



City of Alexandria
Transportation Commission

Regular Meeting

April 18, 2018
7:00 p.m.
Council Workroom

MINUTES

Commissioners Present: Chair Stephen Klejst, Vice-Chair Melissa McMahon, Commissioner Bruce Marsh, Commissioner Carolyn Schroder, Commissioner David Brown, Commissioner Alyia Gaskins, Commissioner Oscar Gonzalez, Commissioner Jake Jakubek, Commissioner James Lewis.

Staff Present: Hillary Orr - T&ES, Allan Fye – Transit Services, Ramiro Alberto Rios - Transportation Planning, Quance Lawson - Transportation Planning.

Chairman Stephen Klejst called the Transportation Commission meeting to order at 7:00 pm.

1. Public Comment Period

Chairman Klejst opened and closed the Public Comment Period with no comments from the public.

2. March 28 Meeting Minutes

Vice-Chair McMahon made a motion to approve the minutes as written. Commissioner Jake Jakubek seconded the motion and the Commission unanimously approved.

3. Updates to Receive (Consent Items)

Allan Fye, Transit Services Division Chief, provided a comprehensive summary of WMATA Legislation and Funding Update. The Virginia General Assembly reconvened on April 10 and considered amendments by the Governor related to WMATA Dedicated Funding. The General Assembly passed legislation providing WMATA with \$154M in annual capital funding, however, the impact to jurisdictions' Northern Virginia Transportation Authority (NVTA) 30% funds is significant. For Alexandria, this translates in a loss of approximately \$2.2M from the City's annual 30% program, the primary funding source for the DASH Fleet Replacement program. The General Assembly has until April 18 to act on any proposed legislative amendments. City staff will track the proposed amendments and, once the legislation is finalized and signed into law, determine the overall impact to the City. The

governor proposed amendments to reduce the impact by raising taxes. On April 18, 2018, the proposed amendments failed, and the original bill is now expected to be passed. In a separate bill, the General Assembly adopted a regional gas tax floor, which effectively guarantees a minimum amount of revenue from such tax. A portion of the revenue will be dedicated to WMATA as part of the overall annual dedicated funding package and a portion will be dedicated to VRE (Virginia Railway Express) for capital and operating needs.

Commissioner Gonzalez asked staff to elaborate on the Transit Capital Fiscal Cliff update. Allan Fye explained that the Commonwealth provides capital funding through the Department of Rail and Public Transportation's (DRPT) Transit Capital Grant Program to support and encourage capital investment in local transit systems. The grant program is funded through statewide transportation revenue and capital bonds. The funding from bonds will expire in FY19, resulting in a significant reduction in funding available for the capital grant program. These capital grants are a vital source of funding to support the City's contribution to WMATA. During the 2018 Legislative Session, the General Assembly did not act to address the fiscal cliff. It is assumed that the fiscal cliff issue will be revisited in the 2019 General Assembly Short Session.

Commissioner Gonzalez asked staff to elaborate on the Potomac Yard Metro Station update. Allan Fye, Transit Service Division Chief, stated that the Alexandria City Council reviewed updates on the new Potomac Yard Metrorail Station project, in anticipation of approving a new funding agreement to enable the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA) to award a construction contract. The project's initial budget of \$268 million was based on construction cost estimates in 2015. Since that time, sharp increases in the prices of concrete, steel and labor have combined with a shortage of qualified subcontractors in demand for many major transportation projects in the region and nationwide. WMATA received initial bids in March 2017 that significantly exceeded the project's initial budget. The City and WMATA asked vendors to explore design changes and other savings opportunities to make the project more cost-effective, and vendors submitted revised proposals to WMATA in February 2018. The revised proposals, which are still being reviewed by WMATA and the City, are lower than the original proposals but still higher than the initial project budget. The revised project budget is \$320 million, representing the new \$290 million agreement to provide funds to WMATA for construction, and \$30 million in additional City costs. The station will be funded through a variety of sources from the City – including the \$1.1 billion in new tax revenue gained primarily from development in Potomac Yard over the next 30 years; regional transportation authority grants; developer contributions; and special tax district revenue – without the need for any local money from the City's General Fund. This means most residents and businesses in Alexandria will not have to contribute existing local tax revenues to the station's construction. The funding plan for the station currently includes two special tax districts. The "Tier I" district includes commercial properties in the north and central areas of Potomac Yard, and took effect in 2011. The "Tier II" district includes the residential properties in the southern end of Potomac Yard, and is not scheduled to take effect until the new station opens. The Potomac Yard Metrorail Implementation Group will continue to meet on a regular basis throughout the project and will provide the forum for community and stakeholder input, feedback and project updates as it did during the initial planning and design phases. Three construction activities are expected to begin in late 2018, with the new station in service in late 2021 or early 2022.

