



City of Alexandria

Transportation Commission

Regular Meeting

October 18, 2017
7:00 p.m.
Council Workroom

MINUTES

Commissioners Present: Acting Chair Stephen Klejst, Commissioner David Brown, Commissioner Jake Jakubek, Commissioner Ryan Jones, Commissioner Melissa McMahan, Commissioner Carolyn Schroeder, Councilman Timothy Lovain.

Staff Present: Allan Fye – T&ES, Steve Sindiong – T&ES, Thomas Hamed – T&ES, Jim Maslanka – T&ES, Ramiro Rios – T&ES, Christopher Ziemann – T&ES, Quance Lawson – T&ES.

Acting Chair Stephen Klejst called the Transportation Commission meeting to order at 7:03 pm.

1. Public Comment Period

Acting Chair Stephen Klejst began the meeting by initiating a public comment period. The first speaker, Steve Benecheck, who is a thirty-year city resident, inquired about transportation electrification within city transit systems and vehicles. Benecheck asked if there were plans to encourage electrification of public transit vehicle fleets, school buses and related infrastructure, including charging stations. Mr. Benecheck asked about the possibility for the City to develop a policy to implement such technological upgrades.

Acting Chair Klejst responded that the DASH board is currently engaged in the preliminary stages of formulating a strategy to move forward with the implementation of clean diesel and electric technology upgrades. City Staff responded that many small area plans encourage the inclusion of charging stations in future developments. Commissioner McMahan added that the Environmental Action Plan and Transportation Master Plan are scheduled to be updated in the upcoming fiscal year and these plans would be a great opportunity to include electrification recommendations.

Jim Durham, member of the Central Alexandria Traffic Study taskforce, shared his observations from the recent study. On behalf of the Alexandria Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee, Durham recommended that the Commission include a speed management mandate in the Vision Zero Action Plan, more specifically, to set a limit of 25-mph in residential neighborhoods throughout the city to increase driver's field of vision and thus reduce speed-related accidents.

Mike Doyle, city resident, reiterated the importance of the Vision Zero Action Plan to help reduce serious accidents and fatalities. Peter Kilcullen, Porto Vecchio resident and Chair of the Porto Vecchio External Affairs Committee, requested that the City initiate a traffic survey to understand and help reduce vehicular congestion concerns within the Porto Vecchio and surrounding areas.

2. September 2017 Meeting Minutes

Acting Chair Klejst asked if any commissioners had suggestions for edits to the minutes. Commissioner McMahon previously submitted edits that were accepted and addressed prior to the Transportation Commission meeting. Councilman Lovain noted a minor typo on page two and Chair Klejst made a motion to approve the minutes as amended, the motion was seconded by Commissioner McMahon. The minutes were unanimously approved.

3. Updates to Receive (Consent Items)

Acting Chair Klejst asked if there are any subject items that the commission would like to move to general discussion. Commissioner McMahon responded that she would like to discuss the progress on the Environmental Action Plan (EAP) update to gain a better idea of the process and to ensure that the Commission is supporting the environment sustainability efforts to the best of its ability.

Ramiro Rios provided feedback to Commissioner McMahon regarding questions previously submitted. Commissioner McMahon asked why the Environmental Action Plan (EAP) needed to be updated. Rios explained that the current EAP was finalized and approved in 2009 and that it was scheduled to be updated every five years. Commissioner McMahon asked what role the Environmental Policy Commission (EPC) would play in this update. Rios responded that the Environmental Policy Committee is currently working with City staff to incorporate input for the transportation portions of the EAP. Commissioner McMahon asked about public engagement opportunities. Rios responded that the public will have an opportunity to incorporate their ideas at the Environmental Policy Committee meetings in November. Staff will provide updates on schedules and materials as they become available. Commissioner McMahon asked staff to explain what the City's GreenVentory was and what position it will take in the City's Transportation Master Plan. Rios responded that the GreenVentory is a compendium of the City's environmental policies, plans, and programs, including general descriptions and web links, along with preliminary observations and insights about the City's existing environmental efforts across sectors. Commissioner McMahon asked how City staff plans to incorporate the Transportation Commission in the EAP process. Rios responded that the City is currently waiting for requests from environmental group leaders who are coordinating the update. Commissioner McMahon proposed that staff reach out to the environmental group liaisons to provide support in creating a drafted update. Commissioner Schroeder added that she is currently the EPC liaison to the Transportation Commission and added that the EPC met recently to discuss City expectations and format concerns. Commissioner Schroeder will provide more updates to the Transportation Commission during the November 15 meeting and as these updates become available.

4. Commission Updates

Commissioner Jakubek reported that the next Landmark-Van Dorn policy advisory meeting was scheduled for Monday, October 23, 2017 at 200 Cameroon Station Blvd at 7:00 pm.

