



ARLINGTON COUNTY, VIRGINIA

<p>County Board Agenda Item Meeting of October 18, 2008</p>

DATE: October 10, 2008

SUBJECT: Request to Advertise Amendments to the County Comprehensive Plan to Adopt a Demand and System Management Element of the Master Transportation Plan (MTP), dated October 2008, including an updated Transportation Demand Management Policy.

C. M. RECOMMENDATION:

Authorize the advertisement of an amendment to the County Comprehensive Plan to add the document entitled “Master Transportation Plan Demand and System Management Element”, dated October 2008, to be included in the Amended MTP as defined in Attachment A to this Board Report, to be heard by the Planning Commission at its November 3, 2008 meeting, and by the County Board at its November 15, 2008 meeting.

ISSUES: The current request is to authorize advertisement of the proposed MTP Demand and System Management Element which includes an update to the 1990 Arlington Transportation Demand Management (TDM) Policy. This plan also includes examples of “contingency” measures that may require State authorizing legislation or may involve new taxes, fees or regulations. The contingency measures are intended to be used only to address severe traffic congestion problems, and include proposals for the following actions: implementing TDM with by-right development, exploration of a parking tax, consideration of incentives for subsidies aimed at reducing auto ownership, and consideration of a regional congestion-pricing strategy.

SUMMARY: The proposed Management Element would establish Arlington’s first comprehensive plans for Transportation Demand Management (TDM) and Transportation Systems Management (TSM) efforts. The 1990 Transportation Demand Management Policy is proposed to be updated and incorporated into this comprehensive Demand and System Management Element that specifies measures to manage travel on County facilities and to shift travel demand from the usually dominant, single-occupant-vehicle (SOV) mode to a broad array of more efficient travel alternatives. The TDM measures proposed in the plan would be applied to all sectors of travel in Arlington and include existing buildings as well as new development. The majority of the TSM measures would be initiated by Arlington County with support from the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) and other area jurisdictions and agencies.

BACKGROUND: In 1941, Arlington adopted its first long-range, countywide transportation plan: Major Thoroughfares for Arlington, Virginia. Approximately 20 years later, a new

<p>County Manager: _____</p>

<p>County Attorney: _____</p>

<p>Staff: Ritch Viola, DES, Transportation Planning</p>

thoroughfare plan was adopted, this time in concert with Arlington's General Land Use Plan (GLUP). 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 in 1986. Between then and the current effort for a complete update, a new element was adopted for paratransit, and the portions of the 1986 plan for bikeways (now, bicycle) and walkways (now, pedestrians) were updated.

Soon after the 1986 plan was adopted, the Transportation Commission led an effort to tie consideration of proposed development to the objectives and principles of the master plan. The County Board endorsed a Traffic Impact Analysis (TIA) Policy, to guide when and how applicants would analyze the impact of their proposals. In 1990, the County Board endorsed a Transportation Demand Management Policy to guide how applicants should ameliorate impacts, in general as well as in response to impacts identified in their specific TIAs.

In October 2004, the Arlington County Board tasked County staff to undertake a complete revision of the County's MTP. The public process was initiated with a community-transportation survey that generated responses from about 800 Arlington residents and a series of focus-group and 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 a new MTP. Three drafts of the proposed MTP revisions were presented for public review between June 2006 and March 2007 at public forums, on the County's website and through more than 50 presentations made to advisory committees and civic groups. In late 2007, the County Board decided to split adoption of the revised MTP into two general phases with the adoption of the overall goals, policies and map portions to occur first, and adoption of the six modal element documents to occur during 2008.

In November and December of 2007, the County Board amended the MTP to adopt a Goals and Policies document and a MTP Map (known collectively as the "MTP Additions"). The new documents provided updated vision, objectives, goals and policies for the future of the Arlington transportation system, as well as identified key planned transportation facility and service additions including new streets, transit lines, intersection and roadway improvements, and bicycle/pedestrian trails. In July 2008, the County Board adopted the Bicycle and Pedestrian elements to the Amended MTP. The two new elements plus the MTP Goals and Policies document and MTP Map were added to the three previously-adopted MTP documents listed below, including all subsequent supplements and amendments thereto:

- Master Transit Plan (adopted in 1976)
- Master Transportation Plan – Part I (1986)
- Paratransit Element (1989)

The MTP Additions, Bicycle Element, Pedestrian Element and the previously-adopted MTP documents (known as the Existing MTP) now comprise the Amended MTP. (See Attachment A to this report for definitions of other terms used herein.) The Demand and System Management

Element is one of four supplemental modal element documents (consisting of Transit, Streets, Management, and Parking and Curbspace Management) that are still to be adopted by the County Board to replace and add to previously-adopted corresponding MTP documents.

DISCUSSION: As part of the Comprehensive Plan, the MTP is Arlington's principal means of establishing planning policy for transportation matters. The MTP Additions were developed to incorporate the transportation-policy directives established by the County Board in recent years. Moreover, the MTP Additions guide the implementation of a multimodal transportation system that will serve the future Arlington as envisioned by the County's GLUP. By the year 2030 Arlington's residential and employment populations are forecasted to grow about 30%. Arlington will experience increased travel demands not only from its own growth, but also from greater amounts of pass-through travel. The forecasted increased travel demands will challenge Arlington's transportation system unless measures are imposed to manage travel times, shift more travel away from SOVs and achieve greater efficiency in traffic accommodation.

