City Council Strategic Planning Process
Goal #3
Comments Submitted
on-line, via e-mail or presented at Nov 9 meeting

James Wamsley (32) | User | October 22, 2009 - 9:51 AM

Comment on the transportation plan.

Transit service should be provided based on the density of users. this is in contrast to the current system that provides hourly service to everyone.

The Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments suggests these service goals.

60 minute service for areas with up to then 7 dwelling units per acre.
30 minute service for areas with 7 to 15 dwelling units per acre.
10 minute service for areas with over 15 dwelling units per acre.

Transit districts may be the best way to reach these goals with free transit passes to residents and business that pay transit district fees.

Jonathan Krall (33) | User | October 22, 2009 - 2:35 PM

For the Oct 22 Meeting:

Top goals: Potomac Yards Metro station, Comprehensive Bike Network (visible, accessible, connected), More business offices in Alexandria.

Measure success: We want more commerce without more automobile traffic. The results should be measured in revenue. We want more revenue.

Constraints: Development needs to be high density, walkable, and centered around active transportation infrastructure (not just buses--bus routes can be moved with a stroke of a pen).

Andrew Palmieri (34) | User | October 22, 2009 - 3:02 PM

As an Alexandria resident and business owner, I welcome the opportunity to weigh in on the critical strategic planning needs of the City. First, please note that I fully endorse the position of the Alexandria Chamber of Commerce, delivered by Tina Leone at the

October 22, 2009 public hearing on Goal One. It should be noted that these comments are also relevant to Goal 3 and should be taken in conjunction with the Council's deliberations on both subjects.

Developing a strategic plan is critical to the sustainability of any enterprise, both public and private. I applaud the Council for undertaking this effort, and I encourage the Council to act swiftly in designing and implementing its plan.

I encourage the Council and City Staff to make parking and an integrated public transportation system its highest priority. By resolving these issues, a framework for future development designed around a reliable transportation system will quickly evolve.

As for specific projects, the Waterfront/King Street should be at the top of the list. This location represents Alexandria's reception to the world, and we should strive to develop a world-class waterfront that consists of commercial activities that will provide the financial support to enhance existing parks. Because the waterfront is geographically linked to King Street, the implementation of the King Street Retail Strategy should be undertaken as the first phase of the waterfront revitalization process.

Other projects meriting high priority include adding a Metro Station at Potomac Yard and using the redevelopment of the Landmark Mall site as the basis for revitalizing the Van Dorn Street Corridor. When taken in conjunction with the Beauragard Plan, Alexandria has an incredible opportunity to remake this often overlooked part of the City.

In conclusion, parking solutions, attractive and efficient public transportation and revitalization of the waterfront and King Street are paramount to the future success of our City.

David and Kim Kaplan (44) | User | November 1, 2009 - 4:44 PM

For Goals 1, 2, 3, and 7:

We very much support the City's plans to create a multimodal transportation system, which enables residents and visitors to travel throughout the City on foot, bicycle, and via transit. This investment makes our City more livable by reducing traffic, improving air quality, and enabling the creation of vibrant mixed use development that will revitalize City neighborhoods. Smart growth planning is being implemented throughout the region. Alexandria has a great opportunity to partner with its neighbors during the next few years to create the next generation of transportation, including light rail, rapid bus transit, and pedestrian connections between major corridors.

The City's future economic sustainability depends on attracting new residents and businesses and implementing the vision of transit-oriented development articulated in

the City's many neighborhood small area plans. The additional development brings in additional tax revenue and fulfills the goal of having a more even split of the tax burden between residential and commercial property owners. However, new development cannot overwhelm existing roads and neighborhoods, so it must be targeted in areas where the City has made a long-term commitment to providing enhanced transit. Census data shows that Alexandria has done a very good job of attracting young professionals to the City who enjoy the convenience of being close to urban amenities but find the housing more affordable than living in the District. Maintaining and expanding our multimodal transportation system is essential if the City wants to continue attracting new residents to the City.

Our multimodal transportation system is also a key component of creating a caring, affordable community in Alexandria. Through a quality multimodal transportation system, we help seniors remain in their homes and continue participating in the life of their City once they stop driving. We create housing options for individuals with disabilities and opportunities to get to and from work. Additionally, a multimodal transportation system is essential to efforts to develop and retain work-force housing in the City. Housing and transportation are the two largest household expenditures. Yet, while housing costs in urban areas are typically high, transportation costs are frequently lower. When we create housing and transportation options that allow families to move from using two cars to one, or to none at all, we can lower the cost of living for these families, help alleviate the affordability crisis, reduce traffic on our roads, and promote environmental goals at the same time.

We recommend the City pursue the following projects and policies during the next 10 years to create an efficient and effective multimodal transportation system:

1) Adding a Metro Station to the Potomac Yard development.

2) Work with Fairfax County, Arlington County, and WMATA to bring light rail or rapid bus transit to Route 1, Duke Street, Beauregard Street, and Route 7.

3) Implement strategies that create mixed-use, urban development in transit corridors. Strategies should include comprehensive parking plans, signal priority for buses, and tax credits and other incentives for businesses that choose to locate in these corridors. Affordable and work-force housing must also be clustered in transit districts. Car sharing programs should be included whenever feasible in the transportation management plans for all new multi-family housing constructed in the City.

What indicators will allow the City to measure progress toward its overall goal?

- Ridership on transit systems (i.e. Metro, DASH, King Street Trolley)

- Percentage of residents and workers in the City who commute via transit

- Number of car sharing vehicles available within the City of Alexandria

- Percentage of residents in the City who do not own a vehicle

- Number of affordable or workforce housing units added within designated transit corridors

What opportunities should the City seek to capitalize on in pursuit of its goal?

- Regional partnerships

-Federal and State transportation funding

-Support for an increased gas tax within Virginia

What constraints should the City consider?

