



# City of Alexandria

## Transportation Commission

### **Regular Meeting**

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

### **MINUTES**

**Commissioners Present:** Acting Chair Stephen Klejst, Acting Vice Chair Melissa McMahon, Commissioner David Brown, Commission James Lewis, Councilman John Chapman, Councilman Timothy Lovain, Commissioner Carolyn Schroeder, Commissioner Christine Michealis, Commissioner Oscar Gonzalez.

**Staff Present:** Yon Lambert – T&ES, Allan Fye – T&ES, Steve Sindiong – T&ES, Hillary Orr – T&ES, Ramiro Rios – T&ES, Christopher Ziemann – T&ES, Quance Lawson – T&ES.

Acting Chair Stephen Klejst called the Transportation Commission meeting to order at 7:00 pm.

#### **1. Public Comment Period**

Jim Durham, Chair of the Alexandria Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee provided document materials of the regional findings from the Central Alexandria Traffic Study. Durham also provided a signed letter prepared by the Seminary Hills Association directed to the City Manager Mark Jinks. The letter provided residents' concerns regarding regional traffic patterns in the Central Alexandria Area. Durham mentioned that The Central Alexandria Traffic Study illustrated a lack of transit bus options to residents in neighboring cities and localities. Durham suggested implementing High Occupancy Vehicle (HOV) options for travelers and proposed for the City to consider increased funding for complete streets.

Mike Doyle, representative for Alexandria Families for Safe Streets (AFSS), a grassroots organization, reiterated the importance of the Vision Zero Action Plan to help reduce serious accidents and fatalities.

Councilman Lovain pointed out that the Chief of Police has been vigilant in pulling over drivers who abuse traffic laws.

## **2. September 2017 Meeting Minutes**

Acting Chair Klejst asked if any commissioner had suggestions for edits to the minutes. No motions for edits were presented. Vice Chair McMahon made a motion to approve the minutes as written. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Michaelis. The minutes were unanimously approved.

## **3. Updates to Receive (Consent Items)**

Prior to the Consent Items discussion, Acting Chair Klejst welcomed new commissioner Oscar Gonzalez. Gonzalez is an Alexandria resident and currently works for the Virginia Railway Express (VRE). Gonzalez has a background in planning and seeks to improve mobility aspects in the area.

Commissioner Lewis asked when the Central Alexandria study taskforce would be able to provide updates on findings. Yon Lambert, Director of Transportation and Environmental Services, responded that the taskforce is currently reviewing data. Staff is expected to meet with the taskforce in mid-December, after which Staff will provide updates to the Transportation Commission shortly after the New Year.

## **4. Commission Updates**

Commissioner Carolyn Schroeder provided an update on the Environmental Policy Commission (EPC). The EPC met on Monday November 13, 2017 and will have a public hearing on Environmental Action Plan (EAP) on December 4, 2017 to discuss the initiation process and steps moving forward. The EPC also submitted a letter of support and recommendations to the Commercial Parking Standards Taskforce.

Councilman Timothy Lovain reported that the Regional Transportation Planning Board (TPB) held discussions on the new and expanded Constrained Long Range Plan (CLRP) projects. TPB is looking to identify funding resources for unfunded CLRP projects. Councilman Lovain added that four out of ten initiatives include improvements to integrate bicycle and pedestrian facilities to Metrorail stations. Lovain reported that 62 percent of metro riders walk to the metro. Lovain is researching applicable grants that could support improving bicycle and pedestrian facilities as well as improving physical integration between Metrorail and Buses.

Acting Vice Chair Melissa McMahon reported that the Commercial Parking Taskforce had an open house on November 1, 2017. Staff is refining the data collected and will provide updates at the next meeting on November 29, 2017.

Acting Chair Stephen Klejst reported that the board of directors approved Josh Baker's, General Manager of DASH, proposal to purchase 27 clean diesel buses. Overall, the board heavily supports the move towards electrification. Yon Lambert, Director of Transportation and Environmental Services added that the DASH board adopted a resolution to begin purchasing clean diesel buses in efforts to solidify our commitment to sustainability and asked the General Manager to work with City Staff to begin initiating and prioritizing the electrification of the transit system. Lambert noted that DASH would be giving City Council an update on November 28, 2017.

Klejst reported that the DASH and T.C. Williams pilot program remains successful. The ridership is averaging an increase of 80 riders per day with no adverse incidents reported. In support of the Vision Zero initiative, General Manager Josh Baker reported that DASH is moving forward with plans to install pedestrian detection devices on the buses to alert bus drivers and counteract blind spots.

