



**City of Alexandria**  
Transportation Commission

**Regular Meeting**

December 18, 2019  
7:00 p.m.  
Council Workroom

**MINUTES**

**Commissioners Present:** Chairman Stephen Klejst, Commissioner Bruce Marsh, Commissioner Casey Kane, Commissioner Oscar Gonzalez, Commissioner John Goebel, Commissioner Carolyn Schroeder, Commissioner Jakubek.

**Staff Present:** Hillary Orr – Deputy Director, Transportation, Christopher Ziemann - Transportation Planning Division Chief, Jennifer Slesinger - Transportation Planning Division, Thomas Hamed – Mobility Services Division, Sharese Thomas - Transportation Planning Division, Jose Ayala – Department of Planning & Zoning.

Audio/Visual<sup>1</sup> presentation is available online:

<https://www.alexandriava.gov/TransportationCommission>

Chairman Klejst called the Transportation Commission meeting to order at 7:04 pm.

**1. Public Comment Period**

No Comment.

**2. November Meeting Minutes**

Commissioner Goebel made a motion to accept the minutes as presented. Motion carried.

**3. Commissioner Updates**

**Commissioner Jakubek:** The Landmark/Van Dorn Planning Committee will have a meeting in January or February.

**Commissioner Marsh:** The groundbreaking for the Potomac Yard Metrorail station will be on December 19, at 2:00 pm. On December 17, 2019, the Implementation Work Group met. They are still waiting for the cost estimates for the various entrance scenarios. Due to the complexity of the estimates, the estimates will not be available until January 2020. Currently construction is taking place on the AC switch gear building and on the

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side of the Potomac Yard tracks. There was also approval from the Board of Architectural Review on some minor elements of the station. Commissioner Marsh explained that the consultants are only costing out the preferred option, not all options.

**Commissioner Kane:** The Traffic and Parking Board removed two parking spaces on North Pitt Street to improve site distance for private driveways. The Board is continuing to support the Potomac Yard Metrorail station project by removing more parking to accommodate construction vehicles. In addition, approval was granted for installation of a High-Intensity Activated Crosswalk (HAWK) signal for a crosswalk at Braddock Road between North Early and the Minnie Howard Campus. The Traffic and Parking Board will not be meeting in December.

**Commissioner Schroeder:** The Environmental Policy Commission (EPC) met on Monday, December 16. The Commission will be recruiting volunteers for Earth Day.

**Chairman Klejst:** On Wednesday, December 11, 2019, the DASH Board discussed providing guidance to staff on options for the AT2 supplement in terms of the Alexandria Transit Vision (ATV) Study. During the public meeting on November 13, 2019, the Board heard extensive comments about the need to maintain some coverage that was not in the original ATV proposal. Coverage for the AT2 will be evaluated within a two-year period on whether the service is being used sufficiently to justify continuing service. In addition, the Board is looking into expanding the AT2X service that is currently being paid for by the Pentagon. Commissioner Kane asked if the AT2X was going to be the preferred solution or an additional option. Chairman Klejst stated that it could be an option during rush hour, but during midday service the Board is looking at a more traditional AT2 service.

#### **4. Action Item: FY 2021 TDM Grant Applications**

The City has operated a Transportation Demand Management (TDM) program since 1981 and each year has applied for and received funds from the Commonwealth of Virginia. The annual TDM Operations Grant funds two City positions to manage the City's TDM program (GO Alex), to oversee multiple Federal and Commonwealth grants, and to support other multi-modal programs and projects across the City.

In April 2019, the City hired a part-time employee to work specifically on employer outreach efforts. This part-time position is funded by a separate grant (Virginia Department of Transportation Employer Outreach), since employer outreach is not an eligible activity covered by the TDM Operating Assistance Grant. This year, a new grant is available from DRPT called Mobility Programs. This grant specifically supports employer outreach activities that are not covered by the TDM Operating Assistance Grant. Similar to that grant, it provides funding for up to 80% of eligible expenses (such as personnel) with a 20% match from the City.