- Need to raise additional revenue to pay for transportation projects

-Need to work with residents and businesses to build support for new transportation projects in their neighborhoods

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Marjorie B. Salwin (45) | User | November 2, 2009 - 8:52 AM

I Am Not Asking for the World, Just to Keep My 10A and 10B Metrobuses Running

DASH service on average runs every hour for a distance that can be traveled on foot in 30 minutes. Only bad weather or heavy packages would motivate people to wait for a DASH bus if they are able to walk. Thankfully, I do not have to go to any location on DASH, but some do. Do they take a DASH bus? More often than not, no. Most DASH service runs where the rich live, like Russell Road or Old Town, and fails to serve the working poor. The rest drive their cars or suffer the DASH. Unless they have access to Metrobus.

Between Metrobus 10A and 10B, most locations in Alexandria are served every 15 minutes.

Each 10 Metrobus line provides bus service every day except Sunday, when it is on an hourly schedule.

Whenever DASH takes over a Metrobus line, it cuts service from a twice hourly service

to once an hour. Metrobus provides adequate service to where the jobs are . Anyone who cuts twice an hour service to once an hour service where the jobs are is lying to you when they say it is comparable. It is not.

While there are many admirable police, fire, and other personnel in Alexandria City, their budgets are suffering because the city budget is being bled by others who are more astute at budgeting tactics in the system. Transportation and Environmental Services is one of these city components.

One of its biggest boondoggles is the shuttle bus to the water taxi to National Harbor. The shuttle bus to National Harbor serves National Harbor and the Martz Bus Lines, which operates it, not Alexandria businesses. It is a shuttle to the water taxi to a distant location. Make no mistake about it, the tourists riding it are taking that shuttle to get to another location to do their shopping. Yet, somehow it was sold to city businesses as a wonderful way to attract tourists.

I suggested in your last budget go-around that if you claimed you had 600,000 tourists ride that bus last year, then charging them 50 cents each to ride that bus would get the city $300,000, $100,00 more than needed to finance the city's contribution to Metro to keep its buses running in Alexandria. Someone in the city responded to my suggestion, which was offered outside of budget time, to the city government.

Poor people use the 10A and 10B buses to get to work. Poor people work in hotels as maids, cooks, and cleaning people and they make a good living. Cooking may seem beneath many wealthy Alexandrians who employ caterers and treat those businessmen and women like lowly servants but cooking provides health insurance, life insurance and retirement plans for poor people who work in hotels in Arlington.

If these people lose their jobs or have to drive, does it help the budget or the environment of Alexandria City? No.

Those who are going to drive their Mercedes or Jag to their jobs as politicos who pretend to care about the poor but want their taxes kept low is who the City Council is eager to serve. I represent the legacy of a older, kindler, gentler type of political sensibility that was imparted to me by my parents who arrived in the area in 1939.

I am here to remind you that cutting the transportation budget almost always means hurting the working poor in this city and I am not going to let you do that.

All I am telling you is that if you cut Metrobus service by saying DASH can take over, all your Climate Bills and carbon credits and your other forms of pretense to being the morally superior political party are not going to mean a thing. If you cut Metrobus service by failing to take my simple suggestion to raise funds, then certain political personages pretenses will no longer be tolerated on the City Council. They will be exposed as the poseurs they are and actively campaigned against.

Marjorie Salwin (45) | User | November 2, 2009 - 9:20 AM

Dismayed by Grandiose Plans of Past Commentators

Less than one year ago, we in Alexandria were faced with budget cuts and with having to do with degraded bus service on the 10A and 10B routes where we live in city. Might I ask all the policy wonks who have heretofore commented why they are, so Candide-like, suggesting two new Metrorail stations and other such expensive projects so soon after a budget crisis?

Peter Pennington (49) | User | November 8, 2009 - 11:23 AM

In June 2009, the Council adopted the Environmental Action Plan 2030. This document has a host of action items most of which were taken from existing documents such as the Transport Master Plan.
In these straightened times I would recommend that the Council does not take its eye off the small to middle size capital items. Let's finish the bike route plan. Let's put in those missing sidewalks so vividly described during the first Beauregard Small Area planning meeting. Continue the work on pedestrian crossings, bike racks etc. And then let there be a hard look at the marketing of the systems we have. Some commentators have decried the removal of DASH services but when they have an average passenger load of nine, such routes are hard to defend. The answer is to not remove the service but to increase the ridership. This might mean being more hostile to the Single Occupancy Vehicle. All these items can be listed and easily measured on an annual basis.

Mark Benedict, Parkside at Alexandria condominiums and Member, BRAC-133 Advisory Group

The BRAC-133 experience is a lesson in what not to do strategically – maintain a position on transportation decisions in 2004 based on 2004 facts when actual circumstances 6 years later would in all likelihood result in a very different decision by Council – be willing to revisit not yet implement decisions in light of new (current reality) facts.

Strategically – have required transportation studies timelined and commissioned far enough in advance of development projects that studies can be completed (& study results be available) for consideration of transportation impacts of proposed projects – timeline for studies needs to be started 3 to 5 years before start of work on projects.

Many new projects are now in development for Alexandria West End; the approach suggested above is not currently being followed for those proposed projects.

Landmark Van Dorn redevelopment – Beauregard corridor SAP, HOT lanes on I -395. BRT lanes on I-395, access and flyover ramps for BRAC site and their impacts on adjacent communities must be carefully considered.

Mass transit options must figure prominently in all transportation decisions.

Environmental impacts – especially destruction of green space and urban canopy – must be addressed and mitigated in strategic transportation decisions.

Impacts of increases traffic flow on already overtaxed community parking availability is an increasingly critical concern

Pedestrian safety must be a part of strategic transportation planning.

Specific answers to questions posed in e-mail:

1. Number of vehicles on City surface streets, number of trips daily (and starting point of those trips – are these Alexandrians?)

2. Shift of ridership from personal vehicles to mass transit & improvements in community parking options

3. Number of vehicles using City surface streets, mass transit ridership levels

4. Minimal negative impact on the urban environment (preservation of urban canopy)

5. Impacts on the environment and costs (direct & indirect) to citizens to pay for transportation decisions/projects.

Thank you for presenting these tonight and entering them into the record of the public forum.

