

**CITY OF ALEXANDRIA
TRAFFIC AND PARKING BOARD PUBLIC HEARING
MONDAY, MARCH 25, 2024, 7 P.M.
IN-PERSON AND VIRTUAL MEETING**

MINUTES

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT: Chair James Lewis, Vice Chair Ann Tucker, Annie Ebbers, Casey Kane, and Kursten Phelps.

BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT: Lavonda Bonnard and Ashley Mihalik.

STAFF MEMBERS PRESENT: T&ES – Katie North, Division Chief; Sheila McGraw, Principal Planner; Dan Scolese, Civil Engineer IV; Alex Carroll, Principal Planner; Max Devilliers, Urban Planner II; and Bryan Hayes, Urban Planner III.

1. Announcement of deferrals and withdrawals: None.
2. Approval of the February 26, 2024, Traffic and Parking Board meeting minutes:

BOARD ACTION: Mr. Kane made a motion, seconded by Ms. Ebbers to approve the minutes of the February 26, 2024, Traffic and Parking Board meeting. The motion carried unanimously.

3. **WRITTEN STAFF UPDATES:** The Board received written staff updates on:
 - Vision Zero Milestone – Zero Fatalities in 2023
 - Mr. Kane thanked staff for their efforts in achieving this goal.
 - Lower King Street Long Term Pedestrian Plan
 - Holland Lane Community Engagement
 - South Pickett Street Community Engagement
 - Chair Lewis offered the Board’s help to City staff in the form of public outreach, if needed.
 - Eisenhower Avenue Transportation Study Outreach
 - Mr. Kane asked if there is plan to eventually add an ADA-compliant crosswalk across South Van Dorn Street at Eisenhower Avenue, to which Mr. Scolese responded that doing so is not feasible at this time due to various physical challenges with the intersection, but City staff is looking to obtain grant funding to do so in the next six years or so.
 - Completed Parking Meter Additions Potomac Yard
 - February Traffic and Parking Board Member Questions Follow-Up
 - Mr. Kane thanked City staff for addressing the stop signs on the Mount Vernon Trail, and asked if City staff plans on adding stop signs at Taney Avenue and North Howard Street as well as at South Payne Street and Wilkes Street. Mr. Scolese responded that City staff is looking at various with the community for Taney Avenue and North Howard Street, but staff has not gotten to working on South Payne Street and Wilkes Street yet.

Mr. Kane asked if the section of Taney Avenue near Patrick Henry Elementary School will be restriped soon, to which Ms. Carroll responded that staff would check with T&ES Public Works on the status.

4. **PUBLIC DISCUSSION PERIOD:** Steve Milone mentioned that the new loading zone at 930 North Henry Street should only be 40 feet long instead of 80 and that the travel lanes on the 1000 block should be repainted to reduce confusion and mitigate the risk of drivers driving into the westside loading/parking lane on the 900 block.

BOARD ACTION: Chair Lewis asked when North Henry Street would be repaved, to which Ms. Carroll responded that she does not believe it is on the three-year paving schedule, however, that might change over time. Chair Lewis stated that if it gets added to the paving schedule, the striping should be addressed, and asked that Ms. Carroll send him the latest paving schedule for awareness.

CONSENT ITEMS

BOARD ACTION: Mr. Kane moved to remove Items 5 and 6 from consent, seconded by Ms. Tucker. The motion carried unanimously. Chair Lewis moved to approve Item 7. The motion carried unanimously.

PUBLIC HEARING ITEMS

5. **ISSUE:** Parking removal – Intersection of Leslie Avenue and East Luray Avenue

DISCUSSION: Mr. Hayes presented the item to the Board. Mr. Kane asked what the cost is of moving utility poles, to which Mr. Scolese responded approximately \$20,000 per pole, but three would need to be moved in this case, which would cost \$60,000 total. Mr. Kane asked about the feasibility of conducting a citywide audit of utility poles obstructing sidewalks and curb ramps, to which Ms. Carroll responded that doing so would be a massive undertaking which is why City staff tries to address these issues via major capital projects with some spot improvements where absolutely necessary. Mr. Kane suggested City staff apply for a grant to help fund this project. Chair Lewis asked if one or both of the removed parking spaces could be used as an in-street bike and scooter corral to prevent drivers from parking there, to which Mr. Hayes responded that staff is checking on the feasibility of that internally.

