



City of Alexandria

Transportation Commission

Regular Meeting

November 16, 2016

7:00 p.m.

Council Workroom

MINUTES

Commissioners Present: Chair Jerry King, Commissioner David Brown, Commissioner Jake Jakubek, Commissioner Ryan Jones, Commissioner Stephen Klejst, Commissioner Melissa McMahon, Commissioner Christine Michaelis, and Commissioner Carolyn Schroeder

Staff Present: Allan Fye – T&ES, Carrie Sanders – T&ES, Steve Sindiong - T&ES, Karen Callaham - T&ES, Gabe Ortiz – T&ES, Mary Catherine Collins, P&Z, Yon Lambert – T&ES

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

1. **October 2016 Meeting Minutes**

Chair Jerry King asked if there were any edits to the minutes. Chair King noted he had previously provided edits to staff. There being no additional edits, a motion to approve the minutes with edits was made by Commissioner Klejst and seconded by Commissioner McMahon. The minutes were voted on and unanimously approved.

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

The Commission received Funding and Project Updates on the NH2 bus service which started running on October 23, 2016. Acting Transit Division Chief Alan Fye noted that the next Safe Track to impact the city is in early January and February 2017. The FY18 WMATA draft operating budget is anticipated to be \$290 million, and WMATA is considering route restructuring, fare increases, internal efficiencies, jurisdictional increases, and staff reductions. A public hearing and outreach will be conducted in early 2017 after the draft budget is released in November or December.

The Commission asked for an update on the Smartscale (formerly HB2) FY 2022/23 projects. Deputy Director Carrie Sanders noted that the City is working with the Department of Rail and Public Transportation (DRPT) and Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) to answer any questions they have. The City should know by December which projects are advancing for further evaluation.

The Commission asked for an update on the TransAction Plan. The study being conducted by the Northern Virginia Transportation Authority (NVTA) is in progress and will result in a 6-year program of funded projects.

The FY 2018-27 budget was discussed. Staff provided a draft letter to Council on budget guidance, which summarizes the recommendations by the Commission at its October 19 meeting, in addition to comments provided by the chair at the Board and Chair budget meeting. Carrie Sanders asked for the Commission's comment and approval of the draft budget memorandum, so it could be submitted to the City Council. A motion to approve the FY 2018 budget request was made by Commissioner Klejst, seconded by Commissioner McMahon, voted on and unanimously approved.

The Commission asked for an update on the Old Town North Plan. Carrie Sanders stated that the transportation analysis is currently underway, and it is analyzing a potential one way to two-way conversion of Montgomery Street, as well as multimodal improvements and improved transit connectivity to the NRG site. The analysis is anticipated to be completed in the spring 2017. The draft plan will be brought to the Transportation Commission for endorsement prior to taking it to the Planning Commission and City Council.

Commissioner Klejst provided an update on the Motor Coach Task Force. The Task Force had their fifth and final meeting on November 10, 2016. Staff proposed recommendations for short term parking and loading and unloading zones. The Task Force approved all of the staff recommendations along with some modifications to consider short term parking at the Regal Theater site, and using the Alexandria business community to help facilitate the discussion with the property owner.

Commissioner Jones provided updates on the North Potomac Yard Small Air Plan. The Advisory Group met on November 14 and they covered the topics of transportation, affordable housing, and building densities. While the proposed densities and heights in Phase 1 (east of Potomac Avenue) are less than what the maximum is, they do concentrate densities near the future Potomac Yard metrorail station. During Phase 2 (west of Potomac Avenue), the real estate values will have increased to allow for taller buildings but that the greatest density should still be closer to the Metrorail station, away from Route 1.

Commissioner Michaelis asked if the city still pursuing the special taxes to pay for the Potomac Yard Metrorail station. Carrie Sanders noted that the tax district is still part of the funding plan, and that as the City proceeds further with the Design Build contract, staff will have a better understanding of the project cost and funding needs. Commissioner Jones added that the North Potomac Yard Small Area Plan conditions the developers to contribute \$1.1 million for traffic calming for the neighborhoods west of Route 1.

