

City of Alexandria, Virginia

MEMORANDUM

DATE: MAY 17, 2017
TO: MEMBERS OF THE TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION
FROM: T&ES STAFF
SUBJECT: AGENDA ITEM #2 – ITEMS FOR CONSENT

ISSUE: Staff update to Transportation Commission on various ongoing projects.

RECOMMENDATION: That the Commission receive the items for consent.

A. VISION ZERO

The Vision Zero Action Plan is currently underway and anticipated to be completed by Fall 2017.

This month, City staff and consultants have scheduled five unannounced “pop-up” events in the community to engage people in conversations on traffic safety and hear their concerns, and to increase awareness of Vision Zero. The pop-up events will occur throughout the City. In addition, an online AlexEngage survey and online data crowd-sourcing map will also be used in the community engagement process. The survey and interactive map can be accessed at alexandriava.gov/VisionZero.

On April 28, the interdepartmental work group convened for its second meeting. The work group reviewed examples of partner agency-led strategies and discussed short- and long-term steps that could be taken by each agency to achieve Vision Zero. Members of the work group will provide a list of existing plans, programs, and data for review by the project management team, which will inform the strategies in the Action Plan.

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 of the Plan upon its completion in fall 2017.

Background: On January 24, 2017, the City of Alexandria adopted Vision Zero with the goal of eliminating all traffic deaths and serious injuries by 2028. City Council directed the City Manager City to form an interdepartmental working group to develop a Vision Zero Action Plan for future consideration by Council, based upon a comprehensive analysis of traffic deaths and injuries in Alexandria, which would identify associated funding needed for the City to reach this goal. For more information, please visit: <https://www.alexandriava.gov/VisionZero>

B. GRANT FUNDING FOR HOLMES RUN CONNECTOR TRAIL

At its regular meeting on April 19, the National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board (TPB) approved sub-allocating funding for the Holmes Run Connector Trail through the Transportation Alternatives (TA) Set Aside program. The Holmes Run Connector Trail was recommended for \$429,619 in funding. A total of \$800,000 was requested by the City and endorsed by the Transportation Commission and approved by the City Council as part of the original grant application.

Following the TPB’s action on April 19, TPB staff will forward information regarding the approved projects to VDOT for inclusion in the Commonwealth’s Six Year Improvement Plan for Transportation. The CTB will also consider whether to award funding, using the statewide TA Set Aside funds, to the remaining Northern Virginia applications. Once all selections are finalized, VDOT staff will work with applicants to administer funding. VDOT will open the application period for FY 2019 TA Set Aside projects later this year.

Background

In November 2016, the City submitted a Transportation Alternatives grant application for the Holmes Run Connector Trail to the VDOT Local Assistance Division with a request for \$800,000 in funding. The Holmes Run Connector Trail is a shared use path for pedestrian and bicyclists that would be located on the south side of Holmes Run between South Pickett Street and N Ripley Street. The Holmes Run Connector Trail was a high priority trail project as identified in the Pedestrian and Bicycle Master Plan approved in April 2016.

C. DRAFT COMMONWEALTH TRANSPORTATION BOARD SIX-YEAR IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM

The Commonwealth Transportation Board’s (CTB) Six-Year Improvement Program (SYIP) outlines planned funding for the study, development, and construction of transportation projects across the Commonwealth. The CTB updates the SYIP each year as revenue estimates are updated, priorities are revised, and as updated project schedules and costs become available. The draft FY2018 – FY2023 SYIP includes the requested funding for four of the City’s five submitted SMART SCALE projects: 1) DASH Bus Service and Facility Expansion - \$11,134,000, 2) West End Transitway Southern Towers Transit Facilities - \$10,000,000, 3) Traffic Adaptive Signal Control Fiber Optic - \$7,675,900, and 4) Backlick Run Trail Phase I - \$5,044,545. The Van Dorn Multimodal Bridge project was not included on the draft funding list.

