

City of Alexandria, Virginia

MEMORANDUM

DATE: MAY 16, 2018

TO: MEMBERS OF THE TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION

FROM: HILLARY ORR, DEPUTY DIRECTOR, T&ES & PLANNING AND ZONING STAFF

SUBJECT: AGENDA ITEM 9 – ROUTE 1 SOUTH HOUSING AFFORDABILITY STRATEGY

ISSUE: Overview of the Route 1 South Housing Affordability Strategy and highlights of the draft mobility recommendations.

RECOMMENDATION: That the Transportation Commission receive an update on the proposed recommendations regarding mobility, safety, and neighborhood connectivity for the Route 1 South Housing Affordability Strategy.

BACKGROUND: This planning effort, which started in January 2018, is focused on a portion of the Southwest Quadrant area around Route 1 south of Duke Street. The timing of this effort is closely tied to the expiration of affordable housing contracts on two large rental properties in the area – the Heritage at Old Town and Olde Towne West III. This initiative is exploring opportunities to maintain housing affordability in the area through future preservation, renovation, and redevelopment of these properties. The project is also exploring strategies to strengthen the character of the neighborhood by prioritizing safety and accessibility along Route 1 and neighborhood streets, creating a more welcoming gateway to the city, and improving the quality of the public realm. Community engagement for this process has included pop-up events, a walking tour, multiple community meetings and a week-long charrette.

DISCUSSION: Throughout the process, despite the emphasis on preserving affordable housing, the community has expressed concerns about pedestrian and bicycle safety, traffic volume and speed, and development-related impacts that may occur in the neighborhood as a result of new development. During the charrette week, the community and staff drafted guiding principles and strategies to create a roadmap for the focus area and Southwest Quadrant neighborhood. Of particular interest to the Transportation Commission is the Draft Guiding Principle related to mobility, safety, and neighborhood connectivity that states *safe streets for all, prioritizing people walking and biking, consistent with the City's Complete Streets Design Guidelines and Vision Zero Action Plan.*

The following draft strategies have been proposed to address these community concerns and achieve safe streets for all through a multi-phase implementation approach.

- Increased pedestrian safety and accessibility at crossings on Route 1 South / South Patrick and neighborhood streets
- Improved bicycle connectivity
- Improved bus stop accessibility
- Improved access to and within Wilkes Street Park
- Improved mobility for all ages and abilities
- Phased implementation

Staff and the community prioritized improvements to enhance pedestrian and bicycle safety at seven intersections where the community expressed most concern. These improvements, reflected Attachment 1, can be implemented in the short term with existing City funds through the Complete Streets and Vision Zero programs.

The long-term vision for Route 1 is for the street to be transformed from a car-centric to a human-centric street. This includes reducing lane width, adding a landscaped median, and other more permanent improvements. New development will be expected to construct improvements adjacent to their sites that improve the quality of the public realm, pedestrian and bicyclist safety, and connectivity. Major roadway improvements will compete for grant and/or City Capital Improvement program (CIP) funding.