Judy Guse-Noritake, resident, Parks and Recreation Commission chair

Yon:

I am submitting these images in response to the public forum for strategic planning on transportation. When I was in Germany on a professional exchange about 6 years ago I was struck by the integration of public transportation into green areas. The use of trams running down a greenway, through the City center in Freiburg – while cars were parked at the city's edge – made so much sense. People just walked across the tracks and grass, the tram never went fast enough to cream pedestrians. I firmly believe that this kind of attractive public transportation (both the trams and the track) would lure lots of people to ride. Regular buses running down dedicated pavement will not. It is too engrained in the American psyche that "buses" are not sexy enough. The

third image is certainly do-able here, in places like Potomac Yard, running down Route 1.

Judy

Jerome Grant, Resident

1. All initiatives can be funded. All initiatives should be funded.

2. Reduce emissions by encouraging train usage.

3. Developers are destroying trees. Have developers pay for new trees for every tree they destroy for developing/planting the new tree.

4. Stagger the inlet and outlet of traffic in the City by staggering the report times of employees per each company.

5. Re-evaluate traffic lights to be timed to maximize traffic flow to reduce urban sprawl thus increasing carbon emissions.

6. Outsource the growth of communal gardens to high schools or non-profits.

7. City government should purchase solar cell generators that serve as power grids. The energy generated by the City can be sold back to Virginia Power, purchased for poor residents, or sold for income to finance other government objectives.

Chet and Sabra Avery, Commission on Persons with Disabilities

November 9, 2009

Dear Bill and Paul,

Though I am a member of the Alexandria Commission on Persons with Disabilities and Chair of the Commission's Transportation Committee, I am writing to provide you with my personal input on the City's Transportation Plans Goals and objectives for Commission advanced clearnce was not possible because of time deadlines. As you know, I, like members of the Commission, want to make sure that Alexandria is a fully accessible and usable city for its residents and visitors so that all persons including persons with disabilities can fully enjoy all aspects of life in the city of Alexandria.

I know that you will join me in fully supporting the National Award Winning DOT Paratransit Program for persons with disabilities. I know that you will continue to purchase and maintain accessible DASH buses. Moreover as a measure to enhance transportation access in the City and to reduce the City's contribution to reduce costs for the use of DOT and MetroAccess which costs the City more than $40 a trip, I recommend that the City adopt a DASH Fare Waiver Program to encourage the City's DOT and Dash users to travel on DASH. Bill, since you are on the WMATA Board, you can obtain information on the MetroAccess savings enjoyed by other jurisdictions that have adopted the WMATA supported MetroAccess Fare Waiver Program for trips using their vehicles within their respective areas.

As a critical component of any accessible city is that city's streetscape. I recommend that the City review its streetscape and develop a plan to make all of Alexandria's streets accessible. The City has already developed a plan for many parts of the City. The measurable components of this plan would be to make sure that each street crossing has squared curb cuts with accessible bumps so that wheel chair users, blind cane users and many other travelers will be pointed into the official cross walks and toward the opposite corner rather than into the center of an intersection. The plan should also assure that sidewalks are wide enough for wheel chair, stroller and blind cane users with the sidewalks being free of lifted concrete, bricks and other surfacing materials posing tripping an other hazards and with slopes meeting code wherever possible. All signage should be upgraded to meet the visual standards established by the guidance of the Compliance Board and replaced traffic signals. All new signals should be acccessible in keeping with the City's accessible traffic signal policy developed with the input of the ACPD.

While these recommendations seem like a heavy lift for the City, T&ES and the ACPD have been addressing these issues for years. In keeping with the practice of T&ES and the ACPD, this accessible plan should be prepared and reviewed by the ACPD. In keeping with the T&ES and ACPD agreement., once the plan is prepared, I suggest that an annual update report could be prepared for the Commission as well as consultations, as needed, on variations in the City's streetscape plan.

The views in this input are my own and may contain significant omissions as these comments were hastily prepared this afternoon. I along with the citizens of Alexandria who know of his incredible expertise and citizen friendly approach to transportation issues, commend Rich Baier and his dedicated, experienced staff for the contributions made day in and day out in assuring that this City is one of the most accessible cities in America.

Chet Avery

Input for Strategic Planning meeting on Transportation, November 9, 2009

Thank you for listening to my remarks. In brief, I think we would all like to have more commerce without more cars.

Objectives:
- Reduce percentage of automobile transit share while increasing income. The aim should be more commerce without more cars.
- Increase accessibility of the bike, pedestrian, and transit networks through "road diets," where parts of existing roadways are reallocated for transit or biking.
- Increase accessibility of local resources through the implementation wayfinding signage for pedestrians and cyclists.

Indicators:
- Measure bike/bus/car/metro/pedestrian transit share and satisfaction via survey, keeping in mind that many trips are multimodal.
- Measure, via survey or some other method, the degree to which Alexandrians spend their dollars in Alexandria.
- Measure percentage of students walking and biking to our public schools.

Opportunities:
- Pedestrian and biking networks are cheaper to build than car, bus or rail--let's please get serious about building them.
- The Potomac Yard Metro Station is a great opportunity for long-term development of transit-oriented development.
- Developing streetcars or light rail in coordination with Arlington or Fairfax could significantly energize the Route 1, King Street, or Duke Street corridors.

Limits:
- Investment follow-through: We completed a wayfinding signage design for pedestrians, but did not pay for the actual signs. As a result, we did not get the payoff, which would be increased income from commerce.
- Education: The public needs to know the law as it relates to walking and biking and students in our public and private schools need to know how to effectively get around by walking and biking on and off our roadways.

Thank you again for your time and attention.

Sincerely,

Jonathan Krall
6A E Mason Ave
Alexandria, VA 22301

WEST END BUSINESS ASSOCIATION
City of Alexandria, Virginia
Alexandria, VA 22314

3213 Duke Street, Box 128

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Mayor Bill Euille and members of the City Council
315 King St.
Alexandria, VA 22314

Nov. 8, 2009

WEBA Transportation Goals

WEBA would like to see concrete, actionable steps to ease the transportation and traffic issues of the West End.

As a business association, we are primarily concerned with employees being able to get their their place of employment, and with shoppers or customers getting to a business they patronize.

