

# *City of Alexandria, Virginia*

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## **MEMORANDUM**

DATE: FEBRUARY 21, 2018

TO: MEMBERS OF THE TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION

FROM: HILLARY ORR, DEPUTY DIRECTOR, T&ES

SUBJECT: AGENDA ITEM #6 – FY2019 INTERDEPARTMENTAL LONG RANGE PLAN – TRANSPORTATION PROJECTS

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**ISSUE:** To provide the Transportation Commission with a detailed description of each of the transportation-related projects in the FY2019 Interdepartmental Long Range Plan Work Program (ILRPWP).

**RECOMMENDATION:** That the Transportation Commission receives a detailed description of each of the transportation-related projects in the City’s FY2019 Interdepartmental Long Range Plan Work Program.

**A. DISCUSSION:** Since October 2017, City Staff has been providing inputs for the preparation of the FY2019 Interdepartmental Long Range Plan Work Program. The objective of this exercise is to prepare the City for future changes in land use, transportation technology and other relevant issues, and aligning the City’s activities, plans and programs with current relevant policies. The development of the FY19 ILRPWP is based on improving Alexandrian’s quality of life based in economic, social and environmental sustainability, affordable housing and over all, managing City’s resources effectively and efficiently. The priorities for the FY19 ILRPWP are: (i) Land Use, (ii) Transportation and Sustainability, (iii) Housing, and (iv) Open space.

In November 2017, the City conducted community outreach activities to inform of these priorities. During January and February, City Staff has been providing updates to the different Commissions. In March 2018, staff will continue to coordinate internally to develop the final version of the FY19 ILRPWP, and in May 2018, staff will seek final endorsement and approval. The main projects and programs related to transportation under the Transportation and Environmental Services Department are listed below.

### ***1. PLANS/PROJECTS STARTING OR CONCLUDING IN FY2018***

#### **Route 1 South Affordable Housing Strategy**

This planning effort will focus on the Route 1 area south of Duke Street (a portion of the Southwest Quadrant Small Area Plan) beginning in January 2018. The timing of this effort is closely tied to the expiration of affordability contracts on three affordable rental properties in

the corridor. This initiative will engage the community in exploring options for the future redevelopment and/or preservation and renovation of the multifamily rental properties in the area. Among the goals are working with property owners to develop strategies and identify public and private resources to preserve market and committed affordability for existing rental housing as well as extending expiring (early 2020) long-term subsidies that provide deep affordability for many units in the area which currently contribute to the area's inclusivity and income diversity. This study will also look at ways to improve safety and accessibility and enhance neighborhood character. This study is partially funded by the Virginia Housing Development Authority (VHDA) to cover consultant costs related to economic and housing studies considered essential to preparation for the launch of the planning effort.

### **Environmental Action Plan and Green Building Policy Updates**

Per the City Council's Eco-City Alexandria initiative, the Environmental Action Plan 2030 (EAP) was adopted by City Council in 2009 following significant efforts from several City departments and an extensive public outreach campaign. The EAP calls for updating the EAP at least every five years and the Eco-City Charter every ten years. These updates are aimed at maintaining the EAP's relevance, prioritizing efforts, and enhancing its effectiveness in leading the City further toward environmental sustainability and achieving the City's long-term goal of becoming a true Eco-City.

In consultation with the Environmental Policy Commission (EPC), staff is updating the EAP in two phases. Phase 1 short-term focused principle areas are planned to go before Council May 2018. Phase 2 focuses on the remaining short-term principle areas (including transportation) and all mid- and long-term action items is planned for Council consideration June 2019. The EAP work program incorporates the Green Building Policy update and the expectation is that a new Green Building Policy would be adopted no later than the adoption of the phase 2 of the EAP Update in June of 2019.

### **Central Alexandria Traffic Study**

In response to resident concerns about increased traffic and traffic diversion into neighborhoods in Central Alexandria, City Council has directed staff to conduct a comprehensive traffic study, which examines traffic volumes, speeds, and traffic origins and destinations. The traffic study specifically focuses on Seminary Hill, Seminary Ridge, Clover College Park, and Taylor Run Civic Association areas.

After reviewing comments and addressing public concerns, Task Force members will work collectively to identify and prioritize the key locations and issues in the Study. Staff will work with the Task Force discuss both short-term mitigation improvements that can be implemented as part of this Study process, and longer-term items that would need to be addressed in future efforts, such as the update to the Transportation Master Plan.

### **Alexandria Transit Vision Study**

The goal of the study is to identify existing bus transit needs in Alexandria, as well as future projected needs and untapped markets, and develop an unconstrained, and non-biased future bus transit network / alignment that responds to current and projected needs. Similar efforts have been conducted in cities such as Houston, Jacksonville and San Jose, where plans were

done to adapt the transit system to reality in terms of existing and future demographics and land use. The study will heavily focus on data to develop the proposed network.

