



City of Alexandria

Transportation Commission

Regular Meeting

February 15, 2017
7:00 p.m.
Council Workroom

MINUTES

Commissioners Present: Councilman Tim Lovain, Chairman Jerry King, Commissioner David Brown, Commissioner Ryan Jones, Commissioner James Lewis, Commissioner Melissa McMahon, Commissioner Stephen Klejst, and Commissioner Carolyn Schroeder

Commissioners Absent: Councilman John Chapman, Commissioner Christine Michaelis, Commissioner Jake Jakubek

Staff Present: Allan Fye – T&ES, Carrie Sanders – T&ES, Charonne Gray - T&ES, Yon Lambert – T&ES

Staff Absent: Steve Sindiong – T&ES

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

1. January Meeting Minutes

Chairman Jerry King asked if there were any edits to the minutes. Chairman King submitted minor changes to the minutes and asked staff if they have changes to submit. A motion to accept the changes was made by Commissioner Lewis and seconded by Commissioner McMahon. The minutes were voted on and unanimously approved.

2. Updates to Receive (Consent Items)

The Commission received Funding Updates on WMATA's budget. Acting Transit Division Chief Allan Fye noted that there were not any changes since the last Commission meeting. They have a \$290 million dollar deficit they are working through. WMATA conducted a series of pop-up events around the region including King Street – Old Town Metro Station and a public hearing was held on Monday, January 30, 2017 to solicit input on the proposed FY18 Operating and Capital budgets. A public comment period was conducted and ended on Monday, February 6, 2017. One of the items mentioned for consideration was cuts to bus service but no decision has been made. WMATA staff will prepare and submit an outreach and public hearing report to the WMATA Board for consideration.

The Commission asked for the Smart Scale Projects FY22-23 updates. Acting Transit Division Chief Allan Fye stated four out of the five City projects were recommended to be included in the funding program. The multi-modal bridge score did not qualify for any of the three funding groups. The project scores, from highest to lowest, are: West End Transit Way (Southern Towers Alignment), DASH Facility Expansion, Traffic Adaptive Signal Control Fiber, and the Backlick Run Trail. The Multi-modal Bridge score didn't qualify for any of the three funding groups. The next steps are to work on funding scenarios over the upcoming months and hold a public hearing in April 2017. Based on feedback from the public hearing, some projects may be moved. WMATA foresees the Smart Scale plan approved by June 2017 and included into the funding plan issued by the State. Projects recommended for funding will be incorporated into the FY18-23 Six Year Improvement Program (SYIP). Commission McMahon inquired how the Commission could assist in the future to have the Multi-Model Bridge score better. Deputy Director Carrie Sanders stated projects that already have dedicated funding for a significant portion of the project – such as the West End Transit Way – score better.). Moving forward, the Commission can look for ways to apply for funding for the Multi-Modal Bridge. There will be another opportunity to apply for Smart Scale in the fall of 2018 for FY24-25.

The Commission asked for the Department of Rail and Public Transportation (DRPT) updates. The City submitted multiple grant requests to DRPT for DRPT Operating Assistance, capital funding for placing DASH buses, DASH Hybrid bus battery packs, and Kiss and Ride improvements at the Van Dorn Metrorail station; a mid-cycle capital grant for off-Transit Way bus pads and shelters as well as Transit Demand Management (TDM) operations grant that funds staff position and related TDM expenses. The deadline for submittals was February 1, 2017 and is under review by the State.

The Commission asked for City budget updates. Deputy Director Carrie Sanders reported that the budget will be presented by the City Manager on February 21, 2017 and a public meeting will be held on February 23, 2017 at the Beatley Library. Multiple work sessions will be held in March and April 2017. The Transportation focus work session is called “Livable Green.” The City Council will hold a public hearing on “Maximum Property Tax Rate” on April 22, 2017, a preliminary add/delete discussion on April 25, 2017, and a final add/delete discussion on May 1, 2017. The final budget is scheduled to be adopted on May 4, 2017.