Staff is requesting that the Transportation Commission provide an endorsement letter to City Council for the approval of two TDM Operations grants (TDM) Operating Assistance and Mobility Programs.

Commissioner Kane asked about the hours for the water taxi. The Waterfront Commission has endorsed the water taxi starting at 6:30 a.m. Commissioner Kane mentioned that the program was partially successful because of the subsidy, he asked if there will be a subsidy for residents or a frequent use pass that would reduce the cost for commuters. Staff is looking into a continuation of the subsidy, but it is contingent on other funding. Currently staff is awaiting approval from DRPT to use the funds to subsidize these rides. Commissioner Kane asked if provisions for secured bike parking at the Waterfront area were going to be included in the program. During discussion with the Recreation, Parks & Cultural Activities staff, staff stated that it is an infrastructure issue with the Marina and will need to be considered separately. Commissioner Kane suggested considering using some of the space from the eight parking spaces at the Waterfront for not just restrooms, but also secured bike parking. Staff mentioned that secured bike parking was part of the original Waterfront plans but is unsure what the status is now with the current plans.

Commissioner Kane asked how the move toward a WMATA App and DASH's app is going to impact retail operations of the mobile commuter retail service. Retail operations are shifting away from selling fare media from a mobile retail vendor to a concierge style of service. Commissioner Kane also asked if the City owns the vehicle (the contractor owns the vehicle). Commissioner Kane suggested considering having the contractor use an electric vehicle.

Commissioner Marsh asked about working with other jurisdictions, if they are sharing best practices. Staff has frequent discussions with Arlington County and other jurisdictions through several forums such as the Commuter Store. In addition, staff also work on several different regional projects.

Commissioner Schroeder asked if the Employer Outreach Grant Application is similar to the current program staff is administering and if anything new was being included. Also, Commissioner Schroeder mentioned that one of the Environmental Action Plan (EAP) mid-term action plan items is to discourage employee parking programs in the City, while providing other sustainable mobility incentives. She asked if this would be a part of this particular grant or a part of staff's goal generally. The Employer Outreach Grant that staff presented will be specifically to fund the Employee Outreach Coordinator position that will move the position from part-time to full-time. Staff is considering how GO Alex can help with the Environmental Action Plan and plans to provide the Transportation Commission with an update in six months.

Chairman Klejst asked for a motion to endorse the two grant applications that the staff is proposing. Commissioner Schroeder motioned to endorse both grant applications. Commissioner Kane seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

#### **5. Action Item: FY 2021 DRPT State Aid Grant Applications**

In 2018, there were numerous changes related to mass transit in the Commonwealth as well as administrative changes for revenues associated with mass transit. The General Assembly in 2018 passed HB 1539, which requires the Commonwealth Transportation Board (CTB) to allocate state aid for operating assistance solely based on performance metrics beginning in FY 2020. DRPT in conjunction with the Transit Capital Project Revenue Advisory Board, developed a prioritization framework for capital assistance based on three categories: State of Good Repair, Minor Enhancement and Major Expansion.

DRPT's intent was to implement a statewide prioritization process similar to SMART SCALE. The new proposal was adopted for FY2020 Capital and Operating Assistance Grant Programs, for the development of a six-year improvement program, and for transit capital expenditures adopted annually by the CTB.

As a result of HB 1539, the City has been using a new process to request State Aid Grants administered by DRPT which have historically been managed administratively by NVTC. These funds provide support for transit (WMATA, DASH and DOT/Paratransit) and Transportation Demand Management (TDM) programs, projects and services. The City is proposing three applications (one operating, one capital, and one technical assistance) based on the guidelines and criteria outlined in the DRPT Grant Program Application Guidance.

The fiscal impact of funds provided by DRPT do not have definite match rates per year but vary with the number of applications received that year. Based on the rates of funding from FY 2020, the City could expect to be awarded approximately \$4,000,000. The Technical Assistance Grant, if awarded, will require a local match of \$75,000.

Staff is requesting that the Transportation Commission provide an endorsement to City Council for the approval of DRPT FY 2021 State Aid Grant applications.