### **Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS) Initiative:**

The City's ITS initiative is a series of transportation-related technology projects to improve mobility throughout the city. The intent of these projects is to create a technology infrastructure that will allow incorporation of future, yet to be developed emerging technologies such as autonomous self-driving vehicles. The current complement of projects includes the following: 1) ITS Integration Phase I (complete); 2) ITS Integration Phase II (in construction); 3) ITS Integration Phase III (in design); 4) ITS Integration Phase IV (concept); 5) Transit Vehicle Signal Priority Van Dorn Beauregard (complete); 6) Transit Signal Vehicle Priority Duke St/Rte. 1 (bidding construction); and, 7) Traffic Adaptive Control (concept).

### **Landmark Mall Re-planning**

In June 2013, the City Council approved the Phase I Landmark Mall redevelopment plan (DSUP2013-0004), as proposed by the Howard Hughes Company ("HHC"). At that time, HHC owned only the in-line store section between Macy's and Sears (approximately 21.9 acres of the 51-acre Landmark Mall site), so the Phase I redevelopment plan did not encompass the entire site. The plan called for about 300,000 square feet of mixed-use retail, restaurants and entertainment, and some 400 apartment units planned in an open air, town center setting. In June 2015, HHC requested, and was granted, an amendment (DSUP2015-0003) to add approximately 55,000 square feet of residential and flex space to the previous approval. In December, 2016, HHC acquired Macy's and now has control of approximately 2/3 of the site, and they have been having on-going talks with Sears about acquisition or a partnership for their remaining portion.

### **Transportation Master Plan- Streets/Parking/ITS Chapters**

The Transportation Master Plan was approved by City Council in 2008. The Transportation Commission has recommended that the City conduct an update to this plan every 5 to 8 years to stay current with the changes occurring in the City including new development, implementation of high capacity transit corridors, and Capital Bikeshare, and to ensure that the City's policies and recommendations are current with best practices and industry standards. An updated Bicycle-Pedestrian chapter was approved by City Council in 2016. This effort will update the Streets, Parking and Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS) chapters. Staff started internal work for the Transportation Master Plan Update in December 2017 and will conclude in December 2018.

### **Mount Vernon Avenue Pedestrian Safety Improvements and Plan Update (Mount Vernon Avenue Business Plan and the Arlandria Action Plan)**

Beginning in 2016, the City began working with businesses and neighborhood associations along Mount Vernon Avenue to discuss pedestrian safety and accessibility improvements for the corridor. The recommendations, which included extended sidewalks, shortened crossing distances and accessible are currently in design. Additionally, the City released a survey in fall 2018 to obtain input from community members living and working around Mount Vernon Avenue regarding priority traffic safety challenges and possible solutions that could also be addressed with this project and the resurfacing of the corridor in FY 2019. Over 700 responses were received through on street interviews and through the online survey. Based

on this feedback, City staff will develop prioritized safety improvement options to include with this project.

## ***II. STUDIES/POLICY INITIATIVES***

### **Residential Parking Permit Districts and for Determining Parking Meter Locations and Pricing**

On-street parking is one of Alexandrians' biggest concerns, and directly affects access and quality of life. Currently, the City Code does not allow for a proactive, staff-initiated process to create a new residential parking permit district or to update the restrictions within existing districts. There are certain situations where a comprehensive, staff-led approach to creating residential parking restrictions would be appropriate, such as creating a district around a new Metro Station or retail area. Starting in spring 2018, staff will review the current process and propose options for a staff initiated process, with the goal of a public hearing for a change to the City Code at the end of 2018. In addition, Staff identified the City Code as a barrier to effective on-street curbside management by restricting Staff's abilities to implement parking meters. This effort will also analyze staff-led approaches to using parking meters in order to solve problems of parking shortages and promote more parking and turnover in commercial areas.

### **Motorcoach Study**

In 2016, the Motorcoach Task Force was reconvened to discuss potential recommendations for motorcoach policies to address the impact of development on existing motorcoach facilities. In 2017, the Task Force finalized these recommendations, which are intended to address general motorcoach policies and identify additional parking and unloading/loading locations. Implementation of these recommendations is currently underway.

## ***III. PLAN IMPLEMENTATION***

### **Del Ray Parking Study Implementation & Parking Technologies**

In 2016, Staff updated the parking occupancy data within the study area conducted public outreach to discuss key findings and recommendations from the Del Ray Parking Study and review updated parking data. Short-term recommendations will be implemented and long term recommendations will be considered through a future budget process. The parking technologies project provides funding for the deployment of new parking technologies, such as real time parking occupancy systems for on-street spaces and parking garages/lots, web-based interactive parking map, dynamic signage that illustrates real-time parking availability in city-owned garages, and other parking technologies. These technologies will mostly be off-the-shelf solutions requiring minimal design and engineering.

