



**City of Alexandria**  
Transportation Commission

**Regular Meeting**

June 19, 2019  
7:00 p.m.  
Council Workroom

**MINUTES**

**Commissioners Present:** Chairman Stephen Klejst, Vice-Chair Melissa McMahon, Commissioner Bruce Marsh, Commissioner Jake Jakubek, Commissioner Casey Kane, Commissioner Alyia Gaskins, Commissioner Carolyn Schroeder, Commissioner John Goebel, Commissioner John Chapman.

**Staff Present:** Christopher Ziemann - Transportation Planning Division Chief, Steve Sindiong - Transportation Planning Division, Jennifer Slesinger - Transportation Planning Division, Jose Ayala - Planning and Zoning.

Audio/Visual<sup>1</sup> presentation is available online:

<https://www.alexandriava.gov/TransportationCommission>

Chairman Stephen Klejst called the Transportation Commission meeting to order at 7:22 pm.

**1. Public Comment Period**

Christine Michaelis, Alexandria resident who lives on Seminary Road, expressed concerns about the safety of Seminary Road due to the increase in traffic and excessive speeds. Michaelis asked that the Transportation Commission support Alternative 3, which will provide safety for individuals who bike, walk and drive. In addition, Michaelis asked the Commission to complete a comprehensive bike and pedestrian plan for the West End because it is lacking in bike trails and safety routes for pedestrians.

Ella Knight, Alexandria resident who has lived on Seminary Road for six years, expressed concern about being able to walk to school safely because of excessive speeds and distracted drivers. Because there is no crosswalk, pedestrian's getting off the bus must run across the street to prevent being struck by a car. Because there is no evidence that shows Alternative 3 will cause an increase in traffic, Knight has asked that the Transportation Commission support Alternative 3. It is better to have pedestrian's safe and alive than dead.

John Knight, Alexandria resident who resides off Seminary Road, likes to bike but is afraid to bike on the road because he does not feel safe due to excessive speeds and distracted drivers. Knight

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<sup>1</sup> The video stopped at 1:08 due to a power issue.

supports Alternative 3 because he feels it is the only solution that addresses the safety of pedestrians. In addition, he asked that all lights off Duke Street have a crosswalk.

Eileen Boettcher, Alexandria resident who lives off Chapel Hill Road located in a cul-de-sac off Seminary Road, is a cyclist who bikes to work in McLean. During her 12-mile bike commute she is afraid for her life on Seminary Road because there is no room for both pedestrians and cyclists on the sidewalk, so she bikes on the road. Boettcher asked the Transportation Committee to make it safer for pedestrians, cyclists, and drivers on Seminary Road by supporting Alternative 3.

Ken Notis, Alexandria resident who lives off Park Center, would like to see the City become a more sustainable, safer and more multi-modal place than it currently is. Notis feels the current staff recommendation does not match all the goals in the Transportation Plan, because there is no dedicated bike infrastructure or center left turn lane. Since Vision Zero looks at system level changes, the staff recommendation does not address Seminary Road and how it fits into the City as a system. Notis feels Alternative 3 would help to introduce a multi-modal balance and would help meet the goals in the Transportation Plan. In addition, it would help to reduce speed and generally improve safety in keeping with Vision Zero.

Zachary DesJardins, Alexandria resident, feels that the current Bike and Pedestrian Master Plan the city has is outdated. DesJardins stated that the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) bikeway design selection guide recommends shared lane markings, or sharrows, on streets with two-thousand cars or less, yet Seminary Road carries almost eighteen thousand a day. Alternative 3 is the only alternative which complies with the FHWA guidelines. Since the King Street Phase II project was installed in 2016, the city has installed almost no bicycle infrastructure except on South Pickett Street and a few other small places. DesJardins asked the Commission to reject the staff recommendation and support Alternative 3 instead.

