

# *City of Alexandria, Virginia*

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## MEMORANDUM

DATE: March 18, 2020

TO: MEMBERS OF THE TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION

FROM: HILLARY ORR, DEPUTY DIRECTOR, T&ES

SUBJECT: AGENDA ITEM # 5 – ITEMS FOR CONSENT

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**ISSUE:** Staff update to Transportation Commission on various projects.

**RECOMMENDATION:** That the Commission receive the items for consent.

### A. WMATA

**Budget Update:** The Northern Virginia Transportation Commission (NVTC), of which Alexandria has two members (Councilman Aguirre and Vice Mayor Bennet-Parker), submitted two letters to WMATA on the proposed budget. The first pertained only to the [General Manager's proposal](#) and the second included board member amendments that were made later. The letter opposed the approach of cutting bus service to fund service initiatives. It suggested a more incremental approach to fare and service initiatives including the increase to the transfer discount from \$.50 to \$2.00 and on the revenue side, the increase in the max fare from \$6 to \$7. It also expressed concern over the equity impacts of surcharges for cash payments or loading on buses.

The [second letter](#) opposed significant increases to the base fare in addition to asking for a more incremental approach to increasing the max fare. The Commission also opposed the weekend flat fare proposals for their significant revenue impacts and offered that the proposed weekend passes could increase ridership without sacrificing revenue. The letter also proposed a more comprehensive approach outside of the budget process to establishing fare policy.

**NVTC WMATA Committee and WMATA Board Update:** In February, Christian Dorsey, Virginia jurisdictional representative of the WMATA board stepped down. Alternate Matt LeTourneau, Loudon Supervisor, took his place on the WMATA board. Walter Alcorn, Fairfax County Supervisor was named his alternate. Councilman Aguirre was named Paul Smedberg's alternate. Since Mr. Letourneau moved into NVTC's Principal WMATA Board appointee position, he can no longer serve as chair of the NVTC WMATA Committee. Committee chairmanship and membership is governed by NVTC's By-Laws, which directs the chair be one of the two alternate members appointed by the Commission to the WMATA Board of Directors. Mr. Aguirre was appointed to serve as the chair of the NVTC WMATA Committee at March 5, 2020 Northern Virginia Transportation Commission meeting.

## **B. Water Transportation**

On February 22, the City Council approved a lease modification allowing earlier weekday operations for the Potomac Riverboat Company (PRC) to provide morning Water Taxi commuter service to Washington, DC, from the Waterfront in Old Town. Morning service was previously prohibited, and an exception was granted by the City Manager to make the Water Taxi a viable alternative commute option during the 2019 WMATA Platform Improvement Project. The 2019 program demonstrated sufficient ridership for PRC to pursue long-term commuter service during their Water Taxi operating season, March through December annually. The program also mitigated prior concerns about commuter service, such as riders parking on Old Town streets. Data collected through reimbursement applications indicated less than 5% of commuters drove to connect to the Water Taxi. The City offered partial reimbursement of annual passes and commuter tickets to make the Water Taxi a more accessible option for commuters traveling to and from Alexandria while Metrorail service was shutdown.

This year, the City has received grant funding to offer a reimbursement program for Alexandria residents commuting via Water Taxi during the 2020 season. Details of the program (e.g., eligible ticket types and reimbursement rates) are still being finalized, but commuters who have already purchased annual passes and are Alexandria residents will be eligible for reimbursement once the application opens. More information about the commuter reimbursement program will be published at [alexandriava.gov/GOAlex](http://alexandriava.gov/GOAlex) once the program is finalized.

## **C. Alex311**

On February 24, 2020, the City officially launched the [311 Service Request](#) system to replace Call.Click.Connect. It provides access to more than 175 City services and information, it allows customers to attach photos online and through a mobile app, and customers are kept abreast of progress through emails or by tracking online or through the app. Customers can connect to Alex311 through the [website](#), the mobile app, by phone, through Twitter and Facebook, and in person. Alex311 staff commit to being professional, accountable, responsive and courteous.

## **D. Capital Bikeshare**

Staff is working with VDOT to allow the City to move forward with purchasing the bikeshare stations the Transportation Commission reviewed in 2017. In the meantime, staff identified six additional sites for bikeshare stations that can be purchased using funds from developer contributions. Staff is currently confirming that the locations can be supported by the bikeshare operator and is bringing the proposal to the Traffic & Parking Board for review at the end of March. The stations will be purchased this spring and updates on the installation timeline will be posted on the program websites.

Capital Bikeshare also recently launched [Capital Bikeshare for All](#), an upgrade to the system's equity program. *Capital Bikeshare for All* offers a \$5 annual membership for unlimited rides to those who qualify for certain state or federal assistance programs with appropriate documentation. Riders who qualify are now able to sign up individually. Qualifying members will be able to unlock bikes via the mobile application (in addition to the fobs), use more payment methods including prepaid cards, credit and debit cards, or cash (at in-person sign up

locations only), sign up online or in-person at designated locations and ride bikes for 60 minutes at a time.

Capital Bikeshare is planning to relaunch e-bikes this spring. One key difference is that these e-bikes will have a dockless option, meaning they can end trips at a station or outside a station at a bicycle rack within a defined service area. There will be an additional fee to end a trip outside of a station and a penalty if a bike is left out the service area. More details about the expansion and the launch of e-bikes is provided in the February 20, 2020 memo to council.

#### **E. Dockless Mobility**

Five companies (Spin, Bird, Lime, Razor, and Helbiz) are currently permitted with the City for the Phase II Pilot Program. One company, Helbiz, is permitted for both scooters and e-bicycles. Each company is permitted 200 devices, for a total of 1,000 scooters and 200 e-bicycles City-wide. In 2019, seven companies were permitted 200 devices each for a total of 1,400 devices. Last year with 1,400 devices permitted, the City generally saw between 400-800 daily depending on time of year.

The application period of the Ad Hoc Scooter Task Force was open in early 2020. The Task Force will consist of thirteen (13) members, to be appointed by the City Manager, representing a diversity of interests related to shared mobility. Applicants selected for the Task Force will be notified soon. Staff continues to work towards signage and locations for posting notice that riding scooters and e-bicycles on sidewalks is not allowed. Staff is also working to identify locations for more scooter parking corrals to be installed.