



# City of Alexandria

## Transportation Commission

### Regular Meeting

February 17, 2015

7:00 p.m.

Council Workroom

### MINUTES

**Commissioners Present:** Chair Jerry King, Commissioner David Brown, Councilman John Chapman, Commissioner Jake Jakubek, Commissioner Ryan Jones, Vice-Chair Nathan Macek, Commissioner Stephen Klejst, Commissioner James Lewis, Councilman Timothy Lovain, Commissioner Christine Michaelis, Commissioner Annika Moman

**Staff Present:** Allan Fye – T&ES, Yon Lambert – T&ES, Patrick Reed - T&ES, Steve Sindiong - T&ES and Karen Callahan – T&ES, Carrie Beech - P&Z, Jim Maslanka – T&ES, and Carrie Sanders – T&ES, Hillary Orr – T&ES, Pierre Holloman – T&ES

Chair Jerry King called the Transportation Commission meeting to order at 7:00 pm.

#### 1. **January 20, 2016 Meeting Minutes**

Chair Jerry King announced there would be a public hearing on agenda item number 4 and speaker forms are available for the public. He gave instructions for use of the speaker forms. He also gave instructions to Commissioners for having items added to the agenda. He welcomed new Commissioners including Councilman Chapman and Commissioners David Brown and Ryan Jones. Chair King asked if there were any additions or changes to the January 20, 2016 minutes. There being no edits, Vice Chair Nathan Macek made a motion to approve the January minutes which was seconded by Commissioner James Lewis, voted on and unanimously approved by the Commission.

#### 2. **Updates to Receive (Consent Items)**

The Commission received Funding Updates and Project Updates on the Potomac Yard Metrorail Station; the Route 1 Metroway; the Pedestrian and Bicycle Master Plan; the King Street Metrorail Station; the Eisenhower Avenue Metrorail Station; the Seminary Road / Quaker Lane Speed Limit Pilot Project; the Motorcoach Task Force; the Old Town North Small Area Plan; the Old Town Area Parking Study; and the Ad Hoc Advisory Group on Confederate Memorials and Street Names.

Steve Sindiong of T&ES reported that the Motorcoach Task Force meeting tentatively scheduled for February 24 will be postponed until a date in March to be determined. Acting Deputy Director of Transportation Carrie Sanders reported that on February 9, City Council received the Parking Management work plan for the Old Town Area Parking Study and staff will begin working on a

schedule of short and long term work items. Commissioner Lewis inquired about the Commission's recommendation to Council to reform the process for staff not being able to amend residential parking permit zones. Ms. Sanders reported that Council added that as a work item to the City-wide parking plan to look at how staff may be able to initiate those types of changes.

### **3. Commission Updates**

Commissioner Stephen Klejst reported that DASH's Real Time Bus Information and Vehicle Locator System's pilot program will begin in April for a one month trial period and the roll out for the public should be in late April or May.

Commissioner Michaelis reported that the Ad Hoc Pedestrian and Bicycle Master Plan Advisory Committee's final meeting will be February 25, 2016 at 7 p.m. at City Hall, Sister Cities conference room 1101. The draft plan will be presented to the Advisory Committee at that meeting.

Councilman Lovain reported that the Transportation Planning Board (TPB) held discussions on the I-395 Express Lanes project after its presentation on project submissions of the 2016 Constrained Long Range Plan (CLRP) amendment.

Commissioner Lewis indicated the Ad Hoc Advisory Group on Confederate Memorials and Street Names will hold its third meeting in City Hall on Wednesday, January 27, 2016 from 7 p.m. to 9 p.m. He announced public feedback will continue to be received until the January 27 meeting date.

### **4. West End Transitway – Public Hearing**

T&ES Acting Deputy Director Carrie Sanders introduced T&ES staff member Allan Fye as the Project Manager for the West End Transitway. Ms. Sanders stated that the Transportation Commission is charged with the oversight of the implementation of the Transportation Master Plan and that the West End Transitway is one of the main items in the Master Plan.

Mr. Fye reported that the Transportation Master Plan identified three key transit corridors for high-quality, frequency, and capacity transit service expansion in the City to improve transit services to more areas of the City. Since the City Council resolution in 2012 that made recommendations for each corridor as part of the Transitway Corridor Feasibility Study, the work performed on the West End Transitway has focused on a technical analysis on three alternatives; a Build, a No Build and a Transportation Systems Management (TSM) alternative. Work on completing the required environmental documentation to clear the project for further advancement and potential Federal funding has also taken place. At this point, staff is seeking re-concurrence from City Council on a Locally Preferred Alternative which is to connect the Van Dorn Metrorail Station and the Pentagon Metrorail Station via Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) within dedicated lanes along a significant portion of the corridor.

