

City of Alexandria, Virginia

MEMORANDUM

DATE: MARCH 16, 2009

TO: THE HONORABLE MAYOR AND MEMBERS OF THE CITY COUNCIL

FROM: JAMES K. HARTMANN, CITY MANAGER

SUBJECT: BUDGET MEMO #27: KING STREET TROLLEY AND DASH RIDERSHIP

This memorandum is in response to Councilman Gaines' inquiry into King Street Trolley ridership between 10 a.m. and 11:30 a.m. and on DASH ridership before and after implementing the King Street Trolley. Other items to be addressed include the ability of DASH to provide King Street corridor service during these hours and the potential costs of extending King Street Trolley service on Friday and Saturday evenings to midnight.

In April 2008, the City began offering daily King Street Trolley service from 10 a.m. to 10 p.m. Due to a decline in FY 2009 revenue projections, the City had to reduce Trolley service hours in January 2009 through June 2009 to 11:30 a.m. to 10 p.m. The City Manager's FY 2010 Proposed Budget would extend these new service hours through all of FY 2010. It is important to note that operating frequency for the Trolley has also been reduced in FY 2009 from every 15 minutes to every 20 minutes, and that the Proposed Budget for FY 2010 also assumes this level of frequency.

Eliminating Trolley service from 10 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. was deemed to be the best time period for reduced service as this was the period with the lowest ridership rates. The average Trolley trip during the morning period carried 11 passengers, as opposed to 24 during the afternoon peak (4 p.m. – 7 p.m.) and 28 during the evening/night hours (7 p.m. – 10 p.m.) The following table shows ridership figures from April 2008 through December 2008.

King Street Trolley Ridership			
April 2008 - December 2008			
	Total	%	Average Ridership
Morning - 10 to 11:30	38,438	7%	11
Lunch - 11:30 to 2:00	82,925	15%	17
Mid-Afternoon - 2:00 to 4:00	84,493	15%	20
Afternoon Peak - 4:00 to 7:00	151,897	27%	24
Evening / Night - 7:00 to 10:00	200,732	36%	28
TOTAL	558,485		

DASH currently has three routes that provide service along King Street from City Hall to the King Street Metro Station, the AT2 (Lincolnia to Braddock Metro via Old Town), AT5 (Landmark to Braddock Metro via Old Town), and AT7 (Landmark to Lee Center via Old Town). Since the City implemented King Street Trolley service, the AT5 has seen an increase in daily ridership of over 200 passengers per weekday. The AT7 has seen almost no change in ridership during this time period. The AT2 is more difficult to measure as the route has been altered significantly (split into AT1 and AT2) during this time. However, overall ridership has increased since the King Street Trolley was implemented. DASH staff has also indicated that their current service is capable of absorbing additional riders during the 10 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. period that would have previously utilized the King Street Trolley.

Another issue relating to the King Street Trolley service is the potential to extend service hours on Friday and Saturday evenings to 12 a.m. (currently stops at 10 p.m.). There has been some interest from the Lower King Street business community in offering service during this period to encourage additional commerce during this peak time. If the City opted to provide service on Friday and Saturday evenings from 10 p.m. to 12 a.m., the additional cost would be approximately \$35,000 annually, or about \$2,900 per month.