Carolyn Griglione, Alexandria resident, requested the support of the Transportation Commission for Alternative 3. This alternative best meets the goals for the project and the transportation plans for our city. This will also improve conditions for all modes of transportation and enhance the bike network on this section of the roadway. The inclusion of bike lanes on the entire length of the project area provides a safety buffer for protecting pedestrians and more than likely will encourage more walking and bicycling to travel to other parts of the City. Alternative 3 would be a new section of that growth adding updated road design features for all modes of transportation and adding secure bike lanes and sidewalks extending from West of I-395 to King Street and Seminary Road. The recommendation by staff has reduced the original project area from Kenmore Avenue to Quaker Lane to the small portion from Saint Stevens Road to Zabriskie Drive. This is a reduction that is not acceptable, this Alternative does not meet the goals for the project. The staff-proposed plan for Seminary Road is not consistent with the Council approved transportation policy as embodied in the Transportation Master Plan. The Transportation Commission should use professional knowledge, experience and thinking towards the future by putting forth a resolution in support of Alternative 3.

Eldon Boes has lived in Alexandria for thirty years and is asking the Commission to reject the staff hybrid approach and recommend Alternative 3. Boes is a cyclist and has used bicycling for almost all his local transportation for the past fifty years. Boes does a fair amount of volunteer work with Alexandria's bicycling in the schools and he works with the P.E. teachers as they teach bicycling

classes to the third graders. Boes is also a member of the tandem group that takes vision-impaired cyclists on rides on Tuesday evenings and those rides start and end on Seminary Hill. Boes bikes on Seminary Hill in West Alexandria on a regularly basis and finds it a real challenge to find routes in residential areas that are safe for cycling. The lack of safe east and west bicycle routes is almost certainly the primary reason that the Seminary Road gap was identified in the City's Transportation Plan as one of the top priority bicycle gaps to fill; in fact it was number 9 out of 96. Boes requested to add safe bicycling lanes like those proposed in Alternative 3, and for the commission to reject the staff's hybrid proposal.

## **2. May Meeting Minutes**

Commissioner Jakubek made a motion to accept the minutes as presented, motion carried.

Chairman Klejst introduced the Commissioner representative from the Planning Commission replacing David Brown, John Goebel.

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

The Commission discussed the following topics from the Consent Agenda:

### **A. Dockless Mobility Pilot Review Process**

Chairman Klejst asked staff to provide an overview of the Dockless Mobility item. Commissioner Kane asked about the data pertaining to the [Dockless Mobility Pilot Review](#) from some of the companies that are pulling back on the number of scooters that they are deploying in the City. Staff stated that they do have data but have not analyzed it and anecdotally they are noticing fewer scooters and are receiving fewer comments. Commissioner Kane also asked about the changes to the law starting on July 1st in terms of whether it is legal to ride scooters on the sidewalk, and whether there is a plan for staff to make a recommendation to City Council about addressing the law change.

Mr. Ziemann responded that staff has not explored banning scooters from sidewalks yet, since there are several features they would like to think about, and because not every street is the same and a one-size-fits-all approach would likely not be the safest.

Commissioner Gonzalez said a resident wrote him regarding the new law taking place on July 1<sup>st</sup>. The resident expressed concerns that the City would not be able to enforce scooters not being on the sidewalk, because the new law will be starting July 1<sup>st</sup>. Staff stated that the legislation passed by the State was essentially to establish a statewide law for scooters, but these laws could be superseded by local ordinances.

Commissioner Gonzalez expressed concerns about the lapse in police enforcement starting on July 1<sup>st</sup> until a city ordinance is passed. Chairman Klejst stated that the City's gap in its ability to enforce scooters not being on the sidewalk could lead to additional abhorrent and risky behavior that would adversely impact pedestrians and others. Commissioner Gonzalez asked about plans to develop a replacement ordinance between now and then. Staff is currently discussing options internally, but the City has no definitive plan. Commissioner Gonzalez stated that it would be nice to have this replacement ordinance sooner than later because it is not a pleasant experience for pedestrians having scooters come up behind or in front of them.

Chairman Klejst asked if the City has given thought to putting together a workgroup or task force like the Motor Coach Taskforce where you had very important and real conflicting viewpoints. The group was able to reach resolution on a situation that still exists, and people are working in harmony with the Motor Coach Industry as we speak today. He asked whether T&ES has considered a similar approach to form a working group from stakeholders of the business community, residents, as well as the users of the scooters along with

the companies who provide the scooters. Staff stated that it could be a recommendation that comes out of the first round of evaluations, but with the pilot program only going another three months staff would not try to start it up right now, but it could potentially be a recommendation.