The draft SYIP also includes the full funding requests for the City’s FY2023 CMAQ and RSTP program. The Transportation Commission endorsed the FY23 program at its November 16, 2016 meeting; the Northern Virginia Transportation Authority (NVRTA) adopted the FY23 program at their February 9, 2017 meeting.

As part of a statewide outreach process the CTB held a public hearing in Northern Virginia on May 3, 2017 about the draft FY2018 – FY2023 SYIP to receive formal comments. During this public hearing, Vice Chair of the Transportation Commission and DASH Board member Stephen Klejst provided comments on the draft SYIP (see Attachment 1). The public comment period began on March 21, 2017 and ended on May 16, 2017. During the public comment

period, the Transportation Commission submitted a letter to the CTB (see Attachment 1). The CTB is expected to adopt the Final FY2018 – FY2023 SYIP at their June 2017 meeting.

D. RESIDENTIAL PARKING PERMIT DISTRICT ELIGIBILITY FOR RESIDENTS OF NEW DEVELOPMENT

Staff has prepared a draft policy to standardize when residents of new development should be ineligible for on-street parking permits. The policy proposes considering each development based on two specific criteria and if either instance is met, the residents would be ineligible for permits. The criteria are (1) if the average on-street 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 hearing on April 6th and recommended approval of the policy with a vote of 5 to 2. The Council considered this policy at the May 9th meeting directed staff to schedule it as a public hearing item on June 13th.

Background: Last spring, through the Citywide Parking Work Plan, the Council asked staff to develop a policy that addressed the issue of whether or not residents of new development should be eligible for on-street parking permits through the residential permit parking program. This issue had been discussed at the public hearings for a number of recent development approvals and the Council felt a policy was need to help address this issue for future developments.

To develop this policy, staff collected parking occupancy data around the developments that were approved with and without the restriction to determine if the goal of protecting parking for existing residents was achieved through the restriction. While the average occupancies for both sets of development were fairly similar (ranging between 60-67%), staff also found that in some cases where residents were eligible for permits, they were purchasing them even though they had access to off-street parking. Acknowledging this information, staff felt it was important that the parking conditions near a site and the design of a development be considered when determining resident eligibility for on-street permits. Additional information is available online at: www.alexandriava.gov/ParkingStudies.

E. 72 HOUR PARKING RULE

At its March 27, 2017 meeting, the Traffic and Parking Board voted to unanimously advance a pilot exemption proposal to City Council. The exemption proposal provides residents the ability to park on-street for up to two weeks in length so long as they are 1) within 1/8 mile of their place of residence, and 2) in compliance with any posted restriction signage. Residents may apply for an exemption up to four times a year, and may apply for two contiguous exemptions. To apply for an exemption, a resident must register with the Alexandria Police Department through an on-line application. Residents will not be required to post information on their vehicles indicating that they have received an exemption. As proposed, the pilot is scheduled to sunset in November of 2018.

City Council received a report on the exemption proposal at its April 25, 2017 legislative meeting. Council is scheduled to hold a public hearing on Saturday, May 13, at which time they will have chosen to either defer or approve a change to City Code.

Background: The City is in the process of reviewing City Code Section 10-4-8, which is known as the "72 hour rule". This rule prohibits vehicles from parking within the public right of way for a period of more than 72 hours. The rule applies to everyone--even residents who are parking in front of their homes or residents with parking permit stickers. When the Alexandria Police Department receives complaints about violations, an officer is dispatched to respond to the situation. An officer returns three business days later to check on the vehicle's status. If the vehicle has moved, no action is taken. If the vehicle has not been moved, the officer issues a \$25 citation and, when warranted, places notification on the car indicating that the vehicle will be impounded if it is not removed. The City is reviewing this rule per Council direction. As written, the rule supports parking availability by encouraging turnover, but can be generate neighbor vs. neighbor disputes. For more information, please see the project website: <https://www.alexandriava.gov/tes/info/default.aspx?id=95263>