PUBLIC TESTIMONY: Richard Hull testified in support and mentioned that Commonwealth Academy's chain link fence is located immediately adjacent to the sidewalk where the utility pole is located and, if the chain link fence was moved back, the sidewalk could be widened to make it ADA compliant. Mr. Hull also raised concerns about parking supply in the neighborhood and suggested that parking no longer be prohibited on Leslie Avenue next to Commonwealth Academy. Mr. Hull also suggested that the City considered additional safety improvements such as speed bumps.

BOARD ACTION: Ms. Ebbers made a motion, seconded by Ms. Phelps to recommend the Director of T&ES remove two parking spaces at the intersection of Leslie Avenue and East Luray Avenue. The motion carried unanimously.

6. **ISSUE:** Stop Sign Request – Intersection of First Street and North Pitt Street

DISCUSSION: Dan presented the item. Mr. Kane asked if City staff will be installing an ‘All Way Stop’ in addition to the new stop signs, which Mr. Scolese confirmed. Mr. Kane asked why the Valley Drive stop sign request was not also being considered at this time, to which Mr. Scolese responded that that particular request needs a certain amount of community support to go forward.

PUBLIC TESTIMONY: None.

BOARD ACTION: Ms. Tucker made a motion, seconded by Mr. Kane to recommend the Director of T&ES install an all-way stop at the intersection of First Street and North Pitt Street. The motion carried unanimously.

7. **ISSUE:** No Turn on Red Restrictions and Slip Lane Modification - Duke Street and South Patrick Street and Duke Street and South Henry Street

DISCUSSION: Ms. Carroll presented the item to the Board. Mr. Kane asked if pedestrians would be required to wait within the traffic island or if the pedestrian signals would be synchronized to prevent that, to which Ms. Carroll responded that it is too early in the planning stages to determine, but staff will try to achieve that. Mr. Kane asked if City staff has looked in passive pedestrian detection technology at this intersection, to which Ms. Carroll responded that staff would consider it. Ms. Tucker asked what kind of streetlamps would be installed and if adjacent residents could be shielded from excessive light, to which Ms. Carroll responded that she does not have those details yet but that staff would consider effects on adjacent residents prior to installation. Chair Lewis asked if the planted median would be raised relative to the street, to which Ms. Carroll responded that the Fire Department approved a full-build planted median. Chair Lewis asked trees would be addressed on the South Henry Street side of the intersection, to which Ms. Carroll confirmed that they would.

PUBLIC TESTIMONY: Mike Doyle testified in opposition because he believes the proposed solution is not safe enough for pedestrians. Mr. Doyle prefers that a pedestrian bridge be built and that the slip ramp be removed entirely. Mr. Kane stated that pedestrian bridges are no longer considered ideal because they typically have not been ADA compliant, and ADA-compliant bridges require immense amounts of land. Mr. Kane asked what the required grade is for pedestrian bridges, to which Ms. Carroll responded that the incline must be very steady which requires a lot of space. Dane Lauritzen testified in opposition stating that this item should be deferred to provide a better solution that removes more pedestrian conflicts. Jackson Williams testified in opposition stating that lanes should be reduced to improve pedestrian safety. Steve Milone testified in opposition stating that the slip ramp should be removed entirely and the crosswalks should be raised. Mr. Milone also stated that the five trees on Duke Street

should be saved, and that the vehicular right-of-way on the 200 block of South Patrick Street be reduced in width. Ms. Tucker asked if the two westbound through lanes on Duke Street could be reduced to one lane, to which Ms. Carroll responded that staff could look into incorporating that concept in future plans. Mr. Kane asked what the project timeline is, to which Mr. Scolese responded that staff is currently applying for the grant which is due at the end of March, 2024, and the fully funded project would not begin for another six years. Mr. Kane asked if the project design could be adjusted after grant is awarded, to which Mr. Scolese responded that certain minor aspects could be, but major aspects such as a slip ramp versus a dedicated right-turn lane could not be. Chair Lewis asked if the 'No Turn on Red' signs could be installed sooner, to which Ms. Carroll responded that they could be installed this year, and that the grant funding would be for the curb extensions, planted median, full-build slip lane, and streetlamps. Mr. Kane asked if tractor trailers would be able to make a right turn from Duke Street onto South Henry Street without the slip lane, to which Ms. Carroll responded that the curve radius would have to be extra wide to allow for tractor trailers to turn without a slip lane, which would encourage drivers of smaller vehicles to speed more than at a usual turn.