Chairman Klejst expressed concerns that if there is not a working group formed before staff gives a recommendation to the City Council, the recommendation may not be fully valid. He suggests a working group comprised of key stakeholders within the City, such as residents, business owners and those who provide the scooters along with riders. Then Council would have a broader array of sources of input that would lend itself to a more rational decision-making process. Chairman Klejst also asked whether the City will have control over when the pilot will end. Staff confirmed that when City Council approved the pilot program in Fall 2018, it was for nine months which started January 1<sup>st</sup> and will end on September 30<sup>th</sup>. Council also approved that staff extend it for three more months to avoid a break in service.

Chairman Klejst suggested that the working group include civic associations, the business community, and the general population to get a sense of their experience with scooters. Commissioner Kane expressed concerns that civic associations do not properly represent the entire community. Staff anticipates doing outreach in Old Town specifically. Commissioner Gaskins expressed concerns about including people with disabilities into the focus groups and having user profiles included. Commissioner Marsh asked if having the pilot program extended would require a new Memo of Understanding (MOU). Staff confirmed that they can extend the pilot program three months, but anything more would need to be allowed by City Council and would require a new MOU.

Chairman Klejst asked if the outcome of the recommendation to City Council in November will be to continue a pilot or implement a program that will last forever or what the actual deliverable to the City Council will be. Staff has not done the evaluation so they cannot confirm, but there are several possibilities. For example, the City can recommend that scooters should be regulated in a certain manner or scooters should be prohibited in the City, or there could even be a second pilot program with different conditions potentially recommending an ordinance restricting sidewalk usage or changes to the fee structure. Staff cannot confirm until the data is evaluated from the pilot program once it ends.

## **B. WMATA Metro Platform Improvement Project First Week Review**

Commissioner Jakubek wanted to know how much longer there would be construction noises during the [WMATA Platform Improvement Project](#) in the middle of the night. Staff stated that citizens should be prepared to expect noises all summer long, though it will likely be worse in the beginning. Commissioner Kane commended the report released after the first week of the shutdown and asked for the next report. Staff anticipates a report will be released around July 18<sup>th</sup> with both the DASH and WMATA data.

Vice-Chair McMahon expressed concern over the closure of the roadway and sidewalk under the bridge by King Street Metro. She thought it would be helpful to have signage for impromptu closures if similar closures are anticipated. Staff said they will relay the request.

## **C. Seminary Road Complete Streets Project Update**

Vice-Chair McMahon commended staff on the thoroughness and transparency of the consent item regarding Seminary Road. However, staff's hybrid recommendation falls short because it does not provide dedicated bike infrastructure as recommended in the Transportation Master Plan in order to achieve policy goals that the City set forth. The lack of the left turn lanes in the design of the road will not help in crash reduction. In addition, Staff's recommendation does not reduce marginal speed because much of the road's infrastructure has not changed. Vice-Chair McMahon and Commissioner Kane expressed concerns about the Commission not being able to decide on this item as an action item. The Commission feels that this is an item they should be formally commenting on to Council as part of their role of ensuring the proper implementation of the City's

Transportation Master Plan. Commissioner Jakubek concurred with Vice-Chair McMahon that staff's recommendation does not achieve policy goals the City set forth in the Transportation Master Plan. Commissioner Jakubek feels that, as a City, we have been promoting Complete Streets and we want to incorporate road safety into our City culture. Commissioner Gonzalez expressed concerns that if one of the Commission's guiding roles is to support the Transportation Master Plan, then the staff recommendation does not fit that role. It is a great concern to hear residents throughout the City say they do not feel safe as pedestrians or bicyclists. Vice-Chair McMahon asked how to communicate concerns as a Commission within the framework of their jurisdiction or lack thereof. Commissioner Kane found it odd that during the initial start of the King Street Complete Streets project, the improvements were brought to the Transportation Commission for approval, but Seminary Road Complete Streets Project was not.