We need multiple transportation solutions, using many different modes. No one improvement will be sufficient to meet all the needs. Some are going to be local in nature, and make it easier for people to walk to work or shopping. Some are going to be more regional and involve automobiles, streetcars, DASH buses, shuttle buses, high-capacity high-speed buses, as well as anything new on the horizon.

We need regional planning, where Alexandria, Arlington, and Fairfax work together toward joint solutions, are cognizant of each others' plans, and cooperate to reduce regional bottlenecks that hurt everyone.

Within Alexandria, we would request the following:

- In the Beauregard Plan, optimize land uses to minimize the need for new auto-oriented road capacity and encourage transit; work with Fairfax County to make sure the solutions are coherent and work for both jurisdictions
- Revisit the Landmark plan to make sure the logical transportation connections from Landmark to Old Town, Beauregard, and other key areas of the city have been thought through, and that there are enough ways for regional traffic to get to Landmark
- All future small area plans should examine transportation in a bigger corridor than the plan boundary, and reflect inter-jurisdictional cooperation.
- Begin preparing specific implementation steps and strategies for our long-range transportation plan
- Investigate alternative funding mechanisms. It is clear we cannot rely on Virginia to fund what we need, and although federal funding is going in the right direction, it is not here yet. We need a variety of funding sources.

Sincerely,

Kathleen M. Burns, vice president, West End Business Association, 1036 N. Pelham St., Alex., VA 22304
burnskathy@earthlink.net PH 703-824-1799
CC: Members of the Planning Commission
Ms. Faroll Hamer, Planning Director

Mr. Mayor and Councilman Smedberg

Two issues warrant some attention that was integral to the transportation master plan you recently adopted, but are somehow being lost in the process. Both relate to the urbanization of our City.

Many ask what urbanization is and in a simple way, it can be described as the creation of a society that shares open space, housing, and transportation. The functionality is best described as a community designed primarily for the pedestrian or people scale as odd as that sounds. This just means that the scene should be one that caters to the pedestrian and draws the attention away from the heights. Think in Broadway in New Your City from Harlem all the way to the Stock exchange.

The first issue is about the degradation of pedestrian environment. There are numerous excuses, but the fact is the pedestrian is talking the back seat and that is resulting in sub par urban environments. Try to cross at so-called pedestrian crossings, push the button and wait for a cycle or two before you get to cross. Whatever the excuse it is not pedestrian oriented.

The second issue relates to the core assumption in the transportation master plan. It was neither BRT nor the specific routes. Instead, it was the realization that there is no room for building our way out of the increasing traffic congestion. That putting mass transit in the same lanes, as cars would make them just another vehicle stuck in traffic.

No it was dedicated traffic lanes taken away from the cars and given to dedicated traffic lanes for the mass transit vehicles, that would provide the quicker more reliable choice that could compete by reducing travel time for the individuals. Because time is key and unless it was quicker than cars and reliable with great frequency, there would be little incentive to switch.

This point has been lost in the planning translation, with plans that only partially convey the essence of dedicated transit lanes for it to work efficiently. The alternative suggestions of sharing the lanes with cars will be significantly less useful in providing an alternative to the cars.

The other suggestion that is bantered about is the mass transit as a form of valet parking, which does carry extraordinary cost, but will not increase mobility in the city.

Poul Hertel

(I) they will compromise of

POUL MARTIN HERTEL

TRAFFIC CONGESTION

WHY DEDICATED TRANSIT LANES

STILL STUCK IN TRAFFIC

Traffic congestion is considered bad from many aspects. However, according to a report from the Brookings Institution, "peak hour traffic congestion plays an essential and positive role in the transportation life of the nation. Congestion-which basically consists of waiting in line-, is the nation's principal means of allocating scarce road space among competing users during periods when too many people want to use that limited space at the same time. That excess demand for roadways during peak hours is the real problem to which congestion is the most feasible solution"[1]. That is right, viewing congestion as a legitimate solution to a real problem is the first step toward recognizing the reality of the situation we face. In doing so, the need for alternative modes for moving people will become clear.

In theory, there are four ways to cope with the daily peak-hour disparity between the total demand for travel and limited road space.

1. Rationing of the limited road space by charging drivers a users fee.

Many economists recommend using this pricing mechanism to allocate this scarce resource. However, the negative aspects have precluded its implementation. On a practical level, no pricing system could charge a variable toll on every major and minor city street since the economically efficient price to charge is the marginal cost of the extra driver being on the road. Furthermore, adjacent streets not covered would see increased congestion. On a political level, such a toll system would benefit higher income households while imposing a hardship on lower income households.

2. Expand the capacity of the roads.

According to the Brookings report, "A region cannot build its way out of congestion once peak-hour congestion has appeared there"[2]. In theory, increased capacity should speed up traffic. "Unfortunately, once peak-hour congestion has appeared, building new roads or expanding existing ones there does not reduce the intensity of such congestion much in the long run"[3]. For many people that had previously avoided the area will now use it, and developers will take advantage of the short run perceived increase in mobility. "These forms of induced demand would reduce much of the hoped for gain in capacity from building more roads". Finally, "The reality is that there are too many people seeking to use the roads at the same time each day for this approach to work without enormous financial and environmental costs"[4].

3. Expand the capacity of public transit.

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[1] Anthony Downs; Still Stuck in Traffic, Coping with Peak-Hour Traffic Congestion, Brookings Institution 2004 page 5

[2] Ibid page 8

[3] Ibid page 102

[4] Ibid page 8

In theory, the provision of sufficient mass transit should greatly diminish the number of private vehicles trying to use the roads during peak hour congestion. But in the United States, the share of all peak-hour trips made on transit is tiny compared with the share made by privately owned vehicles (POV's) on roads. Somewhat over three fourths of all 2000 commuter trips were POV trips, whereas only about 4.75 percent were on public transit[5]. One of the major reasons is that transit cannot efficiently serve low-density communities. Yet most of the people live in such settlements.

4. "Letting people wait in line until enough others have moved of the road so that space becomes available. That waiting constitutes traffic congestion"[6].

