



2016 MOTORCOACH TASK FORCE MEETING #3

City of Alexandria | Department of Transportation & Environmental Services
Tuesday, July 11, 2016 | 7:00-9:00 pm
City Council Workroom – City Hall | 301 King Street

NOTES

Welcome, Introductions

Committee members in attendance:

- Steve Klejst, Chair
- David Glazier
- Susan Howells
- Charlotte Hall
- Victor Parra
- Bert Ely
- Steve Mutty
- Lisa Capobianco (proxy, King Street Blues)

Project staff:

- Steve Sindiong, City of Alexandria
- Patrick Reed, City of Alexandria

Public:

- Five (5) persons signed the sign-in sheet.

Introductions (Stephen Klejst)

- Task Force Chair Steve Klejst called the meeting to order. Chair Klejst discussed the schedule, noting the potential need for a fifth meeting. Chair Klejst stated that this decision would be made later in the meeting.
- Chair Klejst reviewed the Task Force's objectives, noting that recommendations would be made at future meetings.
- Chair Klejst introduced Deputy Director Doug Campbell of the Department of Emergency Communications, who would deliver a brief breakdown of his Department's role in motorcoach management.

Department of Emergency Communications (Doug Campbell, Steve Klejst, Patrick Reed)

- Deputy Director Campbell explained his department's role in dealing with motorcoach complaints. When a call is received, the department does the best it can to gather information from the caller, and then direct resources appropriately. Officers—or more typically—parking enforcement officers are identified to respond to complaints about motorcoaches.
- The Department tries to direct resources to the proper location, but parking complaints are low priority calls. Other challenges include obtaining accurate geographic information from callers, and extracting the right information from callers about a given violation.
- The Department's Computer-Aided Dispatch (CAD) system is not currently set up to differentiate motorcoach complaints from other parking complaints. In order for the Department to determine how many complaints it has received, it would need to manually go through each call record.
- The Task Force asked various questions about ways to improve capturing data for complaints. Deputy Director Campbell noted that the City could potentially identify ways to improve data capture operations through the CAD system. Deputy Director Campbell also

reaffirmed that the primary respondent for motorcoach complaints is via parking enforcement officers.

- The Task Force discussed whether some issues arise because drivers are unaware of where they are supposed to be loading and parking. A Task Force member asked about the use of a web site noting these locations, which currently exists. The Task Force also discussed the use of the ambassador program, in both identifying hot spots for violations and providing outreach to drivers.
- The Task Force discussed the merits of a smart phone application that would be used to inform drivers of where to park in the City. This would require drivers to download the application before coming to the City. The Task Force discussed whether this would be comparable to or better than an improvement of the existing web site. The Task Force directed staff to see if there existing applications that the City could tie into or use as a model.
- The Task Force discussed signage as a deterrent at violation hotspots to inform individuals about proper parking locations. T&ES Urban Planner Patrick Reed reminded the Task Force that signage was discussed heavily during previous Task Force efforts. The position of previous Task Force was that signage degraded the aesthetic appeal of Old Town and led to the perception of being unfriendly to tourists.
- The Task Force discussed ways to improve outreach. Reed suggested reaching out to DDOT and Arlington to improve cross communication as the assumption is most operators make trips to primarily to DC and focus pre-trip preparation on the District. If links were shared across websites, the City may have a greater likelihood of reaching operators.
- A Task Force member noted the importance of reaching out to businesses in Prince George's County regarding motorcoach parking, particularly to MGM Casino and National Harbor.
- Task Force Member Bert Ely moved that the City work to attempt to link its motorcoach website information to DDOT and Arlington County's web sites. Task Force Member Victor Parra seconded this motion. The motion was approved unanimously.
- The Task Force discussed ways to communicate with operating companies that commonly violate the City's regulations at the management level. The Task Force discussed a means of changing the CAD system to capture motorcoach IDs, companies, or driver names. Reed noted that this would only be possible in instances where a complaining party provides the information to DEC, or if the violator is caught in the act. Reed suggested the Task Force consider the other enforcement policies, which could address this issue raised.

Discussion of Enforcement Policies (Patrick Reed)

- Reed opened the discussion of enforcement policies by detailing a proposed Call.Click.Connect improvement that would allow individuals to report motorcoach violations via the City's existing system. The City would thereby have the ability to determine hotspots. A Task Force member noted skepticism about the purpose of the Call.Click.Connect data repository unless if it would be paired with the proper enforcement mechanisms. This Task Force member wanted to know if the ambassadors could be used as an arm of enforcement, and/or issue tickets via photograph. Reed responded that staff would investigate this with the City's Attorney's Office.
- The Task Force discussed the use of professional associations in the tourism industry to provide outreach to repeat violators. Victor Parra, representative and President of the United Motorcoach Association, noted that he would be willing to provide outreach to operators in cases of repeat violations.

