

# *City of Alexandria, Virginia*

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## **MEMORANDUM**

DATE: SEPTEMBER 16, 2020

TO: MEMBERS OF THE TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION

FROM: HILLARY ORR, DEPUTY DIRECTOR, T&ES

SUBJECT: AGENDA ITEM # 7 – LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES

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**ISSUE:** Staff to provide a recap of the 2020 Legislative Session and seek feedback on 2021 Legislative Priorities

**RECOMMENDATION:** That the Commission share feedback on transportation legislative priorities for the 2021 short session of the Virginia General Assembly.

### **2020 Recap**

For the 2020 Legislative Session, instead of providing detailed legislative requests, the City put forward principles and priorities to guide its actions and response with the Legislature.

The 2020 transportation-related principle was as follows:

*As we work to support a wide variety of safe, connected, multimodal transportation options in our city that enable access to daily activities in our community and our region, the city supports legislation and budget priorities that ensure Alexandria has safe, reliable and frequent mobility choices regardless of resources or ability. As we work to create a community where various forms of transportation use, and share, our roads safely and efficiently, the City supports legislation that protects vulnerable road users, including bicyclists and pedestrians. **The City supports efforts in the General Assembly that help us achieve our Vision Zero goal to eliminate all traffic deaths and serious injuries in our community by 2028.***

The 2020 transportation-related priorities were as follows:

- The City supports efforts to protect existing multimodal transportation funding and identify revenue options that will fully restore funding to the Northern Virginia Transportation Authority (NVTA).
- The City supports efforts to modernize the local tax structure. The City is supportive of opportunities for additional local revenue authority to increase funding for local needs, including transit, transportation, school construction and renovation, and other significant capital needs.
- The City supports legislation to accelerate the electrification of transportation.

The City achieved significant success in the 2020 Legislative session to achieve increases in transportation safety related to an expansion of automated enforcement, a hands-free bill, safe passing legislation, and requirement to stop for peds at crosswalks.

In addition, the Transportation Omnibus bill HB1414 makes a series of significant changes to both transportation funding and safety in the Commonwealth:

- Increase in the gas tax
- Reduction in registration fees for motor vehicles
- Fuel efficient vehicles will be subject to a highway use fee or may enroll in a mileage-based user fee program
- Changes in fees and taxes in Northern Virginia
- Establishment of a new Virginia Passenger Rail Authority.
- The bill also creates numerous new transportation safety programs, including an Interstate Operations and Enhancement Program, a Virginia Highway Safety Improvement Program, the Statewide Special Structures Program, and a Transit Incentive Program.

These fee changes result in a significant, but not complete restoration of NVTFA funding available for City use.

Given the current financial situation, the August special session is making adjustments to changes in new revenue.

## **2021 Proposals**

As the 2021 Legislative Session is a short session with a limit on the number of bills that can be proposed and drafted, the City is seeking a tight, achievable legislative agenda. Staff considerations currently include:

1. Preserving dedicated funding and new revenue sources for transit
2. Fully restoring Northern Virginia's regional multimodal funding
3. Continuing to advance legislation to help us achieve Vision Zero
  - a. Bicycle safety
  - b. Decreased DUI threshold
  - c. Higher fines for harming vulnerable road users