Commissioner McMahon reported that the Commercial Parking Taskforce had a meeting to discuss issues regarding shared parking, parking requirement exemptions and hotel meeting spaces. The Task Force plans to provide recommendations for the Transportation Commission's endorsement at the Transportation Commission Meeting in December. Commissioner McMahon also mentioned that

there are some concerns from the public regarding shared parking and that it may be important to consider public usability when finalizing resolutions.

Councilman Lovain provided an update regarding the Transportation Planning Board meeting. He mentioned that a proposal was made to reduce the height of the Gov. Harry Nice Memorial Bridge (U.S. Route 301). Councilman Lovain expressed concerns that the height reduction would prevent tall ships from entering Alexandria. Councilman Lovain also provided an update regarding the prioritized locations for improving pedestrian and bicyclist accessibility to metro stations. Councilman Lovain shared results from two traffic surveys conducted by the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA) and the Transportation Planning Board, which found that many metro riders in the region had difficulties accessing metro stations without the use of an automobile.

Commissioner Schroeder stated that the Environmental Policy Commission would like to submit a letter of recommendations to the Commercial Parking Standards Taskforce prior to their next meeting. Commissioner McMahan responded that their next meeting is scheduled for Monday, November 13, 2017 at 7pm.

Acting Chair Klejst reported on the new Pilot Program between Alexandria County Public Schools and the Alexandria Transportation Company. The Pilot Program began its trial implementation on September 25, 2017 with T.C. Williams' students. As part of the pilot, students can board DASH buses at no charge throughout the academic school year. Throughout September, DASH's ridership increased from 700 to 900 riders per day with no reported incidents regarding lack of adequate supply or negative impact to other riders.

Acting Chair Klejst provided an update on the Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transportation (DRPT) Open House Public Hearing for the D.C. to Richmond VA (DC2RVA) High-Speed Rail (HSR) project. During the meeting, speakers made several requests to include adequate rail services throughout the week; requests were made to consider incorporating electrification solutions for the HSR project and increase parking opportunities to accommodate anticipated ridership.

Commissioner Schroeder asked if anyone at the public hearing expressed concerns about the removal of trees along the rail alignment. Acting Chair Klejst stated that the DRPT project may impact a small percentage of trees along the rail alignment, however, the majority of these trees were on the right-of-way of the rail companies.

Transit Services Division Chief Allan Fye added that staff had carefully reviewed the DC2RVA HSR Project Draft Environmental Impact Statement (Draft EIS) and had prepared a list of comments and concerns including increased noise levels during construction and operation, the construction of sound or retaining walls and questions regarding land acquisition in the City. Fye went on to say that the draft EIS was submitted and reviewed by several divisions and departments across the city to ensure that all comments were documented. Allan Fye mentioned that DRPT will present a final overview of the project to the City Council for endorsement on October 24, 2017.

5. T&ES Grant Applications

a. FY19 Transportation Demand Management Operations

Transit Services Division Chief Allan Fye introduced the new Transportation Demand Management (TDM) Coordinator, Thomas Hamed. TDM is the application of policies and strategies to reduce trips made using single occupant vehicles, while still ensuring residents, workers and visitors can reach destination within Alexandria. Mr. Hamed gave an overview of the TDM program, and its

GoAlex campaign. GoAlex is a resource tool created to educate residents and commuters on new mobility options. GoAlex's marketing campaign highlights three service lines such as employer outreach, grassroots marketing, and a mobile store. In FY18, the TDM program will implement a series of performance measure initiatives to showcase how effective the program has been and focus on geographic equity and the partnership with DASH and major employers.

The TDM program is funded by the Transportation Demand Management Operations Assistance Grant. The TDM grant will fund several projects with local and regional significance and will also support in the organization of city-wide events. The TDM Program also helps support multi-modal and transportation planning efforts.

Staff requested action from the Transportation Commission to endorse the FY 2019 TDM Operations Grant Application for \$301,177 and recommend Commissioners approval of the twenty percent funding match (\$60,235.40) to the City Council Legislative Session on November 28, 2017.

Commissioner Jakubek asked when the performance measures will be completed in order to understand how the program has influence users' transportation choices. Staff responded that DRPT is finalizing their state-wide performance measures to include vehicle miles traveled and emissions. Meanwhile, staff is working with the Office of Performance and Accountability to develop internal performance measures to determine how well the program influences user behavior. Staff hopes to receive preliminary results in this FY18.

Commissioner McMahon added that the TDM program is most useful when it capitalizes on other city programs and projects through the city. Commissioner McMahon advised staff to seek internal investments to help diversify multiple funding resources and make them sustainable in the long term.

Commissioner McMahon asked why the funding did not change from the previous FY to the current FY. Staff responded that the program is currently transitioning its staff and resources and the fiscal budget fits well with the program's current needs. McMahon also asked what role the TDM program plays in the Employees' Transit Benefit Program. Allan Fye responded that the TDM program educates employees on transit benefit options and encourage the use of transit and bike sharing among city employees. Commissioner McMahon asked if there have been surveys conducted to understand city employees' travel choices. Staff responded that they are considering data collection options.