"In effect, congestion is the solution to the real problem; that is, how can we ration our limited road space during peak hours when far more people want to travel on that space than it can handle simultaneously? Congestion may seem to be-and is- undesirable when compared to the mythical alternative of delay free, high-speed movements at all times. But that alternative can never be achieved in most large metropolitan areas."[7]

WHAT CAUSES CONGESTION

1. Studies suggest that absolute growth in and the absolute size of the population in an area is the greatest cause of traffic congestion. "Thus, congestion is most likely to be most serious in large metropolitan areas, since they are likely to produce absolutely large amounts of growth even if they have low percentage rates of growth, and large areas experiencing growth rapid enough to generate absolutely large gains"[8].

2. Increase in the use of automotive vehicles is the result of Americans preferring to travel in private vehicles, mainly alone, in part, because such travel usually provides convenience, comfort, privacy, flexibility in timing, and speed superior to that of mass transit. In the state of Virginia the population grew by 32 percent from 1990 to 2000, whereas, the number of cars grew by over 66 percent[9].

3. Another equally powerful reason is the advent of the low-density suburbs. In most metropolitan areas, the fastest growing suburbs are usually those at the edges of the most heavily built up territory. "These peripheral suburbs typically have residential densities much lower than communities closer in"[10]. Hence, they generate more car travel per person than would higher density communities.

4. Drivers are not required to pay the full marginal social cost of driving during peak periods. Every peak-hour commuter entering a congested road not only incurs the costs of his or her own delay but also imposes greater delay costs on all other persons using the same road at the same time.

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[5] Ibid page 52

[6] Ibid page 11

[7] Ibid page 11

[8] Ibid page 19

[9] Ibid page 45

[10] Ibid page 53

Unless society compels the drivers to pay for driving, they will continue to underestimate the collective costs of road usage.

DEMOGRAFFICALLY

millions choose to live and work based on goals other than minimizing their commute. In 1999, the Association of Realtors asked 2000 randomly selected households if given the choice, would they prefer a townhouse in an urban setting or a detached house in a suburban area? Eighty-three percent choose the larger farther-out suburban single family home. As a result of these preferences for suburban living, 78 percent of all commuters in America traveled singly in private vehicles compared with 12 percent for car pools and 4.7 percent on public transit, requiring far more space to accommodate these cars on the road.

"A central reason is the low density, spatially spread out residential development predominant in most parts of US metropolitan areas. The forms of public transport dominant in America – buses, light rail, and heavy rail can efficiently serve only areas settled at relatively density. Public transit needs to gather significant number of passengers together at its point of origin destination or both, and that is done when densities are high at those points. One study concluded that buses need 4200 persons per square mile or higher to be efficient and fixed rail requires higher densities"[11].

Studies suggest that the medium distance commuters (i.e. Alexandrians) **value their time** most highly because long distance commuters have made residential location decision that attach less importance to longer travel times than many who prefer to live closer to work. Alexandria is at the crossroads of considerable through traffic from the surrounding jurisdictions, and as they grow so will the congestion on Alexandria streets. This suggests that Alexandria residents will be the ones most frustrated by regional growth.

"Policymakers primary method of combating congestion has been to build more roads. But as funds for additional roads have come harder to come by, many urban officials have confined their activities to "studying" ways to reduce congestion."[12]

Before pursuing such strategies, it is important to understand that traffic flows follow four principles that are usually ignored.

1. Triple convergence
Most drivers seek the least congested means of getting to their destination. Many drivers discover the best routes and converge towards those streets until they are congested. Eventually, equilibrium is reached when the streets offer no speed advantage over other roads or transit methods, assuming they are available. Assume now that an improvement takes place that enhances the throughput capacity of the road. Initially, the cars will move faster, but after a while (**long run**), the traffic volume will rise until the vehicles are again moving at a crawl.

[11] Ibid page 52

[12] Page 87 Alternate Route by Clifford Winston and Chad Shirley

This is because drivers who previously used alternative roads will switch to the improved street and many drivers who previously staggered their commute will stop doing so. Finally, some will find it advantageous to switch from public transit modes to driving because it is now faster. These three types of convergence cause more and more drivers to use the improved road until the traffic moves at a crawl.

The same is true for increased transit capacity. If a new rail system is opened, it will attract some peak hour commuters out of automobiles. "Nevertheless, as soon as drivers realize the road permits faster travel, they will converge until conditions again reach a crawl"[13].

2. Regional Growth

Residents feeling the effects of fast growing regions are especially eager to limit traffic congestion in order to prevent any further loss of time in their own commute. However, traffic congestion is extremely difficult to relieve if the growth has been caused by factors other than good transportation facilities. Since growth is the perceived cause of the congestion, then why not limit the growth. A given community can ban all expansion within its boundaries, but that would not prevent nearby communities from increasing their density over time; That is, the regional growth, a main cause of the congested streets, is impervious to local public policy.

CREATING MORE TRANSIT CAPACITY

"Public transit has certain fundamental characteristics that directly affect its ability to cope with peak hour traffic congestion"[14]. Whatever the form, it does require a relatively high level of density at either its points of origin, destination, or both. Unfortunately, the residential patterns dominant in the suburbs involve relatively low densities especially in the areas where a significant amount of the through traffic originates. Furthermore, buses comprise a significant percentage of the transit, use the same roads as the cars and have frequent stops, which add to the congestion.

Commuting on transit is usually more time consuming than a trip in a car. This is because transit has certain inherent characteristics. These include having to get to the stop, waiting at the stop, stopping several times, sometimes transferring, and getting from the final stop to the final destination. "Consequently, in 2000, the average commuting trip in the United States required 47.7 minutes versus only 24.1 minutes for such trips by private vehicles driven by single occupants and 28.6 minutes for trips in carpools"[15].