Commissioner McMahon noted that she attended the joint Arlington County Board, Alexandria City Council, and Falls Church Council meeting. She mentioned that Dennis Leach provided information on the walk share for Arlington metrorail stations, which shows that 85% of Arlington metrorail station riders are walking to and from the stations. The City should strive to have at least an 85% walk mode share to the future Potomac Yard Metrorail Station. In context of the Small Area Plan, greater densities are needed near the station to support this mode share.

3. Commission Updates

Commissioner Klejst noted that the Alexandria Transit Company (ATC) is conducting interviews to fill the General Manager position. The first round of interviews has been conducted. The narrowed list of candidates will be presented to the Board in December and a selected candidate is anticipated by January 2017. Sandy Modell has offered to extend her employment to ensure a seamless transition. He also gave an update in regards to the Service Realignment of the Dash AT1 and AT9

lines, which had a 5% increase in ridership. The real time bus rollout with the marketing strategy was also well received with positive feedback.

Commissioner Jakubek reported that the Eisenhower West Landmark Implementation group will hold its next meeting on Monday, November 28, 2016 at 7:30pm. They are having an overview of the West End Transitway, developments in Fairfax County, and the development process.

Commissioner Michaelis noted that the Vision Zero Subcommittee met prior to the regular Commission meeting (on Wednesday, November 16, 2016). The draft Vision Zero policy resolution has been presented to the Commission on Aging, Alexandria Commission on Persons with Disabilities, the Alexandria Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee, Traffic and Parking Board, Public Health Advisory Commission, and the Alexandria City Public School Board. All of these groups have provided input for the draft resolution. The resolution will be presented to the Transportation Commission in January 2017 for endorsement, and presented to the Council on January 24, 2017.

Deputy Director Carrie Sanders acknowledged Karen Callahan who will be retiring at the end of November. She has contributed to the Transportation Commission for the past six years.

4. RSTP/CMAQ – Public Hearing

Acting Transit Services Division Chief Allan Fye presented an update on the FY2018 to 23 Congestion Mitigation Air Quality (CMAQ) and Regional Service Transportation Program (RSTP) and the funding request for FY 2023. Staff is seeking an endorsement for FY 2023 projects. CMAQ projects are those that reduce emissions and improve air quality, and has limited abilities to fund operations, while RSTP projects can be more flexible, but generally preserve or improve transportation infrastructure.

The Transportation Commission endorsement will be presented to Council on November 29, 2016, and to the Northern Virginia Transportation Authority (NVTA) on December 14. The NVTA will make funding determinations in the spring of 2017, which will then be transmitted to the Commonwealth Transportation Board (CTB). Then in June 2017, the CTB will incorporate projects into its Six Year Plan. Mr. Fye provided an overview of the proposed project list for FY 2023, which totals \$4.3 million.

Commissioner Brown wanted more clarification on the difference between RSTP and CMAQ. Ms. Sanders answered every project we apply for will have a mixture of both RSTP and CMAQ funds, and the funding amounts are flexible. Commissioner McMahan asked for clarification on the difference between commuter outreach and transportation demand management. Staff Gabe Ortiz, the City's Transportation Demand Management (TDM) Coordinator answered that commuter outreach falls within the TDM program, but is related to the mobile store, where kiosks could be expanded.

Commissioner McMahan expressed concern that the TDM funding related to outreach and services drops significantly in FY 2023. Carrie Sanders noted that the City has other funding sources as well as prior year funding that can be used toward TDM. Commissioner Michaelis asked why bikeshare funds were decreased in FY 2023. Carrie Sanders noted that the City has prior year funds from FY17 to use toward bikeshare. In addition, the funding plan allows for approximately ten new stations per year, and that most station should be in by FY 2023. Starting in FY 2023, the City will start to replace existing stations as needed, primarily those installed in 2012, and the costs will be lower since the number of stations replaced will be less than when original stations were installed.

Commissioner Michaelis commented she is glad to see proposed funding sources for pedestrian mobility to tie in with the recent Bike Ped Plan.

