

NORTHERN VIRGINIA TRANSPORTATION AUTHORITY

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MEMORANDUM

FOR: Chair Phyllis J. Randall and Members
Northern Virginia Transportation Authority

FROM: Monica Backmon, Executive Director

DATE: September 2, 2021

SUBJECT: TransAction Update – Public Engagement Activities

- 1. Purpose.** To inform Northern Virginia Transportation Authority (NVTA) of the status of public engagement activities for the TransAction update. These activities will inform the development of goals, objectives, and performance measures for the evaluation of projects/packages of projects in TransAction.
- 2. Background.** The Authority adopted the current version of the TransAction Plan, the long-range transportation plan for Northern Virginia, on October 12, 2017. The Authority officially kicked off the update to TransAction Plan at its January 9, 2020 meeting with a public listening session. The Authority awarded the contract for consultant services for TransAction update to the Cambridge Systematics team at its meeting on March 11, 2021. TransAction will be updated in three phases, starting with a review of transportation needs and priorities. Each phase of the work comprises an integrated approach that includes planning and public engagement activities. Phase 1 is the most important phase for public engagement as it provides the greatest opportunity to shape the overall approach to the TransAction update at an early stage in the process. This memorandum describes the Phase 1 public engagement activities and supporting initiatives.
- 3. Public Engagement Activities.** During Phase 1, which continues until October 31, 2021, there are multiple public engagement opportunities. Mindful of the Authority's core values, especially the equity core value, NVTA staff and the consultant team have designed public engagement opportunities to target underserved populations that may otherwise feel excluded. The TransAction [website](#) provides full details of engagement activities, and a summary is provided below:
 - a. Online Survey** – offered in English, Spanish, and Korean, this survey is targeted at all who live, work, or have business in Northern Virginia, and those who visit or pass through. The survey is open until September 17, and is the primary opportunity to engage with NVTA and the consultant team.

- b. **Pop-up Events** –while distributed throughout the region, and open to all, the locations for these in-person events maximize the opportunity to intercept populations in equity emphasis areas. Translators are available at each location to minimize language barriers and help visitors to complete the online survey. In total, ten pop-up events will take place through September 15, complementing the online survey.
 - c. **Live Chat Sessions** – four separate sessions between August 26 and September 16 provide an opportunity to ‘chat’ with NVTA staff on a one-on-one basis via the TransAction website. Each session lasts for two hours on a Thursday afternoon while the online survey is open. In addition to these four publicized sessions, NVTA staff has randomly initiated live chat sessions on an unannounced basis.
 - d. **Focus Groups** – eight invite-only sessions held during the second half of July provided an opportunity to explore transportation topics in more detail than is possible through the online survey. Focus group segmentation considered access to transit and federal Title VI classification status, among a total sample size of 95 adult Northern Virginians.
 - e. **Stakeholder Group** – NVTA staff has created a stakeholder group comprising contacts from organizations that represent individual citizens and/or individual businesses. Initially based on the subscription lists for NVTA’s eBlasts, the stakeholder group currently includes more than 50 organizations, including advocacy groups, citizen associations, chambers of commerce, and associations representing businesses. NVTA staff will continue to add qualified organizations to this stakeholder group, prior to scheduling a meeting with the stakeholder group in October.
- 4. Supporting Initiatives.** To enable the extensive public engagement activities described in the previous section, NVTA staff and the consultant team have coordinated with regional partners on numerous supporting initiatives to promote the online survey, including:
- a. Refreshed TransAction website;
 - b. Resources and tools with message templates for use by:
 - Authority members;
 - Planning Coordination Advisory Committee members;
 - Chief Executives of member jurisdictions and the region’s five largest towns;
 - Local and regional Public Information Officers;
 - Stakeholder Group members; and
 - c. Social media messaging, including a new NVTA Instagram account to supplement existing Twitter and Facebook accounts.
- 5. Next Steps.** The online survey will close on September 17, 2021. NVTA staff will share findings from the online survey and focus groups during the October 2021 committee meeting cycle, and post these on the TransAction website and through social media. NVTA staff will announce future public engagement opportunities for phases 2 and 3 in due course. Phase 2 includes the next edition of NVTA’s public perception survey, scheduled for late 2021. Phase 3 includes formal public comment and a Public Hearing during 2022.

The Authority will adopt the final TransAction Plan in November 2022.