Commissioner Kane asked what happens if City Council decides against the match of \$75,000 but is willing to provide \$50,000. Does that decrease the amount the State would give or is staff left trying to convince City Council that was a bad decision or when they approve the \$150,000 is City Council essentially consenting to

the \$75,000 commitment. Staff confirmed that if approved by the State for the \$150,000, City Council would be consenting to the \$75,000 commitment. Because this is something the City and DASH must do anyway, applying for this grant essentially is saving the City and DASH \$75,000.

Chairman Klejst asked for a motion to approve the DRPT State Aid Grant applications that staff is proposing. Commissioner Marsh motioned to endorse both grant applications. Commissioner Jakubek seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

#### **6. Informational Item: King Street Place Update**

Staff discussed the King Street Place Project (formerly known as lower King Street). City Council has given staff instructions to close off the block of 100 King Street between Lee Street and Union Street to private vehicles between April and October from Friday evenings through Sunday as a pilot program.

Staff is currently researching the technical elements that include confirming the available space, working with the Fire Department emergency vehicle access requirements, and determining permitting requirements.

In 2000 there was a pilot program that was not successful; staff is working to address lessons learned.

Staff is working with DASH on Trolley routing, where to remove parking, and which routes would be successful. In 2015 there was a lower King Street multi-modal feasibility study with community engagement that looked at the 100 and 200 blocks. Since the current pilot only involves the 100 block, staff felt it was important to have the trolley service to the waterfront area, particularly with the new elements along the waterfront. The preferred Trolley route option is to turn North on Lee Street to Cameron Street, then loop back south on Union Street.

In general, there is support from the business community. Initial business community concerns were accommodating deliveries, valet parking, mobility for persons with disabilities, safety in preventing vehicles from entering in the bollard space, delineating with the restaurants and the requirements for alcohol and liability. The conceptual design addresses most of the business community's concerns. Staff is working with businesses on employee parking in the alleys, allowing for deliveries on Lee Street due to the constraints of alley delivery, and valet parking location.

Staff would like to give an update to City Council in early January and get their feedback on the concept plan. In mid-January staff would like to receive endorsement from the Transportation Commission and the Waterfront Commission and have a public hearing at the Transportation Commission meeting. In February, staff would bring it to City Council for approval then to Traffic & Parking Board after receiving City Council approval. In March, staff would apply for a special event permit.

One aspect of the concept design is to remove parking for the duration of the pilot because of the amount of moving involved in setting up/removing the tables and chairs. This is expensive and hard on the furniture and difficult for restaurants to find storage. T&ES is collaborating with Department of Planning & Zoning, Department Project Implementation, Parks & Recreation on the design and operation of this pilot.

Commissioner Kane stated that Union Street is crowded with cars and closing off one block of King Street, does not indicate that Union Street is going to have less traffic in the process. He asked if staff discussed the impact the preferred route will have on traffic. The lower King Street Study shows that about 75 percent of the movements in this area are actually pedestrians. Because Old Town is a grid, staff think that vehicles will disperse and not have major impacts on Union Street. Staff is also working with parking garages to ensure that they are getting individuals into the parking garage efficiently.

Commissioner Gonzalez asked about a pilot on the 200 block of King Street. Staff responded that the challenge with the 200 block is that it is a lot steeper and would require totally different design elements.

Commissioner Gonzalez asked if the seating areas would be public. Most of the restaurants want their space to be private. Staff is working with Virginia Tech on a parklet program for public seating. Initially staff reached out to the ice cream shops and suggested that they put a parklet program in place. Commissioner Gonzalez asked if staff considered what pedestrian amenities or signage can be installed, because of the congestion on Union and King Street. He also requested that staff put down paint markings to delineate where pedestrians should be safe or a crosswalk. Staff confirmed that currently there are high visibility crosswalks but agreed to investigate putting in pedestrian paint markings. Also, staff has requested additional Police presence in this area initially, but a full raised intersection is currently in the plans.