Chairman Klejst suggested preparing a letter of formal feedback to the City. Vice-Chair McMahon made a motion that the Transportation Commission write two letters - one to the Traffic and Parking Board and the other to City Council expressing their endorsement of Alternative 3, as Alternative 3 meets the Commission's understanding of their stewardship responsibilities of the Transportation Master Plan. In the absence of Chairman Klejst, Vice-Chair McMahon will sign both letters. Commissioner Jakubek seconded the motion, while Commissioner Kane abstained due to potential conflict of interest as the Traffic and Parking Board representative. The motion passed.

#### **4. Commissioner Updates**

**Chairman Klejst:** DASH signed the ATU contract with a cost of slightly under \$4 million for the first year. City Council was able to do a supplemental budget for the first year to fund this increase, however there is no dedicated source going forward. City Council will need to address this. Funding was also approved for DASH to procure six electric buses. DASH is currently working on determining the delivery schedule and finding a vendor.

**Commissioner Jakubek:** The [Eisenhower West/Landmark Van Dorn Advisory Group](#) met with developer representatives and addressed their concerns about the Greenhill Development floodplain. The Advisory Group asked that the contractor discuss these issues with their staff.

**Commissioner Marsh:** The [Potomac Yard Metrorail Implementation Work Group](#) discussed three options for a second station entrance with the contractor. The first option was for \$75 million; the second option was for \$90 million, and the third option was for \$100 million with a forty percent markup by the contractor for escalation costs. The Work Group is moving forward with the first option for \$75 million. Staff will go back to WMATA and the contractor to trim down the cost to \$50 million. There will be a hearing at City Council this Saturday at 9:30 a.m. for Council to vote on the 25<sup>th</sup>.

**Commissioner Kane:** The Traffic and Parking Board approved and installed a new stop sign at Cameron Mills Road and Monticello Boulevard, but some people are still running the stop sign, so flashing lights were installed to make people aware of the new stop sign. During the next upcoming meeting they will discuss extending the residential pay-by-phone program in a couple locations and installing a parking kiosk in front of Saint Paul's Church on South Pitt Street. There will also be discussion about Seminary Road at the next meeting.

#### **5. Eisenhower East**

Jose Ayala, Urban Planner with the Department of Planning and Zoning, presented an update to the Draft Mobility Recommendations for the Eisenhower East Small Area Plan which is nearing completion. Ayala requested endorsement for the Mobility Recommendations as being consistent with the Transportation Master Plan, the Complete Street Design Guidelines, the Vision Zero Action Plan, the Environmental Action Plan, and feedback from the Eisenhower East community.

In addition to the mobility themes, Ayala presented a map of the area organized around two main neighborhoods and proposed bicycle and pedestrian facilities. The mobility recommendations prioritize a safe environment for all people moving in and around Eisenhower East and beyond.

Commissioner Kane made a motion to endorse the proposal as presented. The motion carried.

#### **6. Transportation Alternatives Set-Aside/Revenue Sharing Grant Applications**

Transportation Alternatives Set-Aside Grant is a federal grant for projects that support non-motorized travel. It requires a 20 percent match with local funds with the maximum award being \$1 million per year for a two-year cycle, FY21 and FY22. Staff is proposing two projects to the Commission but intends to apply for one project pending action by Council. The first proposal (Option #1) would fund the sidewalk construction recommended in the Staff Alternative to close the quarter mile sidewalk gap on Seminary Road per the staff recommendation. The cost for the permanent sidewalk would be approximately \$1.5 million.

However, if the City Council decision differs from the Staff Recommendation for Seminary Road and this project is no longer relevant, staff would apply for Option #2, the Holmes Run Trail at Dora Kelley. Since this portion of the trail was washed out in 2018, the grant would fund rebuilding the west bank and the trail, providing an all-weather bridge instead of the current fair-weather bridge at a cost of approximately \$1.7 million.

Vice-Chair McMahon asked if each option was total project cost or total grant request, staff confirmed it was total project cost. Commissioner Kane would like to see Option #1 approved by City Council, but is concerned about the lack of funding for Option #2 if the City ends up applying for the Seminary Road sidewalk, as it is also a good project. Staff stated this is the first funding opportunity, but there are other funding opportunities that they will pursue for Option #2 because it is a priority.

