



ARLINGTON COUNTY, VIRGINIA

**County Board Agenda Item
Meeting of November 13, 2007**

DATE: November 7, 2007

SUBJECT: Amendments to the County Comprehensive Plan to add thereto a Master Transportation Plan (MTP) Goals and Policies Summary, Dated November, 2007, and Transportation Plan Map Options A and B (two pages each) to the existing Master Transportation Plan.

C. M. RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. Adopt an amendment to the County Comprehensive Plan by adding thereto a document entitled the Master Transportation Plan (MTP) Goals and Policies Summary, dated November 2007 to the Existing MTP, to be the governing document in the event of any conflict or inconsistency with the Existing MTP. (See Table A attached to this Board Report for MTP documents terminology.)
2. Defer action on the Transportation Plan Map, dated July, 2007 (Attachment 2 labeled as Option A).
3. Authorize advertisement of an amendment to the County Comprehensive Plan by adding thereto a Transportation Plan Map, dated November, 2007 (Attachment 3, 2 pages, and labeled as Option B) to the Existing MTP, for public hearings by the Planning Commission at its December 3, 2007 meeting and by the County Board at its December 15, 2007 meeting, to become, together with the Goals and Policies Summary hereby adopted, the governing document in the event of any conflict or inconsistency with the Existing MTP.

ISSUES: What should be the content of the Master Transportation Plan Map and, more specifically, how should street typologies be depicted on the map?

SUMMARY: The existing Master Transportation Plan consists of several documents dating as far back as 1976. The effort to develop a new MTP began three years ago and has proceeded to the point of considering adoption of some portion of the plan. MTP Additions which include the MTP Goals and Policies Summary and the MTP Map, 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. The MTP Additions shall be the governing documents in the event of any conflict or inconsistency with the Existing MTP. Six

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supplemental modal element documents (Transit, Streets, Pedestrian, Bicycle, Transportation Demand Management, and Parking and Curbspace Management) are being developed and will be considered for adoption by the County Board at a later date. At that time, such Future MTP will supersede the Amended MTP.

Since the County Board authorized advertisement of the MTP Additions on October 13th, a public forum was held to answer community questions and several meetings with advisory groups including the Planning and Transportation Commissions were held. The public input on the MTP Goals and Policies Summary has resulted in fine-tuning and clarifications, resulting in the document that reflects the Transportation Commission's action (Attachment 1) which is recommended for adoption. The MTP Goals and Policies Summary will be Arlington's principal means of establishing policy for transportation matters. The document has been developed to incorporate the transportation policy directives established by the County Board in recent years and to provide direction for transportation programs, services and facilities that will be needed to serve Arlington travelers in the future.

Public input on the map was more substantial and inconclusive. As a result, both the Planning and Transportation Commissions recommended deferral of the advertised map (Attachment 2) primarily because of concerns about street typology. The Transportation Commission recommends that another map be developed and advertised, with changes intended to address citizen concerns about street typology, and to shift the emphasis from text to graphics. The map that is recommended to be authorized for advertisement (Attachment 3- Option B) is intended to be consistent with guidance received from the Planning and Transportation commissions.

It is recommended that the County Board defer action on the proposed map (Attachment 2 - Option A) and authorize advertisement of another map (Attachment 3 - Option B). These maps will be made available for public review prior to the scheduled hearings by the Transportation Commission, the Planning Commission, and the 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 1 (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 and six modal elements. This first 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 and six modal elements was held in March 2007. In the Fall, it was decided to proceed with formal hearings on a summary and map, while leaving the six modal elements for future consideration. Additional meetings were then held with the Planning Commission and the Transportation Commission. The MTP Additions authorized for advertisement at the October 13th County Board meeting reflect the input and comments made by the Arlington community during this three-year-long effort.

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 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 Existing MTP and MTP Additions 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.

Policies regarding	Existing MTP approach	MTP Additions approach
<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	A network of high-quality, high-capacity routes is proposed. New forms of service including streetcar and bus rapid transit

	place.	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>Multitmodalism and Intermodalism</i>	Plans exist for each of the primary travel modes but little attention given to making facilities work better for multiple modes. Plan elements' approach is individual rather than holistic.	Recognizes the importance of providing high-quality transportation options. Streets and other facilities should allow 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 effective.

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 Transportation Demand Management (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 include 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 who 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. The use of a new typology for Arlington’s streets will reflect existing and planned conditions along each street and provide appropriate design guidance to best suit the street type. Street typology is shown on the map, and generated the most citizen comment and discussion at the Planning and Transportation Commission hearings.

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 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 for 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.

Public Comment and Advisory Committee Deliberations on the Advertised MTP Additions

Following the October 13 authorization to advertise the MTP Additions, the documents were posted on the project web site, and a public forum was held on October 23, so that citizens could get answers to their questions about the documents and the process. Citizens were provided with forms to use to provide their comments to the Transportation Commission, Planning Commission and County Board. Attachment 4 contains these comments. In addition to the hearings by the Planning Commission and Transportation Commission, which are discussed below, staff met with the following advisory groups to discuss the MTP and receive comments:

- Environment and Energy Conservation Commission
- Urban Forestry Committee
- Pedestrian Advisory Committee
- Bicycle Advisory Committee
- Transit Advisory Committee
- Neighborhood Conservation Advisory Committee

On October 30, 2007, the Planning Commission reviewed the Goals and Policies Summary and MTP Map. For the Goals and Policies Summary, the Planning Commission offered several additional changes, and voted to recommend that the County Board adopt the document. The Planning Commission's changes have been incorporated in the recommended document (Attachment 1.) With regard to the Transportation Plan Map, the Planning Commission heard testimony against adopting the map, especially because of the street typology terminology and cross-sections, and recommended that the County Board defer action on the map.