BOARD ACTION: Mr. Kane made a motion, seconded by Ms. Tucker to recommend the Director of T&ES implement the following changes to improve safety:

- No Turn on Red restrictions on all applicable intersection approaches
- Reduce the slip lane from Duke Street to South Henry Street from two lanes to one lane.

The motion carried unanimously.

8. **ISSUE:** Parking Addition - 1000 Block of North Fayette Street

DISCUSSION: Mr. Devilliers presented the item to the Board. Mr. Kane asked if City staff could swap the existing 'Share the Road' signs with new 'Bikes May Use Full Lane' signs, to which Mr. Devilliers confirmed the request would be sent to Traffic Operations.

PUBLIC TESTIMONY: Steve Milone testified in support, but prefers that the space proposed for an in-street bike and scooter corral be used for more car parking instead.

BOARD ACTION: Ms. Ebbers made a motion, seconded by Ms. Phelps to recommend that the Director of T&ES:

- Add on-street parking with 2-hour parking restrictions, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Saturday, on the east side of the 1000 block of North Fayette Street, and
- Add a 47-foot-long loading zone, 7 a.m. to 8 p.m. Monday through Sunday on the west side of the 1000 block of North Fayette Street adjacent to the Capital Bikeshare station.

The motion carried unanimously.

9. **ISSUE:** Code Change – Taxicab Regulations

DISCUSSION: Ms. McGraw presented the item to the Board. Ms. Tucker asked about inspections, to which Ms. McGraw responded that taxicab drivers must go through an

annual inspection as well as state inspections every time they drive through the airport. Ms. Tucker asked about the outcomes of no longer regulating taxicab fees in other jurisdictions, to which Ms. McGraw responded that it is currently working well for Fredericksburg and that the fares there have not changed since the City relinquished that responsibility. Ms. Phelps asked about the number of taxicab companies in Fredericksburg and Newport News relative to Alexandria, to which Ms. McGraw responded that they are not as prevalent but could provide the Board with an actual comparison of numbers at a later date. Mr. Kane asked about the timeline for collecting data if that was to be ultimate decision, to which Ms. McGraw responded that staff would likely need to collect data using MDS/a data aggregator for a year to more accurately inform decision making. Chair Lewis suggested that the Hack Office help staff with data collection by submitting data annually. Ms. McGraw stated that using MDS would require a new method of data collection. Ms. North mentioned that permit fees and the general budget would help to cover the cost of a new method of data collection for this. Mr. Kane asked how the trade dress ordinance could be loosened, to which Ms. McGraw responded that the ordinance would be stripped to only including the basic requirements to publicly show a taxicab is indeed a taxicab. Ms. Phelps asked if the taxicab company would determine the design of its cabs, which Ms. McGraw confirmed and added that one trade dress could not conflict with another company's. Ms. Tucker asked if a formal review would preclude the public from relaying taxi-related concerns to the Board, which Ms. McGraw confirmed, and added that review would be brought before the Board, followed by City Council, followed by the City Manager. All information is compiled into a report and published on the taxicab webpage. Ms. McGraw stated that the suggestion is to move to a triennial review and strike the review section from Code and move it to the Regulations section to make it easier to change (without City Council approval). Chair Lewis asked if the City Manager designee would be the Director of T&ES, which Ms. North confirmed. Mr. Kane asked how often the City has been involved with dispute resolution, to which Ms. North responded that it has not been because disputes have been resolved between the taxicab company and its employee(s) historically. Mr. Kane asked what other jurisdictions have done to clean up the insurance requirements for taxicabs, to which Ms. North responded that Arlington County has similar requirements and likely does not have motorist coverage requirements. Ms. McGraw stated that the City couldn't change the insurance requirements to help the taxicab companies. Mr. Kane asked what the process involves to establish a taxicab company in Alexandria, to which Ms. North responded that the applicant would need to apply for a permit with the City and would need to meet a large number of criteria and requirements to begin operating in the city. Ms. Phelps asked staff to explain how the solution involving using MDS with a fare maximum would work, to which Ms. McGraw responded that the City would use MDS data to better understand the length of rides and their origins and destinations to support fare changes. Mr. Kane asked how updated the presented fare comparison table is, to which Ms. McGraw responded that it is fully up to date. Ms. McGraw announced that Board recommendations would go before the City Council for consideration at their May 14, 2024, meeting.