In 2014, City Council passed a resolution to establish the West End Transitway Policy Advisory Group to provide policy and technical guidance. At their sixth and final meeting, the group voted to advance the Build Alternative. The Build Alternative includes frequent and continuous transit service along Van Dorn and Beauregard Streets with dedicated transit lanes along significant portions of corridor. The Build Alternative would not require City capital funds. It provides numerous benefits to transit and other vehicular and non-vehicular users of the corridor. It offers the City considerable environmental benefits such as an opportunity for long-term tree canopy coverage through streetscape enhancements. The Build Alternative's contribution to stormwater quality and quantity management is significant and includes sections of Van Dorn Street and Beauregard Street. It will include dedicated lanes, queue jump lanes, full amenity stations (near-

level boarding, real time bus information, and off-board fare collection) and transit signal priority and safety improvements at intersections, improved sidewalks, and new bicycle facilities. City Council's 2012 Resolution had two stipulations. One was to improve better transit service to the Northern Virginia Community College (NVCC) campus. The recommendation includes stops at Fillmore Avenue and Braddock Road to serve the campus. The other stipulation was to be mindful of the possibility of a conversion from BRT to Streetcar in the long run.

The City has received \$2.4 million from the Northern Virginia Transportation Authority (NVTA) to advance the project to the design phase. The City has also applied for an additional \$7 million from NVTA funds for design work. A decision of these additional funds is anticipated in July 2016. During the design phase, the City will advance the physical and infrastructure design for right-of-way and stations, develop a more refined financial plan for capital investment and operating costs, and continue to work with stakeholders to advance the project. Staff is also exploring federal and state funding and private capital contributions.

The next steps are City Council re-concurrence of the locally preferred alternative which can be expected by spring 2016. The City will move forward with the defined Build Alternative toward operation through project development which includes completion of the project's environmental document, commitment of funding, and completion of design, engineering, phasing, permitting, financial planning, bidding, and construction leading to the initiation of service.

After Commission discussion, the Public Hearing was opened. Carol James of 1000 North Vale Street in Alexandria indicated she does not support the plan. She suggested that the West End Transitway will exacerbate the existing problems at North Van Dorn Street and Sanger Avenue. That intersection has an "F" rating under today's condition and is not compliant with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). She asked how an intersection that is not ADA compliant qualifies for federal funds. She stated the northbound traffic on Van Dorn Street will have to make a 90 degree left turn across all BRT lanes. She stated it will integrate a section of 20 or more parking spaces forcing cars to back into or pull into spaces through the BRT lanes. A second speaker, Kathleen Burns of the West End community lives two blocks from Van Dorn Street. She stated she was past president of Brookville Seminary Valley Civic Association and past Vice President of West End Business Association. She stated that City meetings are very poorly publicized and offered suggestions. The West End Transitway design is not neighborhood friendly. Three schools require children to cross Van Dorn Street and that is not reflected in the plan. She encouraged the City Council to not approve the draft plan. The Van Dorn Street and Sanger Avenue intersection has never been resolved successfully. The public hearing was closed.

Staff reported that eNews is used, the City website, Facebook, and twitter is used to publicize the meetings. The West End Transitway project has a link on the City homepage that has been there since the project's inception. All of the meetings of the West End Transitway Advisory Group were held in the West End. To address the parking issue cited during the Public Hearing, Mr. Fye stated the current plan impacts 3-5 parking spaces. He reported at that location is a service road within private property currently owned by a developer and real estate manager (JBG). The locally preferred alternative proposes to change the parking into reverse angled parking. The project is being designed to include ADA standards and the existing conditions at the intersection of Van Dorn at Sanger Avenue are ADA compliant. The signal poles on the sidewalks will be removed during construction to make way for the improved design and traffic signals.

During further discussion, Commissioner Jakubek expressed his concerns regarding the project. He stated the TSM was the best of the three alternatives. Commissioners Brown, Klejst and Macek spoke in favor of the locally preferred alternative. Commissioner Macek made a motion for the

Commission to endorse the proposal for the West End Transitway including the recommendations of the West End Transitway Policy Advisory Group and their resolution in support of advancement to the design phase, and recommend that City Council provide funding through the City budget process for other potential work task considerations. Commissioner Lewis seconded the motion and amended the motion adding to explore improving the Sanger Avenue and Van Dorn Street intersection making it more ADA compliant. The motion was voted on and approved by an 8-1 vote, with Commissioner Jakubek voting against the motion.

