



City of Alexandria

Transportation Commission

Regular Meeting

January 18, 2017
7:00 p.m.
Council Workroom

MINUTES

Commissioners Present: Councilman John Chapman, Councilman Tim Lovain, Chair Jerry King, Commissioner David Brown, Commissioner Jake Jakubek, Commissioner Stephen Klejst, Commissioner James Lewis, Commissioner Melissa McMahon, Commissioner Christine Michaelis, and Commissioner Carolyn Schroeder

Staff Present: Allan Fye – T&ES, Raymond Hayhurst - T&ES, and Carrie Sanders – T&ES, Steve Sindiong - T&ES, Charonne Gray -T&ES, Mary Catherine Collins, P&Z, Yon Lambert – T&ES

Chair Jerry King called the Transportation Commission meeting to order at 7:02 pm.

1. January Meeting Minutes

Chair Jerry King asked if there were any edits to the minutes. Commissioner Lewis asked that the minutes be changed to reflect that he attended the January meeting. Chair King noted that other changes of the minutes were provided to staff. A motion to accept the changes was made by Commissioner Michaelis and seconded by Commissioner Klejst. The minutes were voted on and unanimously approved.

2. Updates to Receive (Consent Items)

The Commission asked for an update on the WMATA budget. Acting Transit Division Chief Alan Fye noted that the WMATA board approved to have a series of events and public hearings around the region regarding the FY18 budget. The first hearing will be held on Monday, January 30th at the WMATA Headquarters in Washington, DC and a popup event will be held at King Street Metrorail station. They are asking for public opinions about the budget throughout January and February of 2017 as well as subsidy, fare increases, organizational trimming, using Federal Transit Administration (FTA) grants to pay for capitalized maintenance, and decrease in service. WMATA will have an approved budget for FY18 by March 2017.

The Commission asked for King Street Metrorail Station updates. Acting Transit Division Chief Alan Fye updated the Commission that the design packet was 95% complete for the King Street – Old Town Metrorail Station project. There is a design conflict with the requirements and location of the trees and lighting which staff is working with WMATA to solve and complete the final design. A

Request for Proposals (RFP) will be sent out by spring or summer 2017 with the start of construction later in the year. Commissioner Lewis inquired if the city is planning to make roadway changes, such as at the King, Callahan, and Russell intersection. While the City has a separate Complete Streets project for this location, the King Street Metrorail station project only includes improvements within the bus loop area.

The Commission asked for King Street Complete Streets updates. Commissioner King mentioned that Staff will conduct a survey on traffic and pedestrian flow this spring. Commission Jakubek requested to see the data once it has been completed. He also asked was there feedback from the Public. Acting Division Chief Steve Sindiong noted that there has been a positive response in the last couple of months from the public.

Deputy Director Carrie Sanders announced that the Northern Virginia Transportation Administration (NVTA) released their initial scoring for the SmartScale program which was presented to the Commission in September 2016. A public hearing is scheduled for April 2017 and in June 2017 a decision will be made. The following projects and funding request passed the initial screening: West End Transit Way Southern Towers for \$10 million, DASH Bus Service Facility Expansion for \$11.1 million, Traffic Adaptive Signal Control Fiber Optics for \$7.6 million, and Backlick Run Trail for \$5 million. The Multi-modal Bridge score did not qualify for any of the three funding groups. More project updates will be provided later in the year.

3. Commission Updates

Commissioner Michaelis noted that Commercial Parking Task Force has not yet met, but Staff has started working to coordinate schedules. The first meeting will be held late February or early March.

Acting Transportation Planning Division Chief Steve Sindiong mentioned that as part of the study, the City is hosting an event featuring Todd Litman who is an internationally known parking Planner of the Victoria Transport Policy Institute. He will discuss the issue of parking, parking technologies and future trends. The meeting will be held at City Hall- Council Chambers on Monday, February 6, 2017 at 7:00 pm. Meeting details will be emailed to the Commission Staff.

Commissioner Brown provided an update on litigation activity on the Purple Line Rail project. In August 2016, the judge ruled to halt the project until the Government did a supplemental environment impact statement (SEIS) to evaluate how the project will be affected by current Metro issues. The Government requested to do an evaluation on their own prior to an SEIS and the request was granted.

Commissioner Jakubek noted that on November 28, 2016 the Eisenhower West Landmark Van Dorn Implementation Advisory group had its second meeting. There was a discussion on the West End Transitway, and a Fairfax County staff person provided an update on relevant projects in Fairfax County, such as the Lincolnia Plan.

Commissioner King inquired about the status of the Lower King Street Study. Steve Sindiong noted that the recommendations from the study were put on hold until further parking evaluations were completed. A parking utilization study was conducted to identify parking utilization in Old Town. Carrie Sanders also noted that the City has initiated a program based on the Old Town Area Parking Study where residents can petition to have their street be eligible for paid parking. She also stated that there is currently no funding in place for the implementation of improvements to Lower King Street.

Commissioner Stephen Kljest mentioned the DASH Board of Directors made an offer to Josh Baker to be the new general manager. He is currently the General Manager of the Lynchburg Transit Agency. He will join DASH on February 6, 2017. He also stated the current DASH General Manager has implemented a new element to the Safety Program called the “Close Call/Near Miss” reporting system which monitors potential hazards on DASH buses. They want to conduct analysis, collect data, and develop mitigation strategies to eliminate potential hazards.

Commissioner Lewis noted that the Traffic and Parking Board has a subcommittee that is evaluating the City’s 72 Hour Parking Rule.

