



# City of Alexandria

## Transportation Commission

### Regular Meeting

June 21, 2017  
7:00 p.m.  
Council Workroom

### MINUTES

**Commissioners Present:** Chairman Jerry King, Vice Chairman Stephen Klejst, Councilman John Chapman, Commissioner David Brown, Councilman Timothy Lovain, Commissioner Melissa McMahon, Commissioner Ryan Jones, Commissioner Jake Jakubek,

**Staff Present:** Yon Lambert – T&ES, Christopher Ziemann – T&ES, Steve Sindiong – T&ES, Charonne Gray -T&ES

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

#### 1. **March Meeting Minutes**

Chairman Jerry King requested edits to the minutes; Chairman King submitted changes via email, which had been included by Staff. A motion to accept the changes was made by Commissioner Klejst and seconded by Commissioner McMahon. The minutes were unanimously approved.

#### 2. **NVTA “Town Hall” TransAction Update**

Program Manager, Keith Jasper presented the Northern Virginia Transportation Authority (NVTA) “TransAction Plan for Northern Virginia.” In 2013, revenue from HB 2313 raised an estimated \$300 million annually for Northern Virginia’s Transportation projects. Seventy percent (70%) of the \$300 million is classified as regional funds. Thirty percent (30%) of the revenue has been and will continue to be distributed to the individual local governments and utilized for their transportation needs. \$990 million is the total amount funding provided to 79 regional transportation projects over the last three years. \$300 million out of the \$990 million total for the next three years were slated to be used to make improvements to Route 28 and I-66 in Fairfax County, which is related to the I-66/Beltway 495 project; however, once the Commonwealth’s agreement with Express Mobility Partners is finalized for the I-66 Outside-the-Beltway project, the Route 28 and I-66 project will be removed from the books. Among the 79 funded regional projects, \$75 million has been allocated to the City of Alexandria, \$69.5 million was awarded for the Potomac Yard Metro Rail Station project; other allocations have been for the West End Transitway, Transit Signal Priority along Route 1 and Duke Street, and acquisitions of DASH expansion buses. The Virginia Rail Expressway (VRE) was granted capital funds for the construction of a pedestrian tunnel and platform improvements at Alexandria’s Union Station and for Slaters Lane Rail Crossover projects. NVTA also funded a transit

alternatives analysis study in the Route 7 corridor between Tysons and the City which was led by NVTC and which looked at high capacity transit along Route 7 between Tysons and Alexandria. This study recommends Bus Rapid Transit (BRT). The Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA) was also allocated over \$17 million for track power upgrades on the blue line.

The total amount of the 30% revenue allocated to the City of Alexandria from NVTA over the last three years is about \$15 million. The NVTA is required by law to produce a long range regional transportation plan for Northern Virginia. The first plan, Northern Virginia 2020 Transportation Plan, was adopted by the Transportation Coordination Council (TCC) in July 1999 and included \$9.7 billion worth of projects. The TransAction 2030 Plan adopted in July 2007 by the NVTA included \$15.4 billion worth of projects; and the TransAction 2040 Plan adopted by the NVTA in November 2012 included \$23.2 billion worth of projects. The draft TransAction plan estimates the cost for roadways, transit, non-motorized vehicles, Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS) / Integrated Corridor Management (ICM), and Transportation Demand Management (TDM) projects at a total of \$44.1 billion.

Four alternative scenarios were tested to determine the effectiveness of managing future transportation in the region under different conditions. The four scenarios include:

- A. Technology making driving easier
- B. Changes in travel behavior
- C. Dispersed land use growth
- D. Concentrated land use growth

The overall findings within the draft TransAction plan suggest that NVTA should pursue targeted multimodal strategies to address the region's transportation needs consistent with the region's priorities and the varying geographies of the area. The NVTA also recommends working with member jurisdictions and regional stakeholders (including extra-territorial partners) to work across jurisdictional boundaries wherever possible to address the region's transportation needs. There is not a single project, program, or policy that will address all of the region's transportation needs. Projected regional revenues through 2040 would fund less than a quarter of the total estimated cost of the 358 regional projects in the draft plan. An analysis projected that trends in technology and travel preferences may improve travel conditions by 2040.

