



City of Alexandria

Transportation Commission

Regular Meeting

April 19, 2017
7:00 p.m.
Council Workroom

MINUTES

Commissioners Present: Chair Jerry King, Commissioner David Brown, Commissioner Ryan Jones, Commissioner James Lewis, Commissioner Melissa McMahon, Commissioner Carolyn Schroeder, Commissioner Jake Jakubek, Commissioner Stephen Klejst,

Staff Present: Steve Sindiong – T&ES, Carrie Sanders – T&ES, Christopher Ziemann – T&ES, Charonne Gray -T&ES

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

1. March Meeting Minutes

Chair Jerry King asked if there were any edits to the minutes. Chair King and Commissioner Stephen Klejst submitted changes to the minutes. Chair King asked staff if they had changes to submit for the minutes. A motion to accept the changes was made by Commissioner Klejst and seconded by Commissioner McMahon. The minutes were unanimously approved.

2. Updates to Receive (Consent Items)

The Commission received updates on the Vision Zero Action Plan. The Vision Zero Action Plan is currently underway and anticipated to be completed by the fall of 2017. A contract was awarded to Nspiregreen and Toole Design Group to assist in developing an action plan. Typically, staff would hold a series of community meetings on a subject such as this, but the pop up event approach has been successful in the past at getting a different array of voices and opinions into the process, and pedestrians are a key stakeholder group for an action plan designed to address roadway safety needs. Chair King noted that this type of outreach has been successfully conducted in the past. It is important to get the pedestrians' input since this will have an impact on the public.

An online Alex Engage survey and online data crowd-sourcing map will also be used in the community engagement process. Staff will continue to provide periodic updates to the Transportation Commission on the development of the Vision Zero Action Plan, and seek the Commission's endorsement upon its completion in the fall of 2017.

The Commission provided updates on the Residential Parking Permit Eligibility for Residents in New Developments. Staff prepared a draft policy to standardize when residents of a new development should be ineligible for on-street parking permits. The ineligibility criteria were (1) if the average on-street parking occupancy is 85% or higher at the time of approval, or (2) if more than 50% of the total occupied ground floor street frontage is a non-residential use. The Planning Commission held a public meeting on April 6, 2017 recommending approval of the policy with a five (5) to two (2) vote. The City Council will review the draft policy on April 25, 2017 during their legislative meeting.

Commissioner Brown commented that the policy was fair and that Staff did an excellent job developing an approach.

3. Commission Updates

The Commission received updates on the Commercial Parking Standards Task Force. The Commercial Parking Standards Task Force had their second meeting on April 18, 2017. Commissioner McMahan reported that the Task Force met to discuss changes to the City's policy in regards to parking rights for various commercial parking uses. The focus was on approaches to setting parking standards, numbers, and strategies to mitigate parking impact. Recommendations were made and Staff was asked for information on approaches for parking requirements using minimums and maximums. Parking maximums are used in small area plans and Staff was asked to provide a proposal on eliminating parking requirements for small sites. Staff was also asked to provide feedback on shared parking approaches, TDM strategies for over supplied parking, and ways we can apply contextual credits or allowances. The next meeting will be held on May 16, 2017.

The Commission received updates on the Eisenhower West Van Dorn Advisory Policy Group. Commissioner Jakubek commented that the last meeting was postponed and the group has rescheduled to meet on Monday, May 22, 2017 from 7pm – 9pm at My Father's House Christian Church located at 4746 Eisenhower Avenue.

The Commission received updates on the WMATA Purple Line. Commissioner Brown stated the Maryland Transit Administration (MTA) filed a motion with the Judge to expedite his decision. The Federal Government agreed with the State and filed a statement saying they did not oppose the request. There are concerns about the Transit Programs being fully funded by the Trump Administration. Full funding for Transit was halted days before it was to be executed.

The Commission received updates on the Motorcoach Task Force. Commissioner Klejst provided updates on the results from the Motorcoach Task Force and it was circulated to the Director of Transportation and Environmental Services (TES) and the City Council.

4. Transportation Long Range Plan (LRP)

Division Chief of Transportation Planning, Christopher Ziemann presented the proposal to the Commission to modify the update schedule of the Transportation Long Range Plan (LRP) from annual to biennial. Chair King asked the Commission for their input. Since the last update, the City Council passed the Vision Zero resolution in regards to safety for pedestrians, cyclists, and drivers, which might push forward some different projects. The process generally takes three (3) meetings ending at 10:00 pm which is a lengthy amount of time.

As part of its responsibility to develop and maintain a comprehensive LRP that identifies the City's unfunded long-range transportation needs, the Commission first adopted an LRP in April 2010. The LRP is an unconstrained list of transportation-related capital projects and studies identified in City plans and policies. When projects receive funding, they move to the Capital Improvement Program

(CIP). The LRP is updated annually with new projects from recently-completed studies and plans. The Transportation Commission rates projects based on specific evaluated measures.

The 2016 LRP update includes changes based on the guidelines provided by the Commission at its April 20, 2016 work session. This includes a number of projects and studies that have been removed, consolidated, or moved to a new developer contingent list. A number of plans had been approved since the 2015 LRP, including the Eisenhower West Small Area Plan, Oakville Triangle Route 1 Corridor Plan, and the Pedestrian and Bicycle Master Plan Update. These plans include a number of recommended transportation projects and studies that are currently unfunded or have not been added to the CIP.