The Revenue Sharing Grant provides a fifty percent match for repaving and reconstruction projects. Typically, the City uses the grant to fund about half of its entire repaving program (about \$2-3 million per year). The final project list of streets is still under development. The City is surveying all streets right now to identify streets with the greatest need. Timelines for both grants consist of pre-applications due on July 1<sup>st</sup>. Staff will present to City Council for endorsement in September. Applications are due October 1<sup>st</sup>.

Chairman Klejst stated there are two separate motions. One motion is to endorse the Transportation Alternative Set-Aside program giving staff the flexibility of applying for one or two projects. The second motion is to endorse the VDOT Revenue Sharing Grant not to exceed \$5 million per year. Chairman Klejst called for motions to approve as presented, motion carried.

#### **7. NVTA 70% Grant Application**

The application for the Northern Virginia Transportation Authority 70% grant is open for applications in July for FY24 and FY25 funding. The program is intended to fund regional transportation projects of significance to reduce congestion and increase quality of life. The staff recommendation is to focus on one priority project: The Duke Street Transitway. It was initially recommended in the Transportation Master Plan and the City has already received \$12 million in NVTA funds for FY20 to begin environmental and design work. In 2012 the Transitway Feasibility Study recommended that the project be implemented in two phases, staff therefore recommends applying for Phase 1 of the project now, which includes dedicated bus lanes, signal upgrades, and pedestrian improvements. The deadline for applications is September 27<sup>th</sup>.

Vice-Chair McMahon asked why the preliminary estimates of cost seem to be so far off from reality. She asked how staff handles designing a grant request. Initially staff develops a cost estimate with escalation and contingency costs factored in. If costs rise more than anticipated, decisions are made to either find more funding or reduce the scope. In this case, staff updated the 2012 cost proposal and added a 35% contingency to cover uncertainty and cost escalation. Commissioner Kane asked what part of Duke Street is included in Phase

I. Staff responded that all of Duke Street is included in Phase I, but it is less infrastructure-intensive and does not complete a full buildout of dedicated right-of-way for buses. Commissioner Kane asked if Phase I addressed the problem at Telegraph Road and West Taylor Run. Staff stated that this is a separate project, but that all the projects are coordinated.

The Commission passed a motion to submit an endorsement letter for the project.

## **8. WMATA Bus Transformation Project**

Staff presented an overview of the draft recommendations, strategy report and an option for Commission action.

Vice-Chair McMahon would like the buses to be more convenient for people getting their personal items aboard, such as strollers or packages. The Commission decided to support the original letter that the T&ES Director and the General Manager of DASH submitted to WMATA, but supplement their points with prioritizing the concept of making the buses have a greater utility for the user population.

The Commission passed a motion to submit a feedback letter on the draft Bus Transformation Project recommendations.

### **Other business**

Staff provided an update on the Potomac Yard Metrorail Station permit application with the Virginia Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ). In February 2019, the City submitted a revised joint application to the DEQ for the Potomac Yard Metro Station. DEQ issued a Draft Water Protection Permit in response to the application and the City formally advertised a public notice for the Draft Water Protection Permit in the related public hearing on June 13<sup>th</sup>. DEQ is accepting comments through Tuesday, July 16<sup>th</sup>. The City has drafted a letter and sent it to several groups for support for the application to help move the Potomac Yard Metro Station construction forward. The Commission approved a motion to submit a letter of support.

The Commission agreed to cancel the July meeting.

Commissioner Kane asked staff for an update on the bikeshare program. Staff is still working out contracting issues for the Bikeshare program. Staff is considering advancing some of the next round of stations but must go through a community process. Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) requires the City to go through the community process before they give official approval. Given the amount of time it will take to order the stations, staff is looking at how quickly new bikeshare stations can be installed.

The Commonwealth Transportation Board announced the third round of Smart Scale funding today. The City received \$57 million for the West End Transitway; \$6.3 million for pedestrian improvements to improve transit accessibility at Landmark Mall; \$6 million for enhancements at Duke Street, West Taylor Run, and Telegraph Road; \$12 million for zero emission buses for DASH; and \$5 million for transit signal priority city-wide.

### **Adjournment**

At 9:42 pm, The Transportation Commission adjourned.