Commissioner Brown made a motion to approve the FY 2019 TDM Operations grant application request; the motion was seconded by Commissioner McMahon, and the motion was unanimously approved.

b. FY24 Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality (CMAQ)/ Regional Surface Transportation Program (RSTP)

Principal Planner and Grants Manager James Maslanka gave a presentation on the FY 2024 Congestion Mitigation Air Quality (CMAQ) and Regional Surface Transportation Program (RSTP). Maslanka stated that the Northern Virginia Transportation Authority sub-allocates CMAQ and RSTP funding to the Northern Virginia Region. In order to apply for CMAQ funding, projects must meet three eligibility requirements: (i) focus on transportation, (ii) reduce air pollutant emissions and (iii) benefit a nonattainment or maintenance area. RSTP funds are flexible and may be used for a variety

of transportation projects of regional significance.

Maslanka indicated that the CMAQ funds support projects that provide improvements in air quality, and RSTP programs help preserve and improve surface transportation infrastructure. For the FY2024, the City of Alexandria proposed CMAQ/RSTP projects include: the development of the West End Transitway, Transportation Demand Management projects, commuter outreach, bike share expansion, Intelligent Transportation System (ITS) integration, DASH bus technology improvements, Backlick Run Trail construction and Pedestrian Safety and Mobility Enhancements. Maslanka stated that the proposed funding total (\$4.5 million) is comparable to awarded funds procured in previous years.

Staff requested action from the Transportation Commission to endorse the FY 2024 RSTP/CMAQ Grant Application and recommend approval to the City Council Legislative Session on November 28, 2017.

Commissioner Brown asked why the FY 2019-FY 2024 CMAQ-RSTP Proposed Program funding amount was different from the requested amount in the grant application. Staff responded that the proposed amount (\$4.5 million) includes funding from federal and state resources.

Commissioner Brown requested clarification of the provided materials and commended staff on their ability to plan the utilization of funds six years in advance. Allan Fye stated that the Transit Division’s strategy has been to apply for reasonable amounts of funding and remain flexible on the priority of each project on a yearly basis. Commissioner McMahan asked staff to describe the process of determining funding totals for each fiscal year. McMahan also asked staff to elaborate on the process to communicate these changes to CMAQ/RSTP counterparts. Staff responded that the earlier the timeline, the more accurate the funding totals. Fye stated that there is a process to change funding requests. Staff would be required to submit a request and provide justification for the changes; it would subsequently go through a series of reviews for approval.

Commissioner McMahan asked staff to clarify funding for Braddock Road Multi-modal project. Staff responded that the funding for the Braddock Road Multi-modal project has been set for FY18 and that currently, Staff is exploring additional funding options with WMATA. McMahan asked if the City could retain funding if grant-funded projects do not materialize. Staff responded that it was possible. McMahan inquired if the City had previous year resources to fund pedestrian safety and mobility enhancement projects, and that if that was the case, how could the City transfer resources for these projects into the current fiscal year. Staff restated that there is a process to request changes from year to year and that often there were constraints on which funding source can be utilized for each project. CMAQ funds can be moved between CMAQ-supported projects while RSTP funds generally stay within their original funding source.

Commissioner Jakubek made a motion to approve the FY 2024 CMAQ/RSTP grant application, seconded by Commissioner McMahan. The grant application was unanimously approved.

6. Vision Zero Update

Transportation Planning Division Chief Christopher Ziemann provided an update on the Vision Zero Action Plan. Ziemann stated that Staff was currently working with the Vision Zero Subcommittee of the Transportation Commission to review the draft Action Plan prior to opening it to the public for comment. Staff will hold a public hearing at the Transportation Commission meeting in November where the draft Action Plan will be reviewed. Staff will seek the Transportation Commission final endorsement of the Vision Zero Action Plan during the December

2017 Transportation Commission meeting.

Ziemann reiterated that the four main strategies of the Vision Zero Action Plan are: engineering (building safe streets for everyone); improving education and enforcement; improving data collection and evaluation; and enhancing policy and collaboration.

Commissioner McMahon asked if the draft materials can be made available earlier to allow for proper review. Ziemann replied that the Draft Action Plan estimated release date for public comment was November 8, 2017, and that this date is already based on an aggressive timeline.

7. Vice Chair Discussion

Christopher Ziemann stated that elections for the Transport Commission Chair and Vice Chair positions will be conducted in December. Acting Chair Klejst asked if Commissioners had any nominations for Acting Vice Chair. Commissioner Brown nominated Commissioner McMahon. Commissioner McMahon accepted the nomination. No other nominations were made and the commission voted and unanimously approved the nomination.

8. Other Business

Acting Chair Klejst asked if the rescheduled meeting date of December 6, 2017 was acceptable to all members of the Transportation Commission. The commission unanimously accepted.

At 9:32 pm, Commissioner Brown made a motion to adjourn the meeting. The motion was seconded by Commissioner McMahon, voted on and unanimously approved by the Commission.