Commissioner Brown asked about two new projects in the FY 2023 list, including West End transit operations, and the Pedestrian and Safety Mobility Enhancements on Corridors. Ms. Sanders noted that the West End Transitway operations is for the recently adopted alternative for the West End Transitway, and the mobility enhancements are to implement pedestrian safety improvements in Case Study areas that were identified in the Pedestrian and Bicycle chapter of the Transportation Master Plan. Commissioner Brown asked if the \$4.3 million is higher than the amount in FY 2022, and if the number has been approved, and if not, is the City confident it will receive this amount. Ms. Sanders noted that the numbers that are brought to the Commission and Council for approval are based on guidance from the State. There are cases where the revenue numbers are different than what was estimated. For example, in FY 2017, the State had more revenue than what was estimated. The City will know approximately three to four months in advance of the fiscal year what the number is. Commissioner Brown asked if staff is seeking approval on just the FY 2023 total funding amount, or the distribution as well. Ms. Sanders stated that the approval is for both the distribution amount, and the total funding amount.

Commissioner McMahon noted that there is an ongoing challenge related to how the City funds operating costs, such as for maintenance, as new capital projects are approved. She asked how the programmatic capital improvements are being calibrated for operating needs, and if for example, under Capital Bikeshare, the sponsorship funds are factored into the program. Ms. Sanders noted that CMAQ/RSTP cannot go toward operating costs for bikeshare. Sponsorships and developer contributions go toward the operating funds, as well as funding in the 10-year Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). The issue will be how to balance the TIP with WMATA requests.

Chair King called to order a public hearing. He asked if there were any speakers. Being that there were no speakers, Chair King closed the public hearing. A motion to approve the FY 2023 RSTP / CMAQ project list was made by Commissioner Klejst, seconded by Commissioner Jukubek, voted on and unanimously approved.

5. TDM Operations Grant

Staff Gabe Ortiz noted that staff is asking the Commission to endorse the application to the Department of Rail and Public Transit (DRPT) and recommend approval of required City matching funds for the FY 2018 TDM Operation grant. The TDM grant is administered by DRPT and the program pays for staff salaries. In addition, it provides for low cost and effective strategies and program to maximize the City’s investment in transportation infrastructure and encourage its efficient use. It provides residents and visitors more travel options and provides direct financial savings and affordable transportation choices, especially to lower income persons. In 2016, less commuters are driving alone, there has been a 27 percent increase in telecommuting since 2013. However, metrorail riders have expressed the lowest satisfaction in commuting. The TDM program has over 6,500 subscribers that are reached out to monthly. New homeowners receive packets on transportation options, and the City sends out a GO Alex newsletter bi-annually.

Mr. Ortiz updated the Commission on the recent branding change from the previous Local Motion brand to the new Go Alex brand.

Commissioner McMahon inquired about the funding for evaluation of the program, which staff noted is from DRPT. She encouraged staff to look at future challenges, and how to use TDM funds toward targeted outreach, such as promoting the West End Transitway to the right audience.

Commissioner Michaelis noted that she likes the new GoAlex branding, and suggested more outreach be done to residents in lower density areas, such as how to use DASH. Commissioner Jones suggested that the City and DASH promote real time information for buses. The Commission recommended that staff provide a follow up to the Commission in the spring on more detailed information of the TDM program.

A motion to approve the FY 2018 TDM Operations grant application request was made by Commissioner Klejst, second by Commissioner McMahon, and voted on and unanimously approved.

6. Other Business

Chair King stated there will not be a meeting in December due to a lack of a quorum. Elections will be conducted in January for the Chair and Vice Chair positions. Chair King also noted his concerns about the lack of Vision Zero funding in the FY18 budget, and that after the Vision Zero Action Plan is approved, there may not be the necessary funds in FY18 to implement the safety program. Acting Transportation Planning Division Chief Steve Sindiong stated that the Commercial Parking Development Ratio study will be starting in early 2017, and that the Advisory Committee is being reconvened. Since the former Transportation Commission representative (who served during the Residential Parking ratio phase) is no longer on the Commission, a new representative is needed. Interested members should follow up with staff.

At 8:50 pm, Commissioner Jakubek made a motion to adjourn the meeting. This motion was second by Commissioner Jones, voted on and unanimously approved by the Commission.