Carrie Sanders provided updates to the Commission on Vision Zero. Staff recently presented a resolution to the City Council in regards to the Vision Zero policy that was endorsed by the Commission and adopted by City Council. Staff is working on a Vision Zero action plan that will provide milestones of zero deaths and serious injuries by 2028. Staff will provide the Commission progress reports and is currently forming an interdepartmental working group to develop the action plan. A Request for Qualifications (RFQ) was posted by the City for a consultant to assist in the process. There will be a series of public meetings for the Vision Zero action plan which will occur this spring with the dates and location to be determined. Staff will provide action plan updates to the Commission.

Chairman King inquired if the Project Management team consisted of City employees. The Lead Project Manager is Complete Streets Coordinator, Ray Hayhurst. A smaller team from the Transportation Planning and Planning and Zoning Divisions were formed as a part of the Project Management team. The Interdepartmental Group which consists of the Police, Fire, and other City Departments will meet every two weeks to review the Vision Zero plan. Chairman King asked Staff for monthly updates on the Vision Zero Action plan. The Alexandria BPAC has a Vision Zero sub-committee reviewing best practices to other action plans and will send out a letter of suggestion in April 2017.

Commissioner McMahon inquired about the staff's vision for using the community workshops. Staff will provide an update at the next Transportation Commission meeting. Chairman King mentioned he along with Yon Lambert and Commissioner Mellissa McMahon will attend the Vision Zero Summit.

The Commission asked for updates on the study of Commercial Parking Standards. Deputy Director Carrie Sanders thanked the Commission for attending the Commercial Parking Standards event on February 6, 2017. The public portion of the study was launched with the Right Sizing Commercial Parking event with Todd Litman. At the event, Mr. Litman discussed trends in commercial parking and various parking management strategies. Points raised at the event will be considered by staff and the Task Force for a review of the City's commercial parking standards. The first Task Force meeting will schedule a meeting in the upcoming weeks.

At the first meeting, the Task Force will review the zoning ordinance, parking requirements in the surrounding jurisdictions, and be provided an example of updated and progressive commercial parking requirements across the country. Staff will update the Commission on the Task Force progress periodically.

3. Commission Updates

Commissioner McMahon mentioned that the Commission had previously discussed the Parking Kickoff.

4. Interdepartmental Work Program/Annual Work Plan

Carrie Sanders introduced the Division Chief, Carrie Beach to present to the Commission the Interdepartmental Work Program Plan. Each fall, an Interdepartmental Long Range Plan is brought to the Planning Commission and City Council. The various departments that make-up the Long Range Work Groups are Planning and Zoning, Transportation and Environmental Services, Office of Housing, Department of Parks and Recreation, Cultural Activities, Office of Historic Alexandria, the Alexandria Economic Development Partnership, and the Department of General Services gather together to develop a Long Range Work Plan draft for FY18. The draft work program includes new plans scheduled to start in FY18, the completion of ongoing plans and studies, and implementation of previously approved plans. The draft is presented to the Planning Commission, City Council, and the Transportation Commission. After feedback has been provided from the City Manager's proposed budget, a final draft is developed and will go before City Council to be approved by May or June 2017 after the adoption of the FY18 budget.

Currently, the following plans are in the final stages: Potomac Yard Metrorail Station Plan, Old Town North Small Area Plan, the Long Range Educational Facility Plan, and the Office Competiveness Study Plan. Projects that are in progress will be completed in 2018.

The Eisenhower East Phase I Plan was approved in 2003, since the development of the plan a few minor amendments have been made. There have been a number of projects with modified densities this past year. Three (3) developers have expressed interest in the redevelopment plan and currently there are 6 million square feet of unbuilt capacity. Staff expressed the need for an infrastructure, sewer, and transportation study to be conducted if the program proceeds with a development plan. The National Science Foundation has already acted as a catalyst for the new development in the area and is anticipated to induce demands for office, hotel, and retail expansions. Staff proposes that the change in retail and office markets, and the occupancy of office buildings, warrants a review of the

proposed land uses in order to ensure that the Eisenhower East area can remain competitive in the coming years.