## **5. Vision Zero Draft Action Plan - Public Hearing**

Hillary Orr, Vision Zero Project Manager, provided the commission with a brief update of last month's review process of the Vision Zero Draft Action Plan (Action Plan). Staff provided a report of draft strategies to the Transportation Commission Subcommittee in October 2017. Staff completed the interdepartmental workgroup input, which included input and recommendations from 19 departments across the city. Once completed, staff released the Vision Zero Draft Action Plan for public comment. The Police Department also released their Traffic Safety Plan around the same time. Public feedback will be open for comments until November 26, 2017.

Orr stated that the Action Plan was created to be a highly data-driven document to help specify the appropriate strategies. The full data analysis report is available on the Vision Zero website. The Action Plan seeks to reduce the number of Killed or Seriously Injured (KSI) crashes to zero by 2028. Commissioner McMahon asked what the timeframe was for KSI crash data collected. Staff responded that the data was collected from the year 2011 until 2016. Commissioner Gonzalez asked for the source of the data. Orr responded that the graphs were based on Alexandria Police Department (APD) data and stated that the Action Plan is heavily focused on pedestrian safety (given their vulnerability to serious injuries) but seeks to ensure that safety is addressed for all modes of transportation. Orr specified that one in seven pedestrian accidents (14 percent) resulted in a fatality and this percentage was much higher than that of accidents involving motorized vehicles only. The Action Plan has four major focus areas: promoting a culture of safety, building safe streets for everyone, improving data collection and evaluation, and enhancing policy and collaboration.

The Transportation Commission Subcommittee originally asked for more detailed strategies in the Action Plan work plan. Orr mentioned that the goal is to complete the Action Plan work plan by December 2017, pending approval by all departments within the City. Staff will provide updates as the status changes.

Orr estimated that the Action Plan implementation cost would be approximately \$200,000 per year for operations and \$1.3 million dollars per year in capital funding. Additionally, Orr stated that the City would need local, state and regional support to implement the Action Plan. Staff encourages everyone to review the Vision Zero Safe Streets Pledge and show support by taking the pledge on the Vision Zero website. The Action Plan is currently open for public comment, and this period will end on November 26, 2017. Staff will seek endorsement from the Transportation Commission at the December 6 meeting and seek City Council adoption at the Public Hearing on Dec 16, 2017. Staff will publish annual reports every year and begin a three-year review process to include action items and status updates.

Acting Chair Klejst asked if there is a strategy in place to help determine where bicycle racks would be most efficient. Staff responded that there is a consistent engineering strategy in use to determine the best location for bicycle rack installation. Orr mentioned that Pedestrian and Bicycle Master Plan incorporates these strategies and recommends the best location for installations. Klejst asked staff if there was a plan to implement an educational campaign on safe bicycle riding. Orr responded that under the Vision Zero framework, the City would implement an educational campaign that will encourage all transportation users, regardless of mode, to take responsibility for their actions.

Acting Chair Klejst opened the Public Hearing. James Durham, Alexandria resident, provided the commission with background materials and reiterated the importance of speed management and safe street design in full support of Vision Zero. Mike Doyle, Alexandria resident, reiterated the urgency

to implement the Vision Zero framework and stated that crashes had increased in 2016, being higher than in any other year since 2011. Doyle stated that he hopes to see a significant reduction in accidents in 2018. Acting Chair Klejst closed the Public Hearing with no more pending comments.

## **6. NVTA 70 % Program Grant Application for FY18-23**

In April 2013, House Bill 2313 was signed into law, levying additional taxes and a fee in Planning Districts that meet population, motor vehicle registration, and transit ridership criteria. The additional revenues generated in Northern Virginia through these taxes and fees are deposited into a fund managed by the Northern Virginia Transportation Authority (NVTA). Thirty (30) percent of the funds are distributed directly to member localities for use on transportation projects; the remaining seventy (70) percent of the funds are distributed by NVTA and used for regional transportation projects. Projects seeking NVTA 70% regional transportation funds must be included in NVTA's long-range transportation plan, TransAction, which was approved by the NVTA at their October 12, 2017 meeting. At the May 18, 2016 Transportation Commission meeting, the Commission endorsed a recommended project list to be included in TransAction.

Transit Services Division Chief Allan Fye provided a high-level overview of the program and timeline of NVTA approval. Fye explained brief details on each project listed in the application memo and included in the multi-year grant proposal. Staff is asking for endorsement of the proposed program of transportation projects for submission to the Northern Virginia Transportation Authority (NVTA) for seventy (70) percent regional transportation funding for FY 2018- FY 2023 for a total of \$88,228,652. City Staff will seek consideration and approval of City Council for the proposed program at the November 28, 2017 Legislative Session.

