



## CITY OF RICHMOND

### Department of Planning & Development Review *Staff Report*

**Ord. No. 2016-079:** To authorize the Chief Administrative Officer to accept \$2,000,000 from the Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transportation and to appropriate the increase to the Fiscal Year 2015-2016 Capital Budget by increasing estimated revenues and the amount appropriated to the Department of Public Works' Main Street Station Multi-Modal Transportation Center project in the Economic and Community Development category by \$2,000,000 for the purpose of funding the Main Street Station Phase 3 development.

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**To:** City Planning Commission  
**From:** Land Use Administration  
**Date:** March 21, 2016

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#### **PETITIONER**

Amy Inman, Senior Administrator for Multimodal Transportation and Strategic Planning

#### **LOCATION**

1500 East Main Street, Richmond, VA 23222

#### **PURPOSE**

Authorizing the Chief Administrative Officer to accept and appropriate \$2 million from the Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transportation for the Main Street Station Phase 3 development.

#### **SUMMARY & RECOMMENDATION**

The City of Richmond has embarked on the development of the Main Street Station to strengthen the region's transportation network, to bolster economic vitality in downtown and to rehabilitate a historic landmark, which to many people is symbolic of the City. The \$86 million rehabilitation of the Main Street Station property into a multimodal transportation center will serve Amtrak, Greater Richmond Transit Company buses, intercity bus service, airport shuttles, taxis, and other alternative modes of travel such as bikeshare, bike storage/rental, Zipcars, Segways, scooters and electric vehicle charging stations at one centralized location in downtown. Main Street Station is located at the convergence of regional bike trails, pedestrian trails, transit routes, interstates/major arterials and the national passenger rail system. The Canal Walk (\$103 million public investment spurring \$700 million in private investment) and the Virginia Capital Trail (\$57 million public investment linking Williamsburg to Richmond) intersect two blocks from Main Street Station. The station will host the Virginia Welcome Center available to the 65 million travelers per year passing by the station on I-95 and surrounding streets and will provide a Bicycle Welcome Center for the riders on the Virginia Capital Trail. The improvements to Main Street Station will further strengthen its position as a monumental gateway to Virginia's Capital City by linking downtown Richmond with downtown Washington DC, Philadelphia, New York, Boston and other East Coast metropolitan areas.

The implementation of the project is scheduled in three phases.

- The \$26.9 million first phase was completed in December 2003.
- The \$10.6 million second phase was completed in September 2007.
- The completion of the \$48.5 million phase 3 projected in March 2017.

The core facility and the rail infrastructure are in place. The Main Street Station will serve as a principal hub for the State's rail efforts, generating future passenger rail lines to the north, south, east and west with an anticipated total of 32 conventional and high speed trains daily serving the station. To date, the City of Richmond has secured financial commitments totaling \$86 million for the capital funding, which demonstrates regional, state and national support for the project. These commitments are comprised of Congressional authorizations, appropriations and federal grants, along with matching funds from the Commonwealth of Virginia and the City of Richmond. The funding associated with this resolution is included in the \$86 million total.

This project has been developed in a joint effort between the direct stakeholders in the transportation center including Amtrak, CSX Transportation, Greater Richmond Transit Company (GRTC), Federal Transit Administration, Federal Railroad Administration, Commonwealth of Virginia and the City. Representatives of these entities have been working closely together for over two decades to plan, develop and implement this project

The City of Richmond is the lead entity responsible for the phased rehabilitation of the Main Street Station and the facilities needed for the Main Street Station patrons. The Commonwealth of Virginia is the lead entity responsible for the track improvements and track infrastructure. The City's development plans, which are advancing ahead of the State's rail efforts, will support the future rail needs.

### **Development phases:**

Phase 1 - The first Phase of the project was completed with the grand reopening of Main Street Station in December 2003 to passenger rail service after a 28-year hiatus. This allowed passengers traveling on Amtrak's 4-5 daily Acela Regional (Newport News/Washington DC/Boston) trains to board and alight at the downtown station. To achieve this objective, the Station's headhouse and east parking area were purchased from the State and numerous improvements made. These improvements included the full rehabilitation of the headhouse, construction of a passenger platform on the eastside, construction of parking on the eastside, construction of a mechanical plant, and other site improvements to service GRTC buses, airport shuttles and taxis. New works of public art were commissioned and displayed both inside and outside the station.

Phase 2 - The objective of this phase was to provide additional facilities for current and future patrons. The City's improvements included the purchase of the remainder of the Main Street Station property from the Commonwealth; the purchase and/or lease and development of the land across the street from the station providing a drop off area, public plaza, tourism origination

point and a 98 space parking lot to ensure that the station's traffic would not negatively impact the neighboring communities and the rehabilitation of the upper three floors of the station headhouse for tenant lease to generate revenue. The plaza and "cathedral walk" within the site provide a pedestrian linkage to the Canal Walk, Virginia Capital Trail and Shockoe Bottom/Slip. The \$10.6 million effort was completed in September 2007.

