streets, especially in commercial areas.
<i>Street Design</i>	Preference is for streets with lane widths of 11 or 12 feet. Each plan element provided design guidance but none specified a holistic design approach that considers all the users and adjacent properties. Design considerations mostly are between the curbs.	Calls for reconstruction of streets to reduce lane widths, and where appropriate, the number of lanes. The “Complete Streets” concept is introduced to provide appropriate facilities for all users and better fit with adjacent uses. Low-volume streets may be rebuilt as “Yield Streets” to add sidewalks, slow traffic and reduce runoff.
<i>Transit Stations</i>	Plan calls for the construction of the Metrorail stations in Arlington and coordinated turnback of bus routes to avoid duplication.	Enhancements in the form of additional elevators, new entrances and station area upgrades are called for in the plan.
<i>High Capacity Transit</i>	Not envisioned beyond construction of the Metrorail system and VRE that are now in place.	A network of high-quality, high-capacity routes is proposed. New forms of service including streetcar and bus rapid transit are envisioned, with measures to increase speed and operating reliability.
<i>Parking</i>	Parking is not extensively addressed in the MTP.	Parking is extensively addressed. Permits reductions in minimum requirements based upon location and other public needs. Emphasis is upon shared-use of spaces rather than specific minimums for each use. Pricing should be used to affect demand.
<i>Multimodalism and Intermodalism</i>	Plans exist for each of the primary travel modes but little attention given to making	Recognizes the importance of providing high-quality transportation options. Streets and other facilities should allow

	facilities work better for multiple modes. Plan elements' approach is individual rather than holistic.	for multi-modal use or easy transfer between modes.
<i>Non-motorized Travel Encouragement</i>	The Transit, Pedestrian and Bicycle plans call for facilities to improve conditions and enable more non-motorized travel: however, promotional programs aimed at encouraging transit, walking and bicycling are lacking.	The plan calls for active programs to encourage more walking and bicycling to enable transportation and improve community health. Biennial surveys and annual counts are to be made to ascertain the amount of non-motorized travel that is occurring and assess how programs can be made more affective.

**Plan Goals and Major Themes:** Six overriding goals have been established in the MTP Additions to guide the County's transportation policies, they are:

1. *Provide high quality transportation services.* Provide high quality transportation services for all users and modes.
2. *Move more people without more traffic.* Provide more travel choices and reduce the relative proportion of single-occupant-vehicle (SOV) travel through TDM, telecommuting and travel shifts to other modes including transit, carpooling, walking and bicycling.
3. *Promote safety.* Provide a safe and secure transportation system.
4. *Establish equity.* Serve the mobility and accessibility needs of all residents regardless of age, income or ability.
5. *Manage effectively and efficiently.* Fund, develop, manage and maintain transportation facilities and services in an equitable and cost-effective manner.
6. *Advance environmental sustainability.* Reduce the impact of travel on community resources, air and water quality and increase energy efficiency.

The MTP Additions propose multiple objectives and policy proposals to support the goals. Those objectives and policies vary in their scope and their manner of implementation but generally fall within four major themes of the plan.

Primarily the MTP Additions seek to enhance the travel options of all Arlington residents and others that travel in Arlington. Providing choices amongst high-quality travel modes for each trip should help to achieve a reduction in dependence upon private motor vehicles for local travel. Measures to improve travel options include an expanded system of high-frequency transit routes (titled the Primary Transit Network), substantially upgraded walkways, a more complete network of bikeways and a more extensive traveler information program.

Another overarching theme of the MTP Additions is the achievement of "Complete Streets" across the County. Through reconstruction and enhanced management practices, Arlington will recast its street system to better accommodate all its users – motorists, transit vehicles, bicyclists, delivery vehicles and pedestrians, as well as better reflect the character of the land uses adjacent to the street. One planned measure is the use of a new typology for Arlington's streets that will

reflect existing and planned conditions along each street and provide appropriate design guidance to best suit the street type.

In addition, the MTP Additions place great emphasis upon enhancements in the management of Arlington's transportation assets to increase the efficiency, safety and capacity of the existing systems within existing rights of ways. Arlington's Transportation Demand Management (TDM) program is proposed to be expanded with greater application to non-commuter travel as well as greater monitoring and enforcement of new developments. Measures such as traffic signal optimization, enhanced conditions monitoring, and variable message display signs will also be employed to enable more efficient traffic flows on our streets. More effective management of valuable curb space will also help to address problems of traffic congestion and insufficient parking supply.

Lastly the MTP Additions recognize that the quality of the transportation system needs to be measured by more than how well the traffic flows. The traditional Level of Service (LOS) measurement is insufficient in capturing all important considerations related to the quality of the transportation system. Measurements of transportation quality also need to account for safety and the experience of all users, as well as other community values such as environmental sustainability, historic preservation and visual character.

**Attachment A: Master Transportation Plan (MTP) Terminology to Board Report for  
October 13, 2007 County Board Meeting.**

**Name:**

**Consists of:**

*Existing MTP*

- Master Transit Plan (adopted in 1976),
- Master Transportation Plan – Part I (1986),
- Paratransit Element (1989),
- Bicycle Transportation Plan (1994),
- Pedestrian Transportation Plan (1997), and
- All supplements and amendments since they were adopted by the County Board as reflected in the five-year updates, or otherwise.

*MTP Additions*

- Proposed MTP Goals and Policies Summary, dated October 2007
- Proposed Transportation Plan Map, (2 pages), dated July 2007

*Amended MTP*

- *MTP Additions* and the *Existing MTP*

The *MTP Additions* will have precedence in instances of conflicts or inconsistencies with the *Existing MTP*.

*Future MTP*

- *MTP Additions* hereby adopted and future plan elements:

- Streets Element
- Transit Element
- Pedestrian Element
- Bicycle Element
- Parking and Curbspace Management Element
- Transportation Demand Management Element