



**Ad Hoc Motorcoach Task Force**  
**Community Meeting Review**  
**26 January 2009**  
**Lyles Crouch Elementary School**

**Attendees**

**Task Force Members:** Councilman Paul Smedberg, Stephanie Brown, Bert Ely, Charlotte Hall, Poul Hertel, Greg Ogden, Cleveland Spruill (for Chief David Baker), Ellen Stanton, Tara Zimmnick-Calico, Lorraine Lloyd (staff) and Yon Lambert (staff).

**Guests:** William Barton, Douglas Thurman, Agnes and Engin Artemel, Nathan Macek, Jim Mackay (OHA), Lance Mallamo (OHA), Jerry Lepisko, Tim Elliott, Doug Guiler, Susan Pettey, Gail and Alan McCurry, Susan and Tad Lipsky, Monica and Bob Bell, Sarita and Charles Schotta, Van Van Fleet.

Yon Lambert, Principal Transportation Planner for the City of Alexandria, welcomed everyone to the Lyles Crouch Community Meeting of the Motorcoach Task Force. The group was shown a presentation that included background information concerning the Task Force, its charter and mission, key issues, long and short term recommendations, and the proposed 2010 framework. Also revealed to the group was the remaining meeting schedule of the Task Force, the task of agreeing to the language in the staff report and subsequent City Council hearing on February 24, 2009.

**Public & Task Force Q & A**

Members of the Task Force and City residents asked questions including:

**Q:** Why is “Encouraging Walking Tours” a long-term recommendation and not a short-term?

**A:** The City and its partners already encourage walking tours and will continue to do so in the short-term. However, the bullet “Encouraging Walking Tours” that was included in the PowerPoint presentation as a Long-Term *Issue* was intended to reflect a more active role by the City when working with local touring companies and is not included in any recommendations.

**Q:** Why haven't there been motorcoach counts before now?

**A:** The City has not had the capacity or funding to pursue counts specific to motorcoaches.



- Q:** How can there be designated routes for motorcoaches considering most operators arrive prepared with an itinerary of the attractions planned during their tour?
- A:** A goal would be for the itinerary to include designated routes; operators would no longer be allowed to deviate from routes and the capacity to “tour” using a full-size motorcoach would be severely restricted. The goal would be to designate routes to hotels, parking/loading/unloading areas east of Washington Street and to disperse the buses across the entire street grid to reduce impacts on residents.
- Q:** The 900 block of South Royal Street can be used to park 10-12 buses. Has it been considered for motorcoach short-term parking?
- A:** It was studied in a previous motorcoach effort but has not been considered by this Task Force. The location could be considered in the future.
- Q:** Will City Council see the staff report for the first time on February 24<sup>th</sup>?
- A:** Mayor Bill Euille and Councilman Paul Smedberg are on the Task Force. However, the full Council has not yet considered any recommendations.
- Q:** Why can nothing happen until 2010 and not 2009?
- A:** The goal of the Task Force is to implement short-term (no- or low-cost) actions and policies immediately. However, some short-term actions will require that Council appropriate new funding.
- Q:** Why does Alexandria need permission from Richmond to regulate the motorcoach tourism in Alexandria?
- A:** Due to a rule of law known as the Dillon Rule. It is the standard used by state and local courts that established that a state legislature has complete control of municipal governments.
- Q:** Some tours begin too early in the day. Can their hours of operation be enforced?
- A:** Yes, the Task Force is proposing to limit tours to certain hours of operation.



**Q:** 10-20 Martz buses pass through Alexandria coming from Washington, DC and traveling to Mt. Vernon. Can we just ask tour bus companies for reports on the number of buses they send to or through Alexandria?

**A:** Martz is only one company; there are hundreds of companies including many small firms that provide motorcoach transportation.

**Q:** Who will pay for the tour bus counts?

**A:** The City will pay for the counts.

**Q:** Construction trucks drive through Old Town and do not hit cars. Why do the tour buses hit cars, damage curbs and trees?

**A:** Deputy Chief Spruill was not aware of such accident reports. If these accidents are occurring, they should be reported to the Police Department.

**Q:** Who designates what routes public transportation takes?

**A:** Routes are proposed by DASH and/or MetroBus and are considered in a community process.

**Q:** Do we know how much revenue is generated by motorcoach tourism?

**A:** It is not clear.

**Q:** How many buses travel through the City?

**A:** The goal is to count the motorcoaches in spring 2009.

### **Statements**

Members of the Task Force and City residents made the following statements:

- Old Dominion Boat Club represented they do not want to block The Strand and do not support changing the portion of King Street near The Strand as a one-way street.
- Restaurants are not directing buses and should be incorporated into the process.



- Idling laws should be changed to that of DC, which has a 3 minute limit.
- OHA representative stated that creative walking tours can be created.
- ACVA representative stated they support a system of managing motorcoaches and indicated that parking is needed and access to restaurants is necessary. AVCA noted that the City should quantify its infrastructure demands regarding tour buses.
- It was noted that accommodations should be provided for tourists that are elderly and/or handicapped and thus could not participate in all walking tours.
- Restaurant staff should meet buses and give their customers the rules for motorcoach drivers.
- Cleveland Spruill of the Alexandria Police Department said police will strictly enforce prolonged idling of tour buses during upcoming tourism season. Funding provided to the police department will enable a stronger police force during the tourism season.
- Lance Mallamo of OHA said that museums are willing to design walking tours and support the Task Force goals/recommendations.