A public hearing on the draft TransAction Plan will be held on July 13, 2017, with a public comment period from June 9 – July 23, 2017, and an anticipated adoption date of October 12, 2017. The call for regional projects for the FY2018-2023 Six Year Program is expected to be announced October 12, 2017, with a public comment period held in the Spring of 2018. It is anticipated the NVTA will adopt the FY2018-2023 Six Year Program in June 2018.

In regards to the Public Comment period, Chairman King asked about information online for people to make comments. Mr. Jasper explained that individuals can visit [www.nvtatransaction.org](http://www.nvtatransaction.org) for event information, correspond via email at [NVTATransActionUpdate@TheNoVaAuthority.org](mailto:NVTATransActionUpdate@TheNoVaAuthority.org), or mail to NVTA, 3040 Williams Drive, Suite 200, Fairfax, VA 2203. If the Commission would like to submit comments, the deadline for the public comment period is July 23, 2017 at 12:00 am and a Public Hearing will be held July 13, 2017 at 7pm. The Commission inquired if another tunnel headed to the District of Columbia is up for discussion within the long range plan. The NVTA recognizes there are certain expansion projects in the core that are required to be completed before any Metro route extension from Northern Virginia. The Blue line tunnel and alignment from a second Rosslyn Metro Station to Union Station and Georgetown are included in the plan along with multiple Metro Rail extensions for the Blue

and Orange lines.

Chairman King expressed that it would take a large amount of time to find funding and implement these projects, and mentioned the potential for congestion in the near-term from construction if a project were to start in the near future. He stated that he could envision autonomous vehicles in use in the next five (5) years and the resulting congestion if the region relied only on autonomous vehicles to solve transportation problems. The traffic would be different if we were to add more buses and carpools would have priorities. Mr. Jasper responded to the Commission stating that if nothing is done to expand Metrorail, transit crowding will double. He suggested more needs to be done not just with solving highway congestion and getting pedestrians to use transit but also taking a multimodal approach as a solution.

In terms of emerging technology, Mr. Jasper noted that the City of Alexandria has already implemented Transit Signal Projects funded by NVTA. Other existing technologies and approaches use ITS technology to manage corridors. Integrated Corridor Management (ICM) approaches are also included in the plan. Page 5 in the draft TransAction plan shows a diagram that displays the 15 ITS and ICM projects included in the draft TransAction plan. NVTA feels that ITS and ICM are very important to the region. Connected autonomous vehicle technology is not a particular project in the plan because it is difficult to know how this will move forward in the future. Through the draft TransAction plan's scenario analysis, vehicle technologies such as connected autonomous vehicles are in the forefront. Vehicle technologies were presented in Scenario A and rideshare in Scenario B. Mr. Jasper was not sure what would be specifically funded for vehicle technologies at this stage. Federal regulators are building a consensus to a certain extent for the Commonwealth of Virginia's role. At the regional and local level, NVTA is starting to understand what is needed locally to facilitate and possibly fund. At the moment, it is not clear enough for NVTA to identify.

Chairman King announced that Alexandria Public School System received a \$5,000 grant for the Bicycling at School Program to teach third graders how to safely ride a bicycle. The program was a pilot project for children to use their bicycles to travel to school instead of having parents drive. He stated that if children learn at an early age about biking, more people will use bicycles and this could be used as one part of the multimodal strategies to reduce car traffic. Mr. Jasper commended Chairman King for teaching children very early about multimodal options.

Councilman Timothy Lovain noted an article on how technology for autonomous vehicles is not accurately noticing pedestrians and bicycles especially when they are moving erratically. The assumption is that the automatic vehicles will stop if something is obstructing it. He is concerned when a pedestrian or bicyclist cuts in front an autonomous vehicle. Councilman Lovain also expressed concern that there would be issues getting to the HOV lanes, which may cause congestion through the downtown neighborhoods.