Major elements of the MTP Demand and System Management Plan include:

- The adopted MTP Goals and Policies, which established six primary transportation-demand-management-related policies for Arlington. Those policies and the updated Transportation Demand Management Policy provide guidance for how the County's TDM program should operate over the next 20-some years. The Demand and System Management Element specifies 20 actions to be undertaken to implement the County's TDM policies.
- At the core of the existing TDM program is the Arlington County Commuter Services (ACCS) program which assists thousands of employers, residents and other travelers in making travel choices. The proposed Demand and System Management Element aims to build upon those existing successful efforts by enlarging the ACCS program's scope to reach more travelers, provide additional means for travelers to access and pay for transit services and to become better integrated with other programs in the region.
- Several substantially new TDM initiatives are proposed in the document including a biennial travel survey, and expanded applicability of the SmarTrip card. In addition, the TDM program includes a number of contingency measures, such as parking taxes, financial incentives to local households that give up their cars or stop driving for commute trips, and subsidized transit passes that could be applied through County Board action to address severe traffic congestion or environmental problems.
- The document also updates and streamlines the County's 1990 Transportation Demand Management Policy which includes a matrix of TDM measures that may be applied to new developments that undergo the site-plan approval process.
- A number of TDM-related performance measures are included in the draft element, they include: maintaining peak period vehicle miles traveled within 5% of the year 2005 levels, decreasing localized congestion (worse than level-of-service D) and increasing and peak-period non-SOV mode share by one-half percentage point annually. Continued

lack of progress on these performance measures could lead to implementation of some of the proposed contingency measures.

- The Demand and System Management Element is also aimed at improving the efficiency of the transportation system through the implementation of adopted TSM policy. Generally, the TSM measures called for in the document involve the implementation of engineered solutions and enhancements to communication that together would enable better vehicular flow both for regular daily travel and during emergency conditions. The plan seeks to build upon existing County initiatives such as optimizing traffic-signal timing, prioritization of transit vehicles and installation of closed-circuit-television cameras at key intersections, by expanding applications to more of the County. The County government would provide additional real-time information to travelers to help them choose the most efficient way.
- The plan also identifies a number of measures that Arlington County would undertake in cooperation with VDOT and other jurisdictions to help ensure efficient traffic flow both on a regular basis and in response to incidents or emergency conditions. Those measures include both infrastructure improvements such as dynamic-message signs and overhead-system detection on major roads, and planning efforts such as the development and dissemination of emergency-response plans.

Issues: Relative to most localities, Arlington has achieved a substantial mode share for alternatives to SOV travel. Nonetheless, with plans for an unprecedented level of growth in the region between now and 2030, Arlington will need to be more successful. The MTP outlines multimodal improvements but their implementation is not guaranteed nor is it certain that a fully implemented plan will be sufficient to keep congestion to a generally tolerable level. Should they be determined to be necessary, this Demand and System Management Element outlines several possibilities to strengthen group-riding, thereby reducing motor-vehicular travel. Examples of these contingency measures are: TDM for by-right development, parking taxes, and regional congestion pricing.

Depending upon how they might be implemented, they could have a significant effect on travel. Moreover, they require state-enabling legislation which might not be attainable. Nonetheless, the uncertain nature of forecasts and importance of achieving a low SOV mode share suggest the need to include the possibility of these measures on a contingency basis.

Community Process: Arlington County staff has worked closely with the Arlington Transportation Commission to draft and update the proposed element. Staff has also reviewed the draft with the Long Range Planning Committee of the Arlington Planning Commission. Copies of the draft document have also been distributed to the Economic Development Commission and Northern Virginia Building Industry Association for their review. Drafts of the element have also been posted on the Arlington County's website along with other elements of the Master Transportation Plan (MTP).

In addition to the scheduled November 15, 2008 County Board hearing, the advertised Demand and System Management Element will be reviewed by the Transportation Commission and the Planning Commission at their meetings on October 30, and November 3, 2008 respectively.

FISCAL IMPACT: Adopting the amendments to the Existing Plan by adding thereto a Demand and System Management Element will impose no immediate financial commitments on the County. However, many of the proposed implementation actions in the document call for the establishment, operation and maintenance of higher levels of transportation facilities and services. Also, the updated Transportation Demand Management Policy (Appendix A) will lead to higher levels of commitment by private-sector development, and greater contributions to support and enhance ACCS. Implementation of the MTP will require the County to 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.

**Attachment A: Master Transportation Plan (MTP) Terminology to Board Report for
October 18, 2008 County Board Meeting.**

Name:

Consists of:

Existing MTP

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

MTP Additions

- MTP Goals and Policies Summary, adopted November 2007
- MTP Map, adopted December 2007
- Bicycle Element, adopted July 2008
- Pedestrian Element, adopted 2008

Amended MTP

- *Existing MTP* and the *MTP Additions*

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

Future MTP

- *MTP Additions* and the proposed future plan elements:
 - Demand and System Management Element
 - Transit Element
 - Parking and Curbspace Management Element
 - Streets Element