"Expanding transit capacity rarely reduces existing roadway traffic congestion that has reached high levels of intensity"[16]. Because of the principle of triple convergence the initial increase in speed on the road caused by the diversion to the transit will not last. In the short run, drivers who had formerly been traveling on other routes or other times or on other modes will replace drivers who initially switched to the mass transit. In the long run, more firms and people are encouraged to move

[13] Anthony Downs; Still Stuck in Traffic, Coping with Peak-Hour Traffic Congestion, Brookings Institution 2004 page 85

[14] Ibid page 117

[15] Ibid page 120

[16] Ibid page 120

Simple model determining the demand for mass transit

A case for dedicated transit lanes

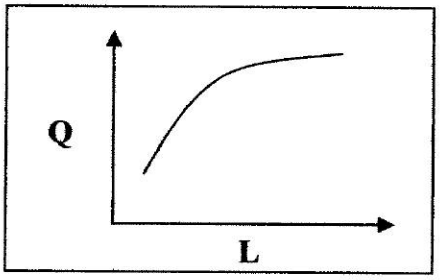
A previous paper entitled "Still Stuck in Traffic" made the following observation;

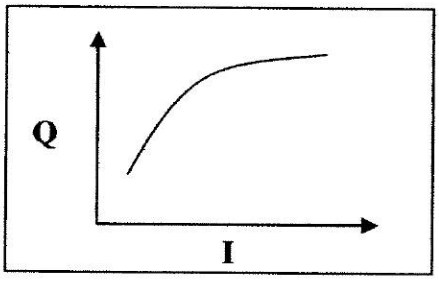
> Studies suggest that the medium distance commuters (i.e. Alexandrians) **value their time** most highly because long distance commuters have made residential location decision that attach less importance to longer travel times than many who prefer to live closer to work. Alexandria is at the crossroads of considerable through traffic from the surrounding jurisdictions, and as they grow so will the congestion on Alexandria streets. This suggests that Alexandria residents will be the ones most frustrated by regional growth.

The following model builds upon this observation in order to establish the main factors that will determine the demand for mass transit in the city of Alexandria.

The quality of life depends on the amount of leisure time that people can enjoy and the income level they have[1]. Technically, both factors increase the
Quality of life, but do so at marginally diminishing rates.

Q= q(Leisure, Income)





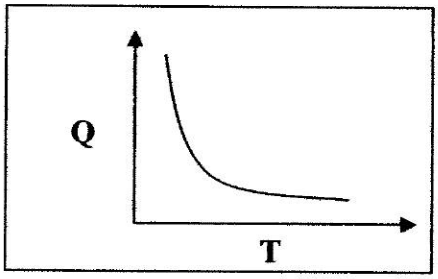
Since there is a finite time limit in the day, travel time must come at the expense of either leisure time, income-producing time or both. Hence;

Leisure + work time = Total time available – travel time

[1] Obviously, other items will play a role in what constitutes quality of life, but while their inclusion would greatly complicate the mathematics, they do not alter the fundamental results presented here.

Therefore, the quality of life will be a decreasing function of the travel time through either diminished leisure or foregone income.

Q= q(Travel time)



As a result, the demand for mass transit can be explained in terms of travel time. To see why, assume that the individual has several alternative ways of transport.

M = m(A)

These alternatives will in turn depend on two factors. The higher the income the more alternatives will be available, which diminishes the demand for mass transit. However, the demand for mass transit will increases as the alternatives start taking more time compared with mass transit.

A= a(Income, Relative travel time)

⇨ **M = m(Income , Relative travel time)**

Those with low income will have very few alternatives aside from mass transit. However, as the income increases, people start being able to afford cars and other alternative modes of travel. As the streets get more congested, these modes start taking longer time. Consequently, mass transit becomes more desirable depending on their ability to provide a relatively faster commute. That is because the quality of life starts to diminish as more time is spent commuting as described in the previous section.

Conclusion

As congestion increases mass transit will become more desirable if it provides a time saving. In order to ensure such possibilities years from now, the City needs to take serious steps to ensure that mass transit will be available that is quicker than the alternative modes. This will only be possible by having dedicated transit lanes.

QED

TESTIMONY BEORE THE PUBLIC FORUM ON TRANSPORTATION 11/9/09

Mr. Mayor, Councilman Smedberg --

This forum is indeed timely. I cannot recall a period in my 40 years in Alexandria when a re-thinking of transportation strategies and priorities is more crucial.

The BRAC and the re-planning effort for the Beauregard Corridor bring the issues squarely before us. We all know the numbers of additional people and traffic the BRAC will bring to our streets and our neighborhoods.

In addition, right now -- beyond BRAC -- there are proposals for six other development projects in the Beauregard Corridor. They will expand commercial and retail uses from the present 171,000 square feet to 875,000 - a 500% increase. The number of dwelling units would jump from 422 to 1,361 -- and employees from 463 to 2,853.

It should be obvious to everyone that the current transportation system cannot handle this pressure. Traffic in the area is heavy and backups already occur at each rush hour.

Until and unless a rapid transit system is UP AND RUNNING in the Beauregard Corridor it would be **height of irresponsibility** for the Planning Commission and the City Council to approve any plan that increases densities there even by one square foot.

The City Planning Office seems oblivious to these requirements. Recall that the Planning Office earlier proposed that rapid transportation modes would not be

needed on Duke or Van Dorn until the build out of 90% of Landmark -- 20 or more years from now. After citizen outcry -- thank goodness -- that utter absurdity was remedied by the Planning Commission and Council.

Here are my two strategic recommendations:

1. Shelve the Beauregard Plan immediately and revive it only when adequate transport is available for BRAC and additional develoment. To let the plan go forward now is to ignore the public welfare.

This recommendation meets all the "SMART" criteria. It is achievable immediately, cost nothing and is really, really SMART.

2. Second recommendation: Begin immediately to put into place a rapid transit system in the corridor -- one that follows the recommendation of the Transportation Task Force and eventually extends from Beauregard onto Van Dorn, serves Landmark, and then links to Eisenhower and the Van Dorn Metro.

Like many others, after careful study I much prefer a trolley for this route.

I look to you, Mr. Mayor, and you, Councilman Smedberg, to spearhead these two recommendations.

Thank you for your time and attention.