The update to Eisenhower East Phase I will consist of a land analysis examining the potential implications and benefits of allowing property owners to convert from commercial to residential or other land uses. The Hoffman Center was mentioned as having a lack of amenities and vitality in retail and hotel uses. A land use analysis is being conducted with the assistance of a consultant. Once the analysis is completed, the Interdepartmental Work Program Plan group will submit their study to the City Council and Planning Commission in September 2017. Phase II of the plan update is proposed to begin in January 2020 and will be reviewed if additional density should be considered.

Property owners have expressed concerns about the plan not being implemented immediately. Currently the Plan Group would like to wait on implementing the plan due to the fact that they have a large amount of unbuilt square footage and another study would need to be conducted in order to accommodate additional development.

Commissioner McMahon questioned about the property owners submitting a request for the City to make changes in an existing plan to suit their needs that is different from the original plan and asked if there has been a discussion among Staff on how to make it more sustainable in the future. Staff's considers that in both cases there is a good reason to open up the plan and have a feasible approach. In regards to some of the plans, staff felt it was worth reviewing some projects to make adjustments and using it as an opportunity to collect community feedback. Chairman King inquired about the National Science Foundation which is scheduled to open in the fall.

Plan updates for Mount Vernon Avenue Pedestrian Safety was presented to the Commission. Mount Vernon Avenue is currently underway for pedestrian safety improvements and is estimated to continue throughout FY18. After completion of the Old Town North, North Potomac Yard, and Eisenhower East Phase I plan updates, staff will provide a strategic update of the two Mount Vernon Plans (2003 Arlandria Action Plan and the 2005 Mount Vernon Avenue Business Plan). The Del Ray Business Association has expressed interest in updating these plans. It is scheduled to begin mid-to-late FY18 and take approximately 18 months. The purpose of the plan would be to address the following topics: 1. District Competitiveness, 2. Update guidelines for redevelopment sites along Leslie Avenue, and 3. Implement priorities and funding. The update is contingent on FY18 funding.

5. North Potomac Yard Small Area Plan Update

Carrie Sanders presented the North Potomac Yard updates to the Commission. The North Potomac Yard Small Area Plan will be submitted to the Commission and City Council for an endorsement by spring 2017. The Advisory Committee is reviewing some developer's application for Phase I of the plan which is east of North Potomac Yard.

The original Small Area Plan (SAP) was adopted in 2010 and includes 7.5 million square feet of development east of Route 1, between Arlington County and E. Glebe Road. Since the creation of the plan in 2010, site conditions have changed, such as the implementation of Metroway and the development of South Potomac Yard. In the original plan, the vision was to realign Potomac Avenue parallel to the metro rail tracks separating a linear park from the development west of Potomac Avenue.

The Advisory Committee recommended a street alignment that puts Potomac Avenue's current alignment through the center of the development. This allows an additional 1.5 acres of open space, creates a more active and pedestrian friendly space at the future Potomac Yard Metro Station

north entrance. It also allows for a phased development of Potomac Avenue and Transit Way. The first phase of the development is anticipated to be completed by 2021. It will be located to the east of Potomac Avenue which includes the mixture of retail, office, hotel, and residential uses. Phase II of the plan will include additional development along Route 1, Evans Lane and Potomac Avenue, and an intermodal transit stop will be located within proximity to the future Potomac Yard Metro Rail Station. The project is anticipated to be completed by 2040.

The planning efforts for Phase I of the plan will finish by June 2017 with plans to be adopted by the City Council, endorsed by the Transportation Commission on May 17, 2017, and approved by the Planning Commission in June 2017.

The Commission asked Staff to consider keeping two lanes on Potomac Avenue and felt the current mode-split was too conservative.

6. Other Business

Chairman King expressed concerns about the FY17 budget for T&ES in regards to projections verses actual spending and is requesting Staff to review the FY17 budget. Staff stated the budget shows what T&ES is authorized to spend annually and that the capital budget report is brought before Council quarterly. The report shows a budget capital report for each project and what will happen in the next quarter, milestones achieved, and expenditures.

At 8:30 pm, Commissioner McMahan made a motion to adjourn the meeting. The motion was second by Commissioner Lewis, voted on and unanimously approved by the Commission.