

City of Alexandria, Virginia

MEMORANDUM

DATE: NOVEMBER 20, 2019

TO: MEMBERS OF THE TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION

FROM: HILLARY ORR, DEPUTY DIRECTOR, T&ES

SUBJECT: AGENDA ITEM # 7 – ITEMS FOR CONSENT

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

RECOMMENDATION: That the Commission receive the items for consent.

A. Pegram Street Bike Facilities

In September 2019, North Pegram Street was repaved between North Pickett Street and Holmes Run Parkway. The City's Complete Streets Policy directs staff to consider roadway improvements in conjunction with routine street maintenance, where possible. After gathering community input via an online feedback form in Spring 2019, coordinating with Alexandria City Public Schools, and working with residents on a traffic calming petition, staff proposed and is implementing the following improvements on North Pegram Street:

- Widening the existing sidewalk between Polk Avenue and North Pickett Street where feasible to better accommodate students walking to Francis C. Hammond Middle School.
- Installing new or upgraded crosswalks at:
 - Holmes Run Parkway
 - Sutton Place
 - Talbot Place
 - Polk Avenue
 - Hammond Middle School
 - North Pickett Street
- Installing new speed cushions between Polk Avenue and North Pickett Street, where 85th percentile speeds in the downhill direction ranged between 33 and 34 miles per hour. (The speed limit is 25 mph, with a 15-mph school zone speed limit in place on a segment of the roadway during school arrival and dismissal times.)
- Reducing travel lane widths from approximately 15' wide to 11' wide between Polk Avenue and North Pickett Street and installing:
 - A 6' climbing bicycle lane in the uphill direction, plus a striped buffer where feasible.
 - Shared-lane markings in the downhill direction.

- Flexpost delineators adjacent to speed cushions to prevent people driving from swerving into the bike lane to avoid the cushions.

Staff will monitor and evaluate the project over the next few months. Staff is aware of isolated instances of people parking in the bike lane. If this continues to be an issue once the bike lane symbols are installed, staff will consider adding “No Parking” signage to discourage illegal parking. Staff will also collect data to evaluate the effects of the speed cushions and reduced lane widths on vehicle speeds.

B. Fast Ferry Request for Information (RFI) Release

The Potomac Rappahannock Transportation Commission (PRTC)/OmniRide published a [Request for Information](#) on October 21 on behalf of the Northern Virginia Regional Commission’s Fast Ferry Stakeholder Group to inform efforts to establish M-495 Commuter Fast Ferry Service on the Occoquan, Potomac, and Anacostia River system.

Over the last decade, the Stakeholder Group has issued studies on critical elements of launching fast ferry, including market feasibility, route proving exercises and infrastructure gap analysis. With this RFI, the group seeks to gain a greater understanding of operators’ abilities and strategic outlook on launching a sustainable commuter ferry system in the Washington, DC region, specifically from Woodbridge, Virginia to Joint Base Anacostia Bolling (JBAB), the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) (Primary Route) and other destinations (e.g., Amazon HQ2, National Airport, The Wharf, Old Town Alexandria, etc., as additional routes). Although Alexandria is not an official member of the stakeholder group, the City is involved in conversations around the RFI. Proposals are due December 13.

C. Pedestrian Safety Awareness Week

As a result of advocacy by the Alexandria Families for Safe Streets, on October 22, 2019, City Council declared the week before day light savings time ends, as well as the Halloween holiday, Pedestrian Safety Awareness Week. To support these efforts and raise awareness of safety hazards when daylight becomes shorter, City Staff and Vision Zero Coalition Partners participated in multiple community outreach events the week of October 28th.

These activities highlighted what the City has been doing for Vision Zero as well as gave an opportunity for the public to speak with City Staff and Vision Zero Coalition Partners about safety at intersections and along city streets. Signs were installed at the 17 intersections that received pedestrian safety enhancements of leading pedestrian intervals and corresponding “No Turn on Red” restrictions. Staff and volunteers held pop-up events at three of these intersections to raise awareness of the safety improvements. Signs were put on DASH buses to raise awareness of the Vision Zero initiative and how it helps transit riders reach their destinations safely.

Staff also held the third annual Operation Illumination giveaway event at 12 locations across the City, focused on making bicyclists and pedestrians visible at night, particularly as it is starting to

get darker earlier. City Staff and Vision Zero Coalition Partners gave away thousands of these safety items at schools, transit stops, and along bicycle facilities.

The culmination of Pedestrian Safety Awareness week was the opening of the Mt. Jefferson Traffic Garden at the Mt. Jefferson Park on Hume Avenue. Traffic Gardens are roadway networks painted or built at children's scale to allow them to practice their traffic safety skills in a low-stress environment. In support of this event, the Alexandria Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee held a bike rodeo to teach kids how to navigate different roadway scenarios by bike as well as by walking. Velocity and Phoenix Bikes were on site to provide bike checks and helmet checks to kids in attendance. City Staff gave away safety gear and spoke with participants about the Vision Zero initiative. Staff also included an activity for the Alexandria Mobility Plan.

D. I-395 Toll Lane Status

The 395 Express Lanes between Edsall Road and the 14th Street Bridge are now scheduled to open November 17. Users will need an E-ZPass® or E-ZPass® Flex to drive the 395 Express Lanes. Carpools of 3 or more ride toll-free with an E-ZPass Flex® set to "HOV ON." Drivers should look for overhead dynamic pricing signs that will update about every 10 minutes based on congestion.

This project includes converting the 2 existing HOV lanes on I-395 into Express Lanes, plus adding a new one for a total of 3 Express Lanes and improvements to the Eads Street Interchange. Changes to Eads Street will result in quicker access to the Pentagon and Pentagon City.

All existing I-395 HOV entry and exit points will become 395 Express Lanes entry and exit points, except for the Seminary Road ramp that faces south, which will stay HOV-only. The 395 Express Lanes will provide funding each year for transit and multimodal improvements through the I-395/95 Commuter Choice grant program managed by NVTC. Through this grant program, DASH and the City of Alexandria have been awarded funding to increase service and add weekend service to the AT-1 (Now the AT-1 Plus) and the AT-9 routes.

E. King Callahan Russell

Several years ago, the Federal Transit Authority (FTA) awarded a grant to the City of Alexandria to make pedestrian and bicycle safety upgrades to improve access to transit at the intersection of King Street, Callahan Drive and Russell Road. The City kicked off the public process for this project in January 2015 as part of the City's Complete Streets Program.

City staff has been working to finalize designs for the intersection of King Street, Callahan Drive, and Russell Road. This revision is intended to improve road safety for all users by creating safer crossings and installing new crossings where the demand exists, providing bicycle lanes through the intersection, reducing rush-hour queues, and upgrading signal hardware.

One outstanding question that staff will seek public input on is the configuration of the access road that connects King Street to Callahan Drive at the bottom of the hill in front of the Masonic Temple. City Staff will present nearly final plans, hold an open house and conduct an opportunity for online feedback this winter to engage residents and intersection users regarding the configuration. With the result of this outreach, Staff will present the final plans at a Traffic and Parking Board public hearing in early 2020 for their recommendation to Council.