Commissioner Ryan Jones added that he liked the four scenarios and what largely happens depends on policy. An important policy decision in Portland, Oregon was the establishment of urban growth boundaries, which focuses density around the active areas as opposed to smaller areas. This leads to a focus on parking policies and densities that are approved for mixed uses for shorter trips and lower VMTs (vehicle miles traveled) per person. Commissioner Jones also discussed moving away from relying on the fuel tax because, as vehicles move away from internal combustion and towards electric vehicles, the tax revenue from the fuel tax will decrease. Eventually, we will have to have more user fees or a GPS-based user fee which could charge by time of day. Additionally, if a citizen uses rideshare as a lifestyle he or she is going to be more inclined to make shorter trips and reallocate funds to another entity, Amazon Home Delivery as an example. As for modeling, it would be difficult to do modeling through 2040 because we predict that today's rideshare is going to be a much higher mode share in the future (possibly up to 30 to 40 percent). It is an analogy for autonomous vehicles: vehicles will be more economical with higher

ridership. Another example of potential use of autonomous vehicles is a premium BRT product that carries 150 people with a driver for monitoring purposes providing quality customer service.

Commissioner Melissa McMahon directed Mr. Jasper and the Commission to review page 11 in the TransAction Plan pointing out monitored emerging trends that need strengthening. There are constraints within the plan NVTA describes and what the Commission could manage within the plan. The Plan creates a list of jurisdictions' desires, analyzing their impact and explains how they are modeled. A stress test was performed to describe the land use potential and the monitoring of emerging trends, but these are not viewable. One of the items mentioned was poor performance of integrating human driven and autonomous vehicles in other geographical areas. She also does not believe the NVTA functions for the region to develop complimentary transit and shared mobility services. Commissioner McMahon suggested information, technical, coordination, research and information sharing would help the jurisdictions develop complimentary transit service. Mr. Jasper agreed, stating NVTA would not provide services but they would take a regional approach on the jurisdiction level. Commissioner McMahon suggested that all regions should meet together for a discussion on how to take advantage of NVTA's role. In terms of weighted importance, Commissioner McMahon stated that the Safety and Emissions categories should have more weight, but State policy puts heavy emphasis on congestion mitigation. Congestion mitigation is not suitable for transportation improvements. In the vision statement, physical sustainability was disclosed but goals, objectives, and a performance measures were not visible. Commissioner McMahon asked if these were secondarily captured by reducing congestion. This could be used to weigh a project against the Commission's evaluations.

Councilman Lovain attended the Transportation Planning Board (TPB) on June 21, 2017; he encourages the NVTA to communicate with the TPB. The TPB is going through similar process to develop a Long Range Plan and unfunded projects. They are reviewing projects, programs, and policies similar to NVTA. The TPB is covering plans for the Route 1 region and could use NVTA's expertise.

### **3. Updates to Receive (Consent)**

The Commission requested updates on the Vision Zero Action Plan. The Vision Zero pop up events are complete and staff is analyzing the public input and WikiMaps where citizens are able to identify intersections and geographical problem areas. This is an ongoing project in which the community can continue to add information onto the map. The analysis and data collection effort will be finalized in the next several weeks. The combined information will be used to develop an action plan which should be available by fall 2017. For the next couple months, the Commission asked Staff to provide Vision Zero updates via email and other important information that needs to be reviewed. Staff agreed, and stated that over the next couple of months, most work will be internal facing to develop the strategic action plan and there will not be any milestones to report.

### **4. Commission Updates**

Commissioner Jakubek updated the Commission on the Eisenhower Landmark Van Dorn Advisory Group. The advisory group met on June 22, 2017 to discuss various transportation projects presented by Steve Sindiong. One of the issues reviewed was the connecting road in the industrial area between Fairfax County on the west side of the City and on the west side of the planning area. The Advisory Group asked if the county provide could partial funding since it is a connecting road to Fairfax County. Staff is going to communicate with the County regarding this matter.

A new alignment for the multimodal bridge was proposed by the railroad company. Staff conducted a meeting with the railroad regarding a proposal for alignments further west along the tracks from the current space on the end of Armistead Park. It would lead directly to the station and further west instead of ending on one side of the energy transfer area. The proposal has not been finalized. The new

alignment would lead directly to the station and be closer to the high density development areas. It could be used in that respect instead of going to Cameron Station which is a low density area.