On November 1, 2007, the Transportation Commission reviewed the proposed MTP Goals and Policies Summary and MTP Map and voted to recommend that the County Board adopt the Goals and Policies Summary document, with those wording changes that are included in the recommended document (Attachment 1.) With regard to the map, the Transportation Commission joined with the Planning Commission in its concern about the street typology, and recommended deferral of the map as advertised (Option A.) In addition, the Commission recommended that the County Board advertise another version of the map (Option B) for a hearing at the December 13 County Board meeting. The Commission specified that this version should, on the front side a) delete the street cross-sections, and b) modify the street-typology names to avoid land-use terminology. On the other side, this version of the map should a) add a transit map, b) show bike improvements on a larger map, c) depict street functional classification, and d) reduce text to become more visual and accommodate a) through c.) The staff recommendations are consistent with the recommendations of the Planning and Transportation Commissions, with map Option B (Attachment 3) intended to follow the direction provided by the Transportation Commission.

Community comments on the advertised MTP Additions focused on the map to a much greater extent than on the goals and policies summary. Prior to the summary being as thorough as it is now, it was intended that the map include more goal and policy information, so that it could serve in many instances as a stand-alone document. Now, because it is intended that the map and summary complement each other, the general direction of the community is toward reducing the text on the map, so as to provide more space for maps that can more clearly outline what's planned, especially for transit and bicycling.

The primary concern with the map is with the street typologies. The street typology is intended to guide the streetscape features to complement the land use specified in the General Land Use Plan. Most of Arlington's street frontage is low-density residential, and the street typology designated along arterials in these areas seemed to generate no controversy. Where the street typology has been designated as something other than low-density residential, in quite a few instances, the existing and planned land use is variable, sometimes a mixture of residential and

commercial along a frontage, sometimes mixed-use development, and often of varying densities. Also, the streets themselves are quite variable, ranging in cross-section from two to six through lanes, and with and without turning lanes and bike lanes. Concern was expressed about the names of the street typology, using terms such as “commercial” or “mixed-use,” and “medium-density,” when some portion of that street fronts low-density residential uses. Concern was expressed about the cross-sections, despite them being labeled as “sample,” because the cross-section shown wouldn’t be identical to the streets designated for that particular type. Except for the low-density residential type for which setbacks were shown, the sample cross-sections on the map as advertised show buildings at the back of sidewalk. The height and shape/color of the buildings raised concerns.

The new map that is recommended for advertisement (Option B) is intended to address many of the concerns expressed about the map, especially about the street typologies. By authorizing advertisement of Option B, and deferring action (Option A), the public can continue to consider and provide comments on a range of map features. The staff will consider further public comment on the map options, and will develop a recommendation that may draw features from both Option A and Option B.

FISCAL IMPACT: Adopting the amendments to the Existing Plan by adding thereto the MTP Additions will result in no definitive financial commitments on the part of the County. However, many of the objectives and proposed actions in the new plan elements, especially the improvements specified on the map and the detail contained in the six modal elements to be considered in the future by the County Board, call for significant financial investments for the construction, operation and maintenance of transportation facilities and services. If the plan is to be implemented, then the County must determine to what extent, to which purposes and on what schedule it will commit its own revenues as well as those non-local funds that it may control. Such decisions will be made by the Arlington County Board as part of future operating and capital budget deliberations.

Table A: Master Transportation Plan (MTP) Terminology to Board Report for November 13, 2007 County Board Meeting.

<u>Name:</u>	<u>Consists of:</u>
<i>Existing MTP</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <u>Master Transit Plan</u> (adopted in 1976), - <u>Master Transportation Plan — Part 1</u>(1986), - <u>Paratransit Element</u> (1989), - <u>Bicycle Transportation Plan</u> (1994), - <u>Pedestrian Transportation Plan</u> (1997), and - All supplements and amendments since they were adopted by the County Board as reflected in the five-year updates, or otherwise.
 <i>MTP Additions (November 13, 2007)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Recommended MTP Goals and Policies Summary, dated November 2007
 <i>MTP Additions (expected December 15, 2007)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Advertised Transportation Plan Map, (2 pages), dated July 2007 (Option A) or - Proposed Transportation Plan Map, (2 pages), dated November 2007 (Option B)
 <i>Amended MTP</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>MTP Additions</i> and the <i>Existing MTP</i> <p>The <i>MTP Addition(s)</i> will have precedence in instances of conflicts or inconsistencies with the <i>Existing MTP</i>.</p>
 <i>Future MTP</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>MTP Additions</i> hereby adopted and future plan elements: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Streets Element • Transit Element • Pedestrian Element • Bicycle Element • Parking and Curbspace Management Element • Transportation Demand Management Element