### **Eisenhower West Small Area Plan / Landmark Van Dorn Corridor Plan Implementation**

In order to achieve the vision for the area encompassed by the Eisenhower West Small Area Plan and Landmark/Van Dorn Corridor Plan, a number of action items are needed to begin implementation, as well as significant funding for related implementation studies and analyses. The approved FY 2017 budget allocates funding for the Air Quality Modeling

Analysis and Infrastructure Plan described below. An implementation advisory group was established by Council in the spring of 2016. Projects consolidated into this combined coordinated implementation effort are listed below in order of anticipated timing.

- Detailed Air Quality Modeling Analysis near the Van Dorn Metrorail Station: Preliminary air quality modeling results revealed possible height limitation of tall buildings near the Covanta facility. This modeling exercise will more accurately project air quality impacts and identify potential mitigation strategies to reduce impacts or constraints.
- Infrastructure Plan: This engineering and design effort will further refine the proposed infrastructure supporting planned redevelopment in the Landmark/Van Dorn Corridor and Eisenhower West plans. The work will facilitate redevelopment by making it clear where proposed infrastructure will be. The work will also refine cost estimates, which will be useful in determining a funding strategy.
- Developer Contributions Analysis: This work will conduct the analysis to determine the extent to which developer contributions can be used to fund infrastructure in these two small area plans. It is likely a phased approach will be recommended. (Funding requested)
- Backlick Run Restoration Master Plan: This Plan will focus on the inaccessible/degraded stretch of Backlick Run located between the City of Alexandria/Fairfax County line and Cameron Station to revitalize it into an active greenway, a key open space feature of the Plan. (Partially funded)
- Combined Energy and Reclaimed Water Feasibility Study: This engineering study will evaluate the feasibility of a district energy system taking advantage of the large energy source produced at COVANTA and the feasibility of using treated water produced and developed in the EW area and all along Eisenhower Avenue.
- Van Dorn Metro Multimodal Bridge Preliminary Design and Engineering: While some preliminary design and engineering for this bridge is currently being done, this initiative will complete the design and engineering for this important bridge. (Funded in FY2018 and FY2019)
- Van Dorn Street Bridge Widening Analysis; Widening the Van Dorn Street bridge is an alternative to the Multimodal Bridge if the Multimodal Bridge is found to be infeasible. (Not yet funded)
- High Street Preliminary Design and Engineering: High Street is a new road, called for in the Landmark/Van Dorn Corridor Plan, which runs parallel to Van Dorn Street and connects, via a Bridge over Duke Street, to the Landmark Mall site. (Funded in FY2023)
- Farrington Ave Connector Study: This study will be completed in conjunction with Fairfax County and will identify the best options for a new north-south connection west of Van Dorn Street between Farrington Avenue and Edsall Road. (Funding requested)

### **Vision Zero Action Plan & Complete Streets Program**

The ongoing implementation is a City priority to eliminate traffic deaths and serious injuries by 2028. Work in FY 2019 will focus on short-term improvements, data collection, and preparing for longer-term engineering improvements. The Complete Streets program funds capital infrastructure improvements to the non-motorized transportation network, including sidewalks, curbs, gutters, pedestrian crossings, on-street bicycle facilities, bicycle parking, and access ramps throughout the City. The implementation of these improvements is coordinated with annual street resurfacing programs.

## ***IV. ONGOING/OTHER PROJECTS***

### **Transportation Demand Management Program and Transportation Management Plans**

The City's Transportation Demand Management (TDM) program, GO Alex, keeps residents, visitors and workers within Alexandria informed of all of their transportation options. GO Alex educates the public about transit and active commuting options through several methods, including grassroots outreach, employer outreach, new resident packets, a bi-annual newsletter, and the GO Alex webpage. In addition, GO Alex also provides travel-planning assistance through the Mobile Store.

Transportation management plans (TMPs) are required by developers in order to limit the number of cars in Alexandria, and promote alternative commuting behavior. Cars create congestion, which threatens the City's appeal to residents and businesses. The City works with developers to limit cars by creating alternative transportation incentive programs at major developments, and working with their TMP coordinators. The City holds annual TMP workshops with coordinators to share ideas for reducing single occupant vehicle trips, and discuss TMP requirements, such as required surveys and funding plans. By working with these coordinators, the City makes meaningful progress to limiting cars in Alexandria, while promoting growth.

### **Regional Transportation Initiatives (TES)**

Many important regional transportation and transit planning initiatives are shown in the Interdepartmental Long Range Planning Work Plan. In addition, staff continues to allocate significant time to coordinating with regional agencies such as NVTA, NVTC, TPB, WMATA, and VRE to address issues related to state and federal funding for local and regional transportation projects, improving air quality and relieving congestion throughout the region, and providing an efficient and effective public transportation network which connects the City to the rest of the region.