Commissioner Gonzalez asked if the Commission could get a look ahead at the Vision Zero action items update. Hillary Orr, TES Deputy Director, stated that all the items are listed on the Vision Zero website. Staff has been working diligently on many items related to the Vision Zero Action Plan. Staff is currently working on finalizing the list of Year 1 Engineering Priorities, which is under review by the engineering and operations teams within T&ES. Staff has established and is making progress with working groups for Enforcement, Communications, Engineering and Data action items. Commissioner Marsh asked if the Metro Buses are experiencing issues with stalling. Fye stated that there are safety concerns with part of their fleet and have taken several measures to ensure passenger safety. Commissioner Jakubek asked when the Metrorail shutdown would begin. Fye stated that although there is no official information, the shutdown will most likely take place during the summer of 2019. The scope has yet to be determined, the approach we will take will be the same as Safe track. Alexandria and Fairfax will be affected the most. Staff plans to alert the public as soon as possible and mitigate commuting inconveniences.

4. Commission Updates

Commissioner James Lewis reported that the Traffic and Parking Board expanded the residential pay-by-phone pilot to an additional five blocks. The pilot is scheduled to expire in May 2019. Commissioner Jakubek reported that the Eisenhower West-Landmark Van Dorn Implementation Advisory Group would meet on May 24, 2018. Commissioner Jakubek will provide more updates as they become available. Commissioner Schroder reminded the Commission that Earth Day would be held on April 28, 2018 outside the George Washington Middle School from 8am to 2pm. The Environmental Policy Commission will hold a Work Session on April 30, 2018 in the City Hall Conference Room 2000. Vice-Chair McMahon reported that the Route-1 South Affordable Housing Strategy Briefing has been postponed until May 16, 2018. Old Town West- Heritage resident outreach will be held on April 25, 2018 and a Community Open House Meeting will be held on May 2, 2018 at Lee Center.

Chair Stephen Klejst reported is currently the Potomac Yard Implementation Work Group representative and will attend the quarterly meetings. Alexandria Transit Company (DASH) will held a public hearing on the FY 2019 Transit Development Program on April 11, 2018 at Alexandria City Hall; there were no public comments to note. Klejst reported that ridership for the month of February is up by 11 percent on weekdays. However, weekend ridership has declined by 50 percent.

5. Transportation Long Range Plan Work Session

Ramiro Ríos, Principal Planner and Transportation Commission Liaison, provided the Commission with a list of the City's Transportation Long Range Plan (LRP) proposed projects. The LRP is a prioritized list of unfunded transportation projects, programs and studies. These are reviewed and prioritized by the Transportation Commission. Once developed, the project list will be proposed to City Council for CIP approval. Commissioner James Lewis provided a brief description of the prioritization methodology and the scoring process. The Commission reviewed the project list and staff recommendations.

6. Other Business

Vice Chair McMahon asked staff to provide the final scoring sheets to her in advance due to her travel next month. At 9:36 pm, Commissioners made a motion to adjourn the meeting. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Jakubek and unanimously approved.