PUBLIC TESTIMONY: Kenneth Bynum, representative of Union Taxi Company, testified in opposition to the City relinquishing responsibility over taxicab companies and wants the City to continue regulating taxicab fares by increasing the per-mile rate to

\$2.40 to match Arlington County, and eventually \$2.56 per mile if Washington, D.C.'s proposal passes. Mr. Bynum opposes the MDS solution, loosening trade dress regulations, decreasing the frequency of the annual review, and relinquishing dispute resolution responsibilities.

Muhydin Mohammed, President of Union Taxi Company, testified in opposition to the City relinquishing responsibility over taxicab companies and requested rate increase.

Fassil Berhe, Board Member of Union Taxi Company, testified in opposition to using MDS data to regulate rates and requested a rate increase.

Abdikarim Sharmarke testified in opposition to the City relinquishing responsibility over taxicab companies.

Daniel Woldegiorgis testified in opposition to the City relinquishing responsibility over taxicab companies.

Yohannes Abaye testified in opposition to the City relinquishing responsibility over taxicab companies.

Abdul Karim, owner of King Cab Company, testified in opposition to the City relinquishing responsibility over taxicab companies and requested increase in rates.

Jon Liss testified in opposition to the City relinquishing responsibility over taxicab companies.

Daniel Hadgu testified in opposition to the City relinquishing responsibility over taxicab companies.

Abdi Elias testified in opposition to the City relinquishing responsibility over taxicab companies and requested an increase in rates.

BOARD ACTIONS:

Ms. Phelps made a motion, seconded by Mr. Kane, to recommend City Council to make no changes to the insurance requirements outlined in Title 9, Chapter 12 – Taxicabs and Other Vehicles for Hire. The motion carried unanimously.

Ms. Ebbers made a motion, seconded by Ms. Tucker, to recommend City Council update City Code to amend Title 9, Chapter 12 – Taxicabs and Other Vehicles for Hire to remove the City from involvement in disputes of a private employer/company. The motion carried unanimously.

Ms. Phelps made a motion, seconded by Mr. Kane, to recommend City Council make no changes to the trade dress requirements outlined in Title 9, Chapter 12 – Taxicabs and Other Vehicles for Hire. The motion carried four to one, with Ms. Tucker opposed.

Mr. Kane made a motion, seconded by Ms. Phelps, to recommend City Council update City Code to amend Title 9, Chapter 12 – Taxicabs and Other Vehicles for Hire to increase the Taxicab Initial Charge to \$5.00 and the Per-Mile Charge to \$2.56, and to ask the City Council how staff should determine fare regulation using data. The motion carried three to two, with Ms. Tucker and Ms. Ebbers opposed.

Ms. Phelps made a motion, seconded by Ms. Ebbers, to recommend City Council update City Code to amend Title 9, Chapter 12 – Taxicabs and Other Vehicles for Hire to eliminate the City-mandated vehicle age limit requirement for all vehicle types. The motion carried four to one, with Ms. Tucker opposed.

Ms. Tucker made a motion, seconded by Ms. Ebbers, to recommend City Council make no changes to the Board’s and City Manager’s biennial review requirements outlined in Title 9, Chapter 12 – Taxicabs and Other Vehicles for Hire. The motion carried unanimously.

INFORMATION ITEMS

10. **STAFF UPDATES:** None.

11. **COMMISSIONER UPDATES:**

- Chair Lewis reminded the Board members that all Board-related emails should be saved for FOIA-related reasons, and that Board members cannot email outside of public Board meetings.
- Chair Lewis updated the Board that the proposal for intersections on Mount Vernon Avenue is still being studied.

ADJOURNMENT

Ms. Ebbers moved to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Ms. Tucker. The motion carried unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 10:34 PM.