In 2010, Megabus Northeast, LLC established the Richmond region's only Megabus bus stop for its intercity network of routes at the plaza at Main Street Station. Megabus' low fare operation provides connectivity from Richmond to New York, Philadelphia, Baltimore, Washington DC, Hampton/Norfolk, Raleigh/Durham and Charlotte. These cities also are along the Northeast and Southeast High Speed Rail Corridors demonstrating the need for travel options. With the introduction of Megabus, Main Street Station's annual ridership grew to 162,002 patrons in FY14.

Phase 3 - The objective of the third phase is to enhance the multi-modal transportation options at the Main Street Station facility and to support future increased rail passenger service. The Phase 3 improvements are being advanced by the City and include stabilizing and rehabilitating the station shed per the National Historic Preservation Guidelines to improve service and capacity for existing passenger rail; reestablishing Franklin Street through the train shed to provide connectivity for the Virginia Capital Trail and pedestrian access through the site; providing alternative transportation modes at the station such as electric vehicles, zipcars, bike stations, Segways and scooters; improving site circulation for multimodal activity; positioning the ancillary space on site as complimentary leasable space to offset operational costs and solidifying the property's iconic gateway presence by establishing a Virginia Welcome Center and Bicycle Welcome Center within the station. The Phase 3 restoration effort is underway with Taylor & Parrish Construction Inc. The restoration effort will be completed in March 2017.

GRTC's Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) system will have a stop directly in front of the Main Street Station providing connectivity to the entire GRTC transit network and provide a shuttle service to other destinations in downtown. The BRT system will be operational by October 2017. Currently over 880 GRTC buses circulate around Main Street Station daily at bus stops within two blocks of the station.

The Phase 3 development functions independently but supportively of the future track improvements for increased passenger rail and high speed rail service at Main Street Station which are the responsibility of the Commonwealth of Virginia. The restoration plans for the station have been developed in coordination with the Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transportation, Amtrak and CSX.

Main Street Station is located on the National High Speed Passenger Rail network providing downtown to downtown passenger rail service along the nation's east coast. All completed federal Environmental Impact Statements (EIS) required to receive federal funding include Main Street Station as the major Richmond station on the rail corridors. The future track

improvements to be developed by the state will allow all of Amtrak's trains serving central Virginia to service Main Street Station. These trains include Amtrak's Florida service, Southeast High Speed Rail, Hampton Roads High Speed Rail, regional trains on the Norfolk to DC and Newport News to DC corridors gradually generating a total of 32 trains a day at the station.

In January 2016, Richmond City Council's resolution 2016-R001 was unanimously adopted "To express the Council's continued support for and endorsement of the extension of high speed rail from the Washington metropolitan area to the Richmond region and to encourage the Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transportation to focus the analysis of its "DC2RVA Tier II Environmental Impact Statement" on Main Street Station as the Council's preferred site in the future study of all station locations in the Richmond region."

Any development of the shed and the Seaboard buildings either directly by the City or through a public/private initiative must be approved by the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) and must, according to FTA requirements, "*be compatible with and incidental to the purpose of the Main Street Station*". Such development must fulfill the transportation commitments and any revenue generated must be directed to offset operating expenses of the station. Following the FTA requirements, the City also will maintain "*on going and continuing control*" of the property and will follow the *Secretary of Interior Standards for Rehabilitation* for the rehabilitation efforts.

The City of Richmond's Downtown Plan states in regards to Main Street Station, "City-proposed plans for Main Street Station involve two different strategies for revitalizing the grand terminal. Both strategies involve introducing a new street through the two block long train shed, thus increasing connectivity in the area and enhancing pedestrian access." (Page 4.61) "A more long-term plan involves developing Main Street Station as a multi-modal transportation hub for Downtown. This would provide a tremendous benefit to Downtown, as it does not currently have an integrated transportation center, thus preventing most residents and workers from using transit. Main Street Station is an excellent choice for such a transportation center, as the station is a grand entrance to the city, and its location provides direct access to the City Center and Downtown neighborhoods." (Page 4.61)

Staff feels the proposal is consistent with the recommendations of the City of Richmond's Downtown Plan for Main Street Station.

Therefore, staff recommends approval of the proposal.

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## **FINDINGS OF FACT**

### **Site Description**

The subject properties are located in between 15<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> Streets and East Main and East Broad Streets. The proposal consists of two parcels totaling approximately 5.30 acres of land. The properties are currently improved with a circa 1901 chateau-style train station which is attached to a circa 1982 train shed.

**Proposed Use of the Property**

State funding totaling \$2 million will provide capital financial assistance for the Phase 3 development of the Main Street Station. Therefore the Chief Administrative Officer must be authorized to accept and appropriate \$2 million from the Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transportation for the Main Street Station Phase 3 development.

**Master Plan**

The City of Richmond's Master Plan recommends Main Street Station to be converted to a multi-modal transportation hub for Downtown. Main Street Station is an excellent choice for such a transportation center, as the station is a grand entrance to the city, and its location provides direct access to the City Center and Downtown neighborhoods. (Page 4.61)

**Zoning**

The properties are zoned M-1 Light Industrial.

**Surrounding Area**

All properties surrounding the subject property are located in the M-1 Light Industrial and B-5 Central Business zoning districts.

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