Respecfully, Jack Sullivan

An OPEN LETTER to

The Mayors, City Council Members, City Managers, County Supervisors, VDOT Officials, and Elected Local, Virginia and Federal Representatives and Officials

serving Arlington County, Alexandria County and Fairfax County.

Requesting/requiring immediate action by you, our public servants,
to **Prevent the Pending Disaster To be Caused By the Opening of BRAC 133.**

It is impossible for the current infrastructure of Western Alexandria, Southern Arlington and Eastern Fairfax to accommodate the transportation needs of the over 6000 employees to be quartered at BRAC 133; just as said infrastructure cannot accommodate the 100s of added apartments and condos now open or about to be opened.

The ONLY responsible solution at this point is to Delay the opening and occupancy of BRAC 133 (and these housing complexes) until AFTER all necessary transportation, access and egress infrastructure is in place; to thereby counter the chaos and damage to our neighborhoods . . . to your constituents.

Such action to preserve our communities, to protect your constituents must included:

1. Creation and extension of the Arlington, Columbia Pike Trolley/Light Rail
   a) The extension must continue to the BRAC site itself,
   b) Either crossing over or tunneling under the Seminary Rd. and Beauregard Rd. intersection.

2. Construction of both On and Off ramps, both North and South directly from I-395 to the BRAC 133 with controlled access on all of these so that only direct service to and from the site is provided.

3. Construction of pedestrian overpasses from the site to neighboring businesses.

4. Construction of adequate onsite interior parking as well as barriers as needed to prevent vehicle or parking intrusion into our neighborhoods and parks.

5. Preventing VDOT from simply adding stoplights as a traffic flow solution!
   a) A more common sense approach is to install Right Hand lanes and loops in place of any Left Hand Turns.
   b) Eliminate existing left hand turn lanes and lights.

6. REQUIRING all construction developers, private, public or federal to plant and service more trees than they have already removed.
   a) Trees on median strips and road sides are needed everywhere on Columbia Pike, on Route 7 – King Street, on Seminary Rd., on Beauregard, along I-395
   b) In every parking lot and around and on the whole BRAC 133 site. As well as in all existing retail and commercial sites.
   c) These are absolutely necessary to counteract the inevitable increase in air, particulate matter

and noise pollution.

We ask that you, our representatives will take immediate visionary and common sense action and delay the opening and occupancy of BRAC 133 and these various apartments and condos until completed transportation and access infrastructure is in place.

Much of the damage to the area (and to the credibility of our elected and appointed public servants to we, your constituents) has already happened – all the more reason that bold and appropriate action is so so important.

Please, as men women of honor and integrity, as our representatives -- exercise vision, common sense and caring to our communities and to our quality of life as requested above.

Delay the opening of BRAC 133 and the various close by housing units until visionary and effective infrastructures are put in place and operational -- thus beginning, with vision, to repair the damage and destruction already in place.

Terry D. Kester
Ex-officially representing every resident and merchant that I have personally spoken to in this area.
3911 Wheat Ct.
Alexandria, VA 22311

703-217-9659

P.S. We also ask that you disseminate this letter, this plan of action, to all of your colleagues in the counties (Arlington, Alexandria & Fairfax), state (VDOT), and federal governance, including all military agents, representatives and officials directly and indirectly involved in the ill-planned creation of BRAC 133.

Add: Name Signature Address & Date

LRT Presentation November 9, 2009

by Anne Haynes, 204 Elm Street, Alexandria, VA 22301

Electric light rail transit (LRT) systems in city after city have continued to experience phenomenal expansion – clear evidence that LRT is both fulfilling its goals, and desired by local communities, despite efforts by an array of powerful organizations, from the Federal Transit Administration and World Bank to richly funded anti-rail Road Warrior ideologues, to convince the public and political decision makers that rail should be sidelined in favor of rubber-tire alternatives like the much-ballyhooed "Bus Rapid Transit" ("BRT"). I would like to summarize three of the latest and most impressive American LRT expansions – in Denver, Sacramento, and Baltimore. Presentation is based on information I got from the www.lightrailnow.org

Denver's Regional Transportation District (RTD) officially kicked off its huge FasTracks regional public transit construction on program in mid-May 2007. Under the FasTracks program, six new regional passenger rail ("commuter rail") and light rail transit lines will be constructed, three existing LRT corridors and redeveloping Denver Union Station"

And less than a year after the opening of its Southeast LRT line, Denver's entire LRT system was reported to be carrying an average of nearly 61,000 rider-trips around the metro area each weekday – 7,000 more rider-trips than RTD expected!

Denver's success with LRT is inspiring other cities to move toward implementing similar systems, or expanding the systems they already have, according to the AP reporter, who notes that

St. Louis recently added eight miles to its existing 38-mile system. Kansas City, Mo., officials are trying to figure what to do now that voters surprised them and voted to build a light rail system. Salt Lake voters approved an expansion of their 14-mile system. Phoenix opened a light rail system in 2008.

Baltimore's light rail transit (LRT) line, inaugurated in 1992, has been a **tremendous success** – carrying nearly 30,000 rider-trips a day. [Source: MTA website 00/04/06]

That's about 3,000 trips in the highest peak hour – or about 2,700 trips in the peak direction, equivalent to *more than 2 crowded freeway lanes* – another resounding illustration of the principle: "Build it, and they will come."

Baltimore's LRT cost $360 million, for the initial route of 22.5 miles. [Source: LTK Assocs., 96/06/11]

Baltimore's rail systems are *extremely cost-effective*. Regional rail, rapid rail, and LRT combined carry about 48% of total passenger-miles; yet, according to calculations based on the latest (2002) Agency Profile from the FTA's NTD, rail transit is moving riders for only 38% of the cost per passenger-mile of the MTA's buses.

In conclusion, Light Rail Transit offers any community a feasible component to a multimodal approach not only to increase transit ridership and to supplement our investment in heavy rail but to reduce our dependence on carbon fuels.

ALEXANDRIA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

Position Statement for City Strategic Planning Process: Goal 3

There is an Integrated, Multimodal Transportation System that Efficiently and Effectively Gets People from Point "A" to Point "B."

