

Accomplishments and Events Transportation

Woodrow Wilson Bridge

In February, City Council agreed to settle its lawsuit challenging the federal government's decision to construct a 12-lane replacement for the Woodrow Wilson Bridge. Terms of the settlement included;

1. The construction of a 12-lane bridge that initially operates as a 10-lane facility;
2. The improvement of the Jones Point area, including extensive landscaping and other amenities; and
3. A new access route between the Beltway and Eisenhower Avenue.

In April, in a separate lawsuit filed by a citizens' group, a federal court ruled that the Federal Highway Association's decision to proceed with a 12-lane bridge did not comply with environmental statutes. The federal government is appealing the ruling and a decision is expected by December. In the meantime, planning and design work on the bridge is moving forward as funding sources are sought.

King Street Pedestrian Improvements

In May, City Council received the King Street Pedestrian Access Study, prepared by the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA). The study evaluated pedestrian safety and access issues related to the use of transit around the King Street Station area. The study culminated work that began in July 1997 and included monthly meetings with the King Street Task Force, two public workshops and a City Council work session in January 1999.

In June, City Council voted to implement short-term solutions to improve pedestrian safety and station access including new signs and sidewalk and crosswalk improvements. New corridor signs are scheduled to be installed by this fall.

Metrorail Service

In 1998-1999, WMATA reported record levels of rail ridership, due in part to the economic recovery of the central business district and near record levels of tourism. At the four Alexandria stations, average daily boardings and alighting were up 6.6%, for a total of 23,830 passengers for FY 1999. Daily ridership increased 3.2% at Braddock Road Station, 7.8% at King Street Station, 7.5% Eisenhower Avenue Station, and 8.3% at Van Dorn Station.

Metrobus Service

WMATA's experimental bus service, which provides more direct access to and from the King Street Metro station, between Park Center, Stonegate and the Northern Virginia Community College, on the west end of the City, has been made permanent due to high demand for the service.

In the past year, WMATA implemented a new "simplified" fare system that eliminated zone and transfer charges and established a flat rate of \$1.10 for a one-way bus trip.

DASH Bus Service

The DASH bus system, operated by the City-owned Alexandria Transit Company, carried more than 2.4 million passengers in FY 1999, a 4.9% increase over the previous year. The Alexandria Transit Company celebrated 15 years of providing safe, reliable DASH service to riders. The transit company now offers a direct connection between Old Town, the Eisenhower corridor and the Landmark area. These improvements have sparked new ridership gains that are expected to continue with development in the Eisenhower Valley and Cameron Station areas. DASH passenger fares covered 42% of its operating costs, making it one of the most cost-effective transit systems in the State and nation.

Alexandria Rideshare

As a result of Alexandria Rideshare Office outreach efforts, 18 new companies started offering incentives to their employees to take transit to work and 450 new car and vanpool computer match lists were provided to area commuters. City employee participation in the transit benefits program reached an all time high with transit riders up 11% over FY 1998.

DOT Paratransit Service

In FY 1999, the number of trips provided by the City's DOT paratransit service declined by 4,353 trips. This 8% reduction in trips is most likely due to changes in the parameters of the service and changing ridership patterns. Yet despite the decline in the number of trips, the City's annual subsidy for DOT service increased from \$610,226 in FY 1998 to \$621,713 in FY 1999 as a result of riders traveling longer distances. A number of new policy initiatives were agreed to with the Alexandria Commission on Persons with Disabilities (ACPD) that are intended to increase passenger convenience without adversely impacting the costs of the service.

King Street / North Beauregard Intersection Improvements

The intersection of King Street, North Beauregard Street and South Walter Reed Drive was the subject of a study to determine what road improvements can be made to this heavily-traveled intersection. The City will be discussing options with VDOT and Arlington County.

Braddock Road Widening

VDOT is currently widening Braddock Road, between Mount Vernon Avenue and West Street, from two lanes to four lanes. The \$17 million project includes the replacement of the railroad bridge over Braddock Road. Scheduled for completion in summer 2000, the project will improve traffic flow, enhance pedestrian and bicycle safety and provide utility upgrades.

Traffic Improvements and Calming Efforts

In June 1999, the City completed construction of traffic enhancements requested by Northeast citizens, including reducing Powhatan Street from four lanes to two, adding raised medians, extending sidewalks and other measures. Last February, City Council sought input from Alexandria civic associations and neighborhood residents about traffic issues and concerns. Council received the staff report and heard public comments on traffic calming issues in late spring and is scheduled to discuss the staff response in October.

Recent traffic control initiatives include the approval of measures for: enhancing existing red-light traffic camera sites; creating a new red-light traffic camera site; and creating a proposed work program and tentative schedule for speed control and reduction on designated streets.

Traffic Enforcement

Traffic enforcement continues to be a top police priority, with a 17.3% increase in the number of citations issued by the Traffic Unit, up from 4,787 in CY 1997, to 5,613 in CY 1998. Increased enforcement efforts are paying off with a decrease of 4.8% in the total number of accidents, down from 2,347 in CY 1997, to 2,234 in CY 1998. Even more encouraging is the continuing decrease in accident-related injuries, down from 826 in CY 1997, to 796 in CY 1998. As in CY 1997, the City recorded only one traffic fatality in CY 1998.