Other regional bodies are moving to a two (2) year planning cycle, for example MWCOG is switching to biennial air quality analysis. The LRP Process lasts for six months, totaling a large amount of commissioners' and Staff's time. The newly proposed plan would allow for time to develop a longer list for a two (2) year ranking. The Transportation Commission will continue to review projects coming off the list for funding through the budget processes and grant applications.

The Commission discussed the matter of extending the period between prioritizations of the Long Range Plan and making it biennial instead of annual. Chair King suggested that if a project comes up between cycles to possibly discuss it and re-evaluate the top five (5). Staff stated that it would be difficult because they would not know if the top five (5) would still be the top five (5) projects, and that therefore staff would be making decisions without Commission input. Rather than open the LRP, staff proposed to notify the Commission when a large project arises outside of the LRP prioritization process (such as upon completion of a small area plan), in order to allow the Commission to consider it and decide if it should go into the CIP, if grant funds should be sought, or if it should simply be listed for consideration in the next LRP prioritization process. After discussion, the Commission agreed to shifting the LRP to a biennial process. This would effectively skip the current year (2017) and the LRP prioritization process would return next year (2018). The Commission expressed interest in scheduling on the agenda in the off-years at least one comprehensive update from staff on what projects successfully moved from the LRP to the CIP.

Commissioner Stephen Klejst made a motion to extend the timeframe to a two (2) year period for the LRP review. The motion was second by Commissioner James Lewis, voted on and unanimously approved by the Commission.

5. North Potomac Yard Small Area Plan Update

Project Manager Steve Sindiong provided updates to the Commission on the North Potomac Yard Small Area Plan (SAP). Staff asked the Commission for an endorsement of the transportation section of the SAP as consistent with the Transportation Master Plan. In February 2017, Staff gave the Commission a preliminary overview of the SAP. The SAP provides a planning blueprint to guide public and private investment and development decisions in the northern portion of Potomac Yard, also called Landbay F. The Plan focuses on the creation of urban form, a mix of land uses, community amenities, and a range of housing opportunities. The plan is the framework to create one of the most sustainable series of neighborhoods within the region, known for its Four Mile Run waterfront, parks, architecture, transportation, and sustainable design.

In 2015, the North Potomac Yard developer representative indicated a desire to begin the process for redevelopment of the North Potomac Yard, which may necessitate amendments to the 2010 North Potomac Yard Small Area Plan and Design Standards. A North Potomac Yard Advisory Group was

established by Council in February 2016. The Advisory Group serves as the community engagement forum to review the Plan and proposed amendments.

The goal of the City's Transportation Master Plan is to ensure that people can travel within and out of the City by providing a transportation system that combines different modes of travel into a seamless comprehensive and coordinated effort. Within the 2010 Adopted Plan, the Route 1 Metroway would use the alignment currently planned and a realigned Potomac Avenue. The Plan update keeps Potomac Avenue along its current alignment. The Metroway is anticipated to use Wesmond Drive instead of Evans, allowing for the Metroway stop to be closer to the future Potomac Yard Metrorail Station entrance. The current Potomac Avenue alignment allows pedestrians and bicyclists to have access to areas of the development without having to immediately cross Potomac Avenue.

The 2010 Plan provides for a pedestrian network and street grid that facilitates pedestrian connectivity, including connections to South Potomac Yard, and areas west of Route 1. The drawback to the 2010 Plan is that it requires pedestrians to cross a wide, busy Potomac Avenue to access the Potomac Yard Metrorail Station.

The transportation analysis undertaken in the development of the most recent plan update examined the transportation impacts within the defined plan area, and also beyond the Plan boundaries to include a total of 19 intersections in the study. It also examines the impacts of the changes in land use and the new roadway network, but also builds in background and approved development that has changed since the 2010 adopted plan, including South Potomac Yard, and the approved land uses and transportation network from the Route 1 / Oakville Triangle Corridor Plan.

In addition, the updated transportation analysis is much more rigorous than the previous analysis, using a microsimulation model (VISSIM), and also takes into consideration the Metroway service that has been operational since 2014.

The Commission discussed the matter of the North Potomac Yard Plan and stated that it seems structured in design for early success and that it is concurrent with the opening of the metro station and felt it would be an achievement as well as being a great project. Commissioner McMahon, while agreeing that the Plan was consistent with the City's Transportation Master Plan, voiced some concerns of the implementation of pedestrian, bicycle and transit priority. For example, while the plan shows a robust bicycle network, not linking bike infrastructure on the proposed East Reed Street with bicycle facilities on the existing East Reed Street just west of Route 1 seems like a lost opportunity. In addition, because East Reed Street is planned to be a retail street, bicycle traffic should be encouraged on this street and not routed on parallel streets with loading docks. Jeffrey Farnier, Deputy Director of Planning and Zoning, answered that the Department of Planning and Zoning shared her concerns and priorities, and that Commissioner McMahon should be vigilant that the implementation of the Plan live up to the priorities outlined in the Complete Streets policy.

The Commission opened the forum for a public hearing and Chair King asked was there any speakers. The forum was closed at 8:11 pm.

Commissioner Stephen Klejst made a motion to endorse the North Potomac Yard Small Area Plan as it is consistent with the Transportation element of the City's Master Plan proposed by Staff. The motion was second by Commissioner James Lewis, voted on and unanimously approved by the Commission.

Other business

Chair King commented that this year the Commission did not have a public hearing for the City's budget and would like to have it on the schedule each March.

At 8:15 pm, Commissioner James Lewis made a motion to adjourn the meeting. The motion was second by Commissioner Stephen Klejst, voted on and unanimously approved by the Commission.