Commissioner Schroeder inquired about the funding resources for projects that show no funding in the memo. Staff clarified that there is funding from various resources but none that is solidified only for that project. Staff will incorporate more detailed information on funding sources in the future. Commissioner Michaelis asked if the proposed amount allocated for the DASH Technology Needs project was sufficient. Staff replied that it will cover the preliminary funding needs. Fye also mentioned that other sources of funding will be used to complement NVTA 70% funds. Commissioner Brown asked how City Staff determines the total amount for the NVTA application. Staff reiterated that we have been successful in obtaining more than eleven percent that the City contributes of the allocated funds from NVTA by focusing on implementing important projects that are cost effective and with a realistic implementation plan.

Commissioner James Lewis made a motion to approve the NVTA 70% Program Grant Application for FY18-23. Acting Vice Chair McMahan seconded. The application grant was approved unanimously.

## **7. FY19 Capital Improvement Program Budget Guidance**

Each year the City Manager presents a proposed City Budget to the City Council for consideration and action. As part of the budget process, a ten-year Capital Improvement Program (CIP) is developed to fund major capital projects in the City. Funding for the CIP comes from the City's general fund, grants, and other non-city sources such as developer contributions.

Yon Lambert, Director of Transportation & Environmental Services, provided a budget overview of the city's top ten project priorities for FY 2019. Every two years city staff will be eligible to make proposals to the approved list. Lambert stated that staff is seeking consideration to reaffirm previously approved budget guidance. Director Lambert stated that City Manager Mark Jinks

identified some areas of priority, asking staff to address high priority projects, the first being the Vision Zero initiative and second, to implement core capital projects. Lambert reiterated the importance of the 2.2-cent dedicated real estate reservation tax for transportation improvements. Finally, Lambert noted that City Council communicated to the City Manager budget guidance to keep the overall real estate tax rate flat.

Councilman Lovian responded that revenue is growing at less than 2 percent, Council has elected to keep the rate flat in efforts to contain expenditures. Councilman Chapman added that there is limited flexibility in terms of revenue generation. Lambert stated that many of the transportation projects are partially funded by special revenue accounts. Lambert reiterated the importance of the Memorandum from the City Manager to the commission asking for budget guidance and to list the highest priority projects as well as the lowest priority ones. Vice Chair McMahon asked if the guidance recommendations for FY19 budget were unchanged from FY18. Staff clarified that the top priorities were mainly unchanged, except that the Vision Zero activities would be the highest priority in the guidance from the Transportation Commission to City Staff. Commissioner Lewis pointed out that the City should maintain current maintenance commitments before creating new projects. Lambert stated that the current budget seeks to incorporate previous infrastructure maintenance obligations as well as new obligations.

Commissioner Michaelis asked if the flat rate will affect real estate assessments. Staff replied that such discussion was outside the purview of this Commission and that staff could not answer detailed questions regarding that topic. Michaelis also asked if the 2.2-cent tax revenue would be dedicated to cover obligations for WMATA operations.

Staff stated that a portion would be dedicated to WMATA. Acting Chair Klejst asked if there are any bullet items for budget guidance that the Transportation Commission would like to add, remove or discuss. Commissioner Schroeder stated that she would be hesitant to remove items off the Capital Improvement Program priority list without further detailed review of each bullet point. McMahon asked for clarification of the CIP bullet stating that we shall “pursue discretionary grant funding for transportation projects, including state capital assistance and federal New Starts, Small Starts, and TIGER grants.” Staff clarified that this budget objective intends to maximize the ability to obtain discretionary grants. Commissioner McMahon recommended that Staff should evaluate whether it was beneficial to apply for grants that the City was not familiar with.

Acting Chair Klejst asked if there was a motion to accept the FY19 CIP Budget Guidance as discussed. Acting Vice Chair Melissa McMahon made a motion to provide City Council the discussed list of budget priorities with the addition of Vision Zero Action Plan as the top priority of the FY19 CIP Budget Guidance. Commission voted unanimously and approved.

## **8. Other Business**

Acting Chair Klejst reminded the commission that the next meeting will be on December 6, 2017 and Chair and Vice Chair elections will also be in December 2017 for the upcoming calendar year. With no other business to discuss, Commissioner Lewis made a motion to adjourn the meeting. The motion was seconded by Acting Vice Chair McMahon. The commission unanimously approved the motion.

Meeting adjourned at 9:17pm