

# City of Alexandria, Virginia

## MEMORANDUM

DATE: JULY 18, 2018

TO: MEMBERS OF THE TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION

FROM: HILLARY ORR, DEPUTY DIRECTOR T&ES

SUBJECT: AGENDA ITEM 5 – ROUTE 1 SOUTH HOUSING AFFORDABILITY STRATEGY

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**ISSUE:** Overview of the draft recommendations of the Route 1 South Housing Affordability Strategy.

**RECOMMENDATION:** That the Transportation Commission review and endorse the Mobility, Safety, and Neighborhood Connectivity Principle and Recommendations as part of the Route 1 South Housing Affordability Strategy.

**BACKGROUND:** In January 2018, the Department of Planning and Zoning launched a community planning process for the Route 1 South Housing Affordability Strategy (Strategy) in partnership with the Office of Housing and the Department of Transportation and Environmental Services, and with grant support from the Virginia Housing Development Authority (VHDA). Community Meeting #7 was held June 4, 2018 to present and release a working draft Strategy for community review.

The Strategy provides tools for retaining the neighborhood's 215 existing committed affordable units and the deep levels of affordability they offer; recommendations to incorporate safe streets for all within the neighborhood, specifically on Route 1; and recommendations to strengthen the character and identity of the neighborhood, including its gateway area, through the potential long-term redevelopment of commercial sites along Route 1, south of Gibbon Street.

The working draft Strategy can be accessed from the project website:

<https://www.alexandriava.gov/uploadedFiles/planning/info/RISWorkingDraftDocument06042018.pdf>

**DISCUSSION:** This memo focuses on Strategy Chapter 4: Mobility, Safety, and Neighborhood Connectivity. During the May Transportation Commission meeting, staff presented an overview of community feedback related to pedestrian and bicycle safety, traffic volume and speed, as well as the Strategy's proposed draft Guiding Principle and Recommendations. Since May, staff has refined the Guiding Principle and Recommendations which were incorporated into the draft document released for community review and provided below.

## **Draft Guiding Principle:**

*Safe streets for all, prioritizing people walking and biking, consistent with the City's Complete Streets Design Guidelines and Vision Zero Action Plan.*

## **Draft Recommendations:**

1. The City will implement near-term improvements through the City's Vision Zero Action Plan (Figure 4.1).
2. The City will actively pursue City grant funding and other funding for implementation of mid- and long-term improvements not already covered through redevelopment (Figure 4.2).
3. Redevelopment will implement streetscape improvements (Figure 4.2).
4. Redevelopment will fund improvements to accommodate people walking and biking within Wilkes Street Park.
5. Redevelopment will implement an at-level crossing on Alfred Street connecting the east and west sides of the Wilkes Street Park.
6. Each redevelopment site will conduct a transportation analysis to study and mitigate traffic impacts.
7. The City will explore the feasibility of extending the Route 1 median south of Franklin Street and/or other methods to calm traffic in collaboration with VDOT.
8. The City will explore the feasibility of a signalized pedestrian crossing for Route 1 at Wolfe Street, and/ or other street operational changes for pedestrian and bicyclist safety improvements as redevelopment occurs.

For more information see Attachment 1, Chapter 4 – Mobility, Safety, and Neighborhood Connectivity pages 35-39.

## **Recommended Implementation Roadmap**

As presented during the May Transportation Commission meeting, it is recommended that implementation of the recommendations occur in phases:

1. **Short-Term Improvements:** Staff and the community prioritized improvements to enhance pedestrian and bicycle safety at seven intersections where the community expressed most concern. For more information see Attachment 1, Figure 4.1: Map of Short-term improvements. These will be implemented by the City through Complete Streets funding in the near term.
2. **Medium and Long-Term (Public and Private Improvements):** The long-term vision for Route 1 is for the street to be transformed from a car-centric to a human-centric street, with the addition of a landscaped median to help calm traffic. For implementation, this improvement will compete for grant and/or City Capital Improvement Program (CIP) funding. In addition, redevelopment sites will be expected to contribute to and construct improvements adjacent to their sites that improve the quality of the public realm, pedestrian and bicyclist safety, and connectivity. For more information see Attachment 1,

Figure 4.2: Map of Medium and Long-Term improvements on page 38, and Implementation Tasks on pages 43 and 44.

**Attachments:**

1. Route 1 South Affordability Strategy July, 2018, Working Draft