Councilman Lovain noted that the Regional Transportation Board initiated Phase 2 of the Regional Long Range Plan. He also noted that the Northern Virginia Transportation Commission (NVTC) has a new chair, Jeff McKay of Fairfax County.

4. Vision Zero Policy – Public Hearing

Complete Streets Coordinator Raymond Hayhurst presented the Vision Zero Policy Resolution for Commission endorsement. It is a multidisciplinary approach to rethinking traffic safety and it began in Sweden in 1997. Vision Zero recognizes that all deaths and serious injuries are preventable. The Vision Zero initiative has been adopted by over 20 communities in the United States, including the District of Columbia and Montgomery County, Maryland. The program differs among communities with the same aggressive timeline in eliminating traffic deaths and serious injuries.

As of December 7, 2016, there have been four pedestrian deaths and 242 serious injuries this year, one pedestrian death in 2015, zero in 2014, and two in 2013. Traffic deaths and serious injuries in the City of Alexandria mirror the national trend. In 2015, there were over 35,000 traffic deaths in the United States, up 7.2 percent from 2014 after a decade long decline and the largest single-year increase since 1966. The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) cited the increase in total vehicle miles traveled (VMT) nationally and distracted driving as the source of recent traffic deaths and injuries. The city addresses traffic safety through programs such as Complete Streets, Capital Improvement Plan projects, Street Smarts Education program, and Law Enforcement.

Vision Zero promotes safety as the primary goal for our transportation network, complements and builds upon existing city programs along with initiatives, and uses data to enable the city to focus on resources for problematic behaviors and locations. The City’s draft Vision Zero policy includes an adopted goal of zero traffic deaths and serious injuries by 2028. The mission is to engage the community in developing a Vision Zero Action Plan, working with interdepartmental groups to provide comprehensive analysis of crashes, outline programs to reduce crashes, identify funding needs, implementation measures, and provide an annual progress report. Staff is asking the Transportation Commission for an endorsement of the draft policy resolution, and then it will go to City Council on January 24, 2017 for adoption. Then staff will begin the development action plan, and present the action plan to the Commission in fall 2017.

The Commission raised a number of questions and comments, including how other cities measure success, the need to conduct action, evaluation and reporting back, and the need to include all roadway users.

Chair King expressed concerns about the lack of adequate budget for Vision Zero prior to the action plan being completed. Carrie Sanders noted that Staff will work on an action plan for the FY 2018 in the next 6 months. Chair King also mentioned he is working with the Washington Area Bicyclist

Association (WABA) sponsoring a Vision Zero Summit on March 31, 2017. He asked Staff in this year's budget and plans, after the City Council has approved the policy to look at ways to reduce the budget for this year.

Chair King called to order a public hearing. He asked if there were any speakers. Jim Durham, Chair of the Alexandria Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee (BPAC) noted that while the City has crash data from the Alexandria Police Department (APD), the Fire Department has additional data on injuries that is often updated after the police report, and staff should consider using as part of the analysis. He also suggested that the Action Plan focus on crashes with injuries, and that the Transportation Commission help staff adhere to a data driven and engineering approach, and that the Commission help to engage the community.

Chair King asked if there were anymore speakers. There were no more speakers and he closed the public hearing. The Commission discussed minor edits to the draft policy resolution. Commissioner Michaelis made a motion to endorse the resolution with the Commission amendments. Commissioner Jakubek seconded the motion and it was voted on and approved unanimously.

5. D.C. to Richmond High Speed Rail Project (DC2RVA) Update

Acting Transit Division Chief Alan Fye introduced Randy Selleck, Deputy Project Manager to present the DC2RVA project. The purpose of the project is to increase reliability, improve frequency, reduce travel time, and increase system capacity. The corridor is a 123-mile stretch of railroad between Richmond and Arlington, Virginia. Freight traffic has increased 2% annually and the passenger commuter rail has increased by 10-11 trains daily with the daily total of 78-89 trains that is expected to triple by 2045. The DC2RVA corridor is a vast nationwide high speed intercity passenger rail plan identified by the U.S. Department of Transportation (USDOT) as well as the states of Virginia and North Carolina. In Northern Virginia they're looking to add third and fourth track; in Fredericksburg they are looking at a bypass option to the East of Fredericksburg.

The DC2RVA federally designated segment of the Southeast High Speed Rail Corridor is the most northern part of the five-state network underdevelopment from Washington, D.C., Richmond, VA, Raleigh and Charlotte, N.C., Atlanta, GA, and Jacksonville, Florida. Improving signals for the Southeast high Speed Rail Corridor will provide more trains operating up to 110 miles per hour.

Currently the Department of Rail and Public Transportation (DRPT) is engaged in a Tier II Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) draft that will evaluate the benefits, costs, and environmental effects of possible alternatives. The DEIS is scheduled for release in early 2017, followed by public hearings and comments.

The Commission asked questions and made comments related to how to mitigate noise impacts, the potential for a shared use path as part of the project, and whether there is adequate right of way in Alexandria for improvements. Staff will prepare and submit comments to DRPT.

6. Other Business

Chair King asked staff if there are any issues associated with traffic due to the Waterfront construction. Director of T&ES, Yon Lambert, stated that a task force was set up to address construction impacts, and for the most part, there have not been any issues. Chair King asked the Commission if there were nominations for the Chair and Vice Chair positions. Chair King was nominated for Chair and Stephen Klejst for Vice Chair. A motion was made by Commissioner Lewis to re-elect both by voice vote, and second by Commissioner McMahon, voted on and unanimously approved by the Commission.

At 8:55pm, Chair King made a motion to adjourn the meeting. The motion was second, voted on and unanimously approved by the Commission.