The Advisory Group discussed other CIP projects: the Holmes Run Trail Connector on the south side of the Holmes Run, the Backlick Run Trail, the West End Transitway, improvements to the Van Dorn Station along with shuttle bays and sidewalks connecting to the bridge, High Street which will be a street west of Van Dorn and running parallel to the neighborhood, and the Duke Street Transitway.

Vice Chairman Klejst updated the Commission on the DASH Board meeting. As part of Smart Scale funding, DASH received funding for their facility expansion which starts in 2019. It will be the first stage of funding for the expansion of the existing fleet as well as funding for improvements to facilities that DASH may receive going forward. On Monday, June 19, 2017, DASH staff met with the Environmental Policy Commission (EPC) to present their findings regarding Hybrids verses Diesel bus procurement. Staff commended General Manager Josh Baker for answering questions from the EPC. EPC asked DASH and Staff to return with a couple of scenario options regarding some specific questions about information, such as a review of the miles per gallon savings. The EPC questioned in the beginning the approach of considering primarily capital savings and would like a deeper look at operational costs and savings. Another issue discussed was the concept of reducing emissions of the total fleet. Eliminating a larger proportion of the older buses more quickly by purchasing cleaner diesel buses would produce lower emissions as a whole than purchasing fewer hybrid buses and replacing older, more polluting buses more slowly. By the time the entire fleet is replaced, DASH will be looking at electric buses since service characteristics in the City provide favorable conditions for electric bus operation in the City.

Commissioner McMahon updated the Commission on the Commercial Parking Standards Task Force. The Task Force met on June 20, 2017 for their 4th meeting. Their agenda was to work on parking for office and commercial uses. Also covered was an initial round of hotel parking discussions and staff presented some Alexandria and Arlington data analysis to try to find trends in the larger data set. The Arlington data provided more guidance into how off-street parking is being utilized at office sites. Staff recommended to the Task Force that recommending parking minimums and maximums would be a more easily understood approach (for developers and Staff) than applying credits to certain mitigation based approaches. Staff also presented draft parking rates for office and hotel uses. Staff showed two existing data sets as well as all the recent hotel approvals, which were well under what the standards are today. For hotels, Staff proposed parking maximums of .4 and .7 spaces per room, and in some cases a minimum of 0 spaces per room. The Task Force provided feedback to Staff that a minimum of zero was too low to start. Staff also presented a map of transit-accessible zones and non-transit-accessible zones, inside and outside of a half mile from existing and future Metro and BRT stations, including the Potomac Yard Metro station, the West End Transitway and the Duke BRT areas. The Task Force instructed Staff refine the map for public consumption.

Several Commissioners discussed wasted space in parking garages, how it could be repurposed and how to get property owners to pay for the design cost. The cost of designing parking to be retrofitted could be 10% more, but would add value when a property is sold. It was also noted that developers are going to redevelop the building where Export Fitness is located on King Street. The property has a massive multilevel parking area and the owners are interested re-using parking space.

## **5. Other Business**

Staff informed the Commission about the Metro Service changes going into effect on Sunday, June 25, 2017. There will be a fare increase but DASH will remain the same at \$1.60. Metrorail has new operating hours and the trains will run every 8 minutes on all lines, which represent an increase of

service on the Blue Line.

The Commission was informed that the Six Year Improvement Plan (SYIP) was approved by the CTB on June 20, 2017.

The Commission discussed whether a meeting was necessary for July and all agreed to cancel the July meeting and reconvene in September 2017.

Chairman King asked the Commission to commend the police officers who acted quickly at the shooting on the baseball field in Del Ray. He felt they effectively prevented a loss of life and would like to give them recognition for a job well done. The Commission noted that the City of Alexandria Public School provided a first alert at 7:35 am the day of the shooting on its website.

Chairman King requested the Commission have a Transportation Representative for the Intelligent Transportation Systems Work Plan Group. The Commission voted unanimously to have Ryan Jones as the Transportation Commission Representative.

At 8:45 pm, Commissioner David Brown made a motion to adjourn the meeting. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Melissa McMahan, voted on and unanimously approved by the Commission.