- The Task Force discussed the ambassador program and was generally supportive. Staff noted that hours and days of operation would need to be determined, as well as a funding source. The Task Force discussed the use of volunteers, such as high-school students or Scout troops. Reed noted that the City would be open to pursuing this idea should it be the pleasure of the Task Force, but that staff would need to coordinate with the City's Attorney's Office first to see if a volunteer program would be feasible due to liability concerns.
- The Task Force discussed the use of incentives to reward operators who do the right thing, such as a raffle for a free meal or small giveaways. The Task Force encouraged staff to explore these options and return to the next meeting with suggestions, as well as ideas about program costs.
- The Task Force discussed the last enforcement policy: updating the City code to align with State Administrative code regarding motorcoach idling. State Administrative code notes that motorcoaches may idle up to 10 minutes. The Task Force had some concerns about this due to unloading and loading for elderly individuals and individuals with mobility impairments. One Task Force member noted that idling was a big issue, and was both loud and disruptive to residents. Reed noted that he would provide the Task Force with the actual language from the Administrative Code via email.
- The Task Force determined that it would make recommendations on policies at a future meeting, simultaneously with management and pricing policies.

Loading Data Collection and Potential Future Locations (Patrick Reed, Stephen Klejst)

- Urban Planner Patrick Reed provided an overview of the data collection process. Reed noted the parallels with the data collection process for parking, and discussed data recording issues with at the S. Washington Street locations. Reed noted that generally speaking, Washington Street has a significant degree of unused capacity, while the loading locations at Market Square and the Unit Block of King saw more action. Reed noted that the parking demand for regular passenger automobiles at potential future locations around the waterfront and Market Square was generally high, with locations closer to the waterfront indicating higher-existing passenger vehicle parking demand.
- A Task Force member indicated that the number of buses arriving at a given location simultaneously is important as this has an impact on streets nearby. This member noted that at any new locations studied should include an examination of the number of buses that can be accommodated.
- The Task Force strongly opposed any loading or unloading locations in proximity to residential areas, specifically along Union Street. A Task Force member noted that noted that this point should be emphasized as a "Takeaway" from the loading study.
- The Task Force reiterated its lack of support for the addition of loading or unloading on Union Street due to the number of delivery trucks that make use of this street, as well as the pedestrian activity on this street.
- In regard to the Market Square locations, One Task Force member indicated concern about existing businesses on Cameron. The Task Force also discussed parking around Market Square for night meetings. Reed reminded the Task Force of the

below grade parking lot directly under Market Square, and also emphasized the circuit that would be created should the locations be considered further.

- A member of the Task Force questioned why the Strand was not considered as a study location for the Waterfront. T&ES Transportation Planning Acting Division Chief Steve Sindiong referred to the Waterfront Plan's vision for the Strand. The Task Force agreed that the Waterfront Plan should not preclude the study of the Strand. David Glazier moved to add the Strand as a study location. Susan Howells seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

Public Comment

- John Chang of the Duke Condominium spoke about potential motorcoach parking on Jamieson, noting how the dimensions of buses would create a dark corridor between the edge of curb and the adjacent shared-use path for pedestrians and cyclists. Chang also questioned whether parked buses would fit on-street without impacting the travel of other vehicles given the street's narrow lane widths. Chang also noted the pedestrian activity in the general area, proximity to daycare uses, and respect for the cemetery.
- An industry representative on the Task Force concurred that Jamieson may not work operationally given the road dimensions. The turn from Jamieson onto West would be problematic for drivers.
- Jan Drury of VISION, a civic association in Old Town North, noted that if the NRG site is used in the short term, she hoped buses would have an alternative to Royal Street which is planned for a neighborhood Bikeway. Drury also spoke about settlement issues for historic buildings on this street. Drury indicated that she hoped something could be worked out with the Masonic Memorial. Drury noted that Fairfax may serve as an alternative to Royal. Staff noted that buses would have operational issues on Fairfax Street due to street dimensions.
- Wellington Watts, a tour business operator in Old Town North, indicated that he liked the idea of adding more loading at Cameron. Watts noted he was reluctant to add loading on Royal as more loading could potentially block views of Gadsby's Tavern. Watts also indicated that he would not want loading on Fairfax (which is not under consideration) as it could block views of the Carlyle House. Watts indicated that additional loading near the waterfront would be beneficial.
- A Task Force Member indicated that there are existing town houses between Royal and Pitt Street.

Future Meetings (Steve Klejst)

- The Task Force discussed future meeting times and dates, and determined that the fourth meeting would need to be extended. The Task Force determined that it would add a fifth meeting if needed, and that dates for both meetings should be polled based on room availability in City Hall for August and September. The Task Force indicated a preference to begin the next meeting earlier (at 6pm) rather than end later (at 10pm). Reed indicated that he would email a poll of potential dates based on room availability in August and September.
- There being no more questions or comments, Chair Klejst adjourned the meeting.