#### **5. NVTa TransAction Plan**

T&ES staff Pierre Holloman gave an overview on the Northern Virginia Transportation Authority's (NVTa) TransAction Plan. In July 2002, the Virginia General Assembly created the NVTa and charged it with developing a Northern Virginia Regional Transportation Plan. State law requires that the plan be updated every five years. This TransAction update will be the first update since the passage of transportation funding House Bill (HB) 2313. This is significant as all projects funded with 70% regional funds, as provided in accordance with HB 2313, must be included in the NVTa's Long-Range Transportation Plan. When adopted, the TransAction update will provide a multi-modal guide for transportation investments in Northern Virginia and will be the mechanism through which over \$1 billion will be allocated to much needed regional transportation improvements between FY 2018- FY 2023. Staff will seek input from the Transportation Commission in the summer of 2016 regarding any missing projects to be included in the draft TransAction plan, and to provide an update to the Commission on the plan development.

#### **6. Complete Streets Program Update**

T&ES staff Hillary Orr gave an update on Complete Streets program. She reported that the Alexandria Complete Streets Design Guidelines is drafted and will be released in spring 2016. The City installed the region's first Advisory Bike Lanes on Potomac Greens Drive. The King Street Bike Lane project received an award from the Washington Area Bicyclist Association (WABA) for The Best Bicycle Infrastructure project in Virginia. Eight automated bicycle and pedestrian counters have been installed on trails around the City and one automated bicycle counter in an on-street bike lane. Over five lane miles of on-street bicycle facilities have been installed over the past year. She cited the list of infrastructure improvements and major complete streets projects completed in 2015.

Ms. Orr stated when a roadway project is altered through the City's Capital Improvement Program (CIP) an evaluation of the street is conducted in order to determine the best way to accommodate and install complete street designs for all street users. All major projects are vetted through a community engagement process that includes public meetings, project updates via email and posting up-to-date information on a project website. Ms. Orr named the grant funded projects completed, under construction and anticipated 2016 spring and summer start dates for those and infrastructure projects. The Commission discussion included the need to address trash containers being placed in bike lanes, and the need to have additional budget for Complete Streets in order to maintain the current expenditure rate / implementation of projects.

#### **7. I-395 Hot Lanes Update**

Ms. Sanders introduced Amanda J. Baxter of the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT). Ms. Baxter stated she is leading the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) effort on the I-395 Hot Lanes project. Joining her was Todd Horsley of Department of Rail and Public Transportation (DRPT). Ms. Baxter stated VDOT is working towards building a regional express lane network and actively reaching out to City civic and community associations. The existing I-95 express lanes end at Turkeycock Run. VDOT is proposing to convert the existing HOV lanes from Turkeycock Run north to the Eads Street interchange into tolled express lanes. They

propose to convert the two existing reversible High Occupancy Vehicle (HOV) lanes to High Occupancy Toll (HOT) lanes and add a third HOT lane. She stated this third lane will not significantly affect the footprint of the highway. An Active Traffic Management System that monitors the traffic flow and can set the best speed limit for the current flow of traffic will be installed. Signage and toll systems, and sound walls will be installed. VDOT proposes to improved connections between the proposed I-395 express lanes and the Eads Street interchange. She stated DRPT will conduct a multimodal study. She also spoke about VDOT's and TransUrban's responsibilities and Framework Agreement to extend the I-395 express lanes. She revealed the Environmental Assessment (EA) public information meeting is anticipated for April 2016 with the release of the draft EA anticipated in late summer 2016. Construction is expected to begin in spring 2017 and be completed in summer 2019.

Mr. Todd Horsley cited DRPT will be conducting a corridor-wide multimodal Transportation Demand Management (TDM)/transit study. The goal is to develop a list of transit services and TDM programs to be funded with future toll revenues. He stated one of the items in the VDOT and Transurban's Framework Agreement calls for a dedicated annual transit investment to be carved out of the tolls revenues when the tolls begin to be collected in 2019. That amount is still being negotiated. The multimodal TDM/transit study is in the procurement process and will be released for bid soon as the study must be completed by December 2016. The scope will comprise the area from Eads Street to the end of the HOT lanes in Stafford County and parallel commuting corridor routes.

## **8. Other Business**

Ms. Sanders indicated a Transportation Commissioner volunteer is needed to represent the Commission on the North Potomac Yard Small Area Plan.

The Commission also suggested that a future meeting be held at the Traffic Operations Center on Business Center Drive, so that the Commission can learn more about the operation.

Vice Chair Macek made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 9:00 pm. This motion was seconded by Commissioner Michaelis, voted on and unanimously approved by the Commission.