1) What two specific, measurable objectives should the City use to achieve its transportation goal?
   a) Tracking system is already planned out- check City's progress against the 2008 Comprehensive Transportation Master Plan (adopted April 2008)
2) What two specific projects or programs should Alexandria undertake in the next 10 years to accomplish its objectives?
   a) Improve and expand use of existing modes of public transportation
      i) Trolley- expand hours and routes (add N-S along Union and Delray)
      ii) Bus Rapid Transit- below are the public recommendations from the 2008 Master Plan-

      - More peak hour buses and bus-only lanes
      - Smaller buses
      - Increase shelter lighting and safety
      - Improve pedestrian walkways and access to public facilities
      - Provide automated schedule
      - Better maintenance, recognizable, visible transit signage
      - More and clearer bus schedules
      - Integrate transit with city planning/development

   b) Also- Complete planning and implement
      i) Transportation hubs- connectivity among transportation modes, offering more choices
      ii) Metro at Potomac Yard
3) What indicators will allow the City to measure progress toward its overall goal?
   a) Increased use of public transportation- revenue
   b) Reduced average commute times- track as changes are implemented
   c) Increased user satisfaction- survey
4) What opportunities should the City seek to capitalize on in pursuit of its goal?
   a) Promote the "green" initiative-
   b) Use federal mechanisms and creative financial methods- get aggressive
5) What constraints should the City consider?
   a) The word constraint denotes negativity- rather use the word standards, guidelines.
   b) Transportation projects should be of the highest quality, they should be convenient for its users and be properly funded using creative measures such as those suggested in the 2008 Master Plan.

The Chamber thanks the City Council and City Staff for placing strategic planning as a high priority for the City and for arranging this public forum.

It is our hope that the Council will take deliberate action to continue the work needed to firm up and implement the Transportation Master Plan that was adopted in April 2008. The plan encouraged the improvement of existing transportation systems, the use of alternative public modes of transportation and the establishment of transit-oriented, pedestrian friendly village centers.

The Chamber supports the conclusions and objectives of the Plan.

As stated in the Master Plan, the details of a full-fledged, City-wide transportation plan will take 6-10 years to fully determine. The Chamber envisions an integrated transportation plan that will serve as the backbone for future development in the City. Transportation hubs will permit greater commercial and residential density in areas that can rely on public transportation with less traffic congestion and improved environmental quality.

As far as specific projects that will have more immediate impact on our needs, the Chamber recommends that we focus on enhancing and expanding existing uses - primarily Trolley and Rapid Transit services, utilizing vehicles that are clean, efficient and aesthetically pleasing, and, of course, Metrorail.

Trolley hours of use should be expanded and a new route should be established along North-South Union Street. Also connectivity to and within the Del Ray area should be implemented.

Existing bus operations should be enhanced through the creation of a true Bus Rapid Transit system. Creating more comfortable shelters, better signage, automated schedules and adding peak hour buses are features that should be implemented. It should also be noted that ridership for a trolley appears to be more appealing than traditional buses. Consideration should be given to utilizing new equipment that will be more appealing to consumers, which in turn will increase ridership.

Metro at Potomac Yard must remain a top priority - planning should be completed including the best course for funding so we so that we may begin construction before costs of construction rise again.

The City must also continue the longer range work of creating transportation hubs that connect the various transportation modes. These hubs should be planned to support denser, multi-use developments that will foster live-work environments. The creation of such areas of interest will eventually provide many more choices for users and decrease the use of personal automobiles.

Measuring progress toward an overall goal will be evident by tracking:

- The increased use of public transportation- i.e. revenue;
- Observing reduced average commute times;
- Increased user satisfaction.

The City needs to be aggressive and creative with financial resources and options - encouraging public/private partnerships, federal funding mechanisms and other creative financial methods.

As far as "constraints," - that word denotes close-mindedness and negativity where we should be expanding our discussion and thinking more optimistically about our transportation future. We'd rather use the words "standards" and "guidelines".

In that mindset, transportation projects must be high quality, be convenient for its users and be properly funded using creative measures such as those suggested in the 2008 Transportation Master Plan.

In thinking strategically about the opportunities afforded through a comprehensive, high quality and effective transportation system, the Chamber believes that the City has a distinct opportunity to leverage such a system in order to become more competitive, both regionally vis-à-vis our surrounding jurisdictions, and also nationally and internationally. This competitive edge will further the goals of the City's economic sustainability report.

In conclusion, the Chamber urges the City Council to implement the high impact, existing transportation improvement opportunities that are part of existing systems while continuing to work diligently on the long range, City-wide transportation plan.

Thank you and good evening.

City of Alexandria – Strategic Goal: Transportation

Submitted by Alexandria Transit Company

1. What two specific, measurable objectives should the City use to achieve its transportation goal?

   - Total number of transit passengers per year.
   - Transit passenger per mile and per hour of service.

2. What two specific projects or programs should Alexandria undertake in the next 10 years to accomplish its objectives?

   - Increased frequency on current transit routes to meet Urban Transit Standards.
   - New transit routes to improve connectivity and accessibility throughout the City.

3. What indicators will allow the City to measure progress toward its overall goal?

   - When new service is added, passengers per mile and/or hour increase. This has been the experience on DASH routes over the past 15 years, in particular, in the Duke Street corridor.
   - When new service is added, passengers per mile and/or hour stay the same or slightly reduced. This indicates that the expanded service was absorbed by new riders to the system. It shows that new service was warranted and that more people will use transit when it is more convenient.

4. What opportunities should the City seek to capitalize on in pursuit of its goal?

   - Dedicated revenue funding sources for transit.
   - Require developers to contribute TMP funds to improve and expand transit and transit connections in their area.
   - Establish Transportation Districts to fund transit priorities and services.
   - Transit priority and dedicated lanes to give transit a time advantage.

5. What constraints should the City consider?

   - Charge market prices for parking and prohibit subsidized parking at any new development.
   - Restrict the use of TMP fund to not allow for private shuttle service that competes with fixed route service and provides only limited connections for development residents or employees.
   - Limit single occupancy travel or automobiles all together between the King Street Metrorail Station and Old Town during peak evening and weekend hours.