Commissioner Schroeder asked if there has been any outreach to the surrounding parking garage vendors to make them more visible and if the cost will change. Staff have discussed several options with garage vendors, such as businesses validating for those garages and way-finding apps to the garages. Currently staff is working with some of the garage vendors on the option of getting technology like spothero and best parking to direct individuals to those garages.

Commissioner Jakubek wanted to know the difference between the current pilot and the previous pilot. The previous pilot study was for six weeks and the current pilot is for six months. Residents were also concerned that patrons parking on that block would park on their street. However, the current study shows that parking garages are underutilized and would provide the additional parking needed. In addition, businesses were previously not on board, but with the new elements of the waterfront, businesses are now seeing the value. Commissioner Gonzalez asked if emergency access was an issue. Commissioner Kane mentioned that the previous pilot did not include accommodations for deliveries to be made and this was a concern for businesses.

Commissioner Marsh asked what the cost to the City would be in terms of maintenance. By privatizing the space and allowing the restaurants to put out and leave their own tables and chairs, the City is saving roughly twenty thousand dollars. However, the City is going to invest in lighting to make the block look more appealing to patrons. In addition, to the Fire Departments request staff is looking into the cost of installing bollards.

Commissioner Kane suggested that staff should coordinate with garage vendors on installing bike racks and corrals to accommodate bicyclist and scooters. He also wanted to know if staff had any discussion with the businesses on what they will do if it floods. The businesses are responsible for picking up the chairs and tables, but staff is currently working on an MOU with a maintenance component. Commissioner Kane assumed that the paint on the street would be permanent through the pilot and wanted to know if there been any thought to coloring the sidewalks. Staff has not discussed coloring the sidewalks outside of the space. Commissioner Kane also mentioned with the bollards at King and Union Street, there is an inclination for pedestrians not to use the crosswalks, but to walk directly across the middle of the street. Commissioner Kane stated that as part of the pilot it might be better to mark the Royal Street route to reduce conflict from cyclists passing through. Commissioner Kane stated that as part of the pilot staff should implement better markings on Royal Street. Staff will take the points into consideration.

Commissioner Marsh asked if there would be additional access for disabled parking on Lee or Union Street. Staff confirmed that the pickup drop-off space is not only for deliveries and valet but could be used for drop off and pick up of any passengers.

Commissioner Gonzalez asked if bikes and scooters were prohibited, since the space is a pedestrian zone. Staff confirmed that moving bikes and scooters are prohibited.

Commissioner Kane asked how two-way traffic would work during the week. Staff stated that the open space is twenty feet wide.

**7. Updates to Receive (Consent Items)**

The Commission discussed the following topics from the Consent Items:

**A. SMART SCALE**

Commissioner Schroeder asked if staff sent the final letter from the Transportation Commission forward endorsing SMART SCALE. Staff confirmed the final letter from the Commission supporting SMART SCALE was forwarded. In addition, the Office of Innovation has stated they may change some of their proposals to reflect the Commission's and other jurisdictions' comments.

**B. Dockless Mobility Pilot Update**

Commissioner Kane asked what the definition of share use path is. City Code defines a shared used path as a bikeway that is physically separated from motorized vehicular traffic by an open space or barrier and is located either within the roadway right-of way or within a separate right-of-way. Shared-use paths may also be used by pedestrians, skaters, users of wheelchair conveyances, joggers, and other nonmotorized users. City Council did not take out dockless mobility devices, so those were not banned from using shared-used paths. Commissioner Kane stated that this ambiguity presents a problem not only for dockless mobility users, but also for pedestrians using shared used paths. Staff will follow-up with the City Attorney regarding this portion of the City Code.

**8. Other business**

Elections will be held in January. Commissioners were asked to send Staff their nomination(s) by email or to self-nominate at the next meeting. Staff will be presenting a Draft Annual Work Plan to the Commission in January. Commissioner Kane asked if there was an increase in responses to the Alexandria Mobility Plan priority questionnaire survey since the deadline was extended. Staff confirmed there was an increase in the number of responses received.

**Adjournment**

At 8:32 pm, The Transportation Commission adjourned.