



Alexandria Transportation Commission
301 King Street Alexandria, VA 22314

City Manager James Parajon
City Hall
301 King Street
Alexandria, VA 22314

October 19, 2022

Re: FY 2024 Budget Priorities

Dear City Manager:

At its September meeting, the Transportation Commission received an update from staff on the FY24 budget process and the City Manager's letter to Boards and Commissions to provide feedback on priority budget options that will help the City further **smart**, **equitable**, and **green** programs in FY24, while maintaining and attracting employees.

The Transportation Commission recognizes the challenges of this fiscal year that the City Manager has highlighted, and supports these priorities being advanced. Transportation funding will be critical to supporting these priority areas. The Transportation Commission has identified several areas that are critical to supporting these goals.

First, there are several programs that support pedestrian and bicycle travel in Alexandria that the Transportation Commission believe should be budget priorities. With changing travel patterns during the pandemic, more people are walking and biking, and cars are frequently able to travel at faster speeds, creating potentially dangerous situations. Communities of color and lower income communities typically have much higher rates of pedestrian crashes. The Transportation Commission recommends the budget support the implementation of the Complete Streets program and Vision Zero Action Plan, so as not to lose ground against the Vision Zero goal of eliminating serious and fatal crashes in Alexandria by 2028. Consistent with the City Manager's goal of maintaining and attracting employees, the Commission also supports funding additional staffing for these programs.

Related to safety and Vision Zero, increased flooding and severe weather events in Alexandria have taken a toll on several of the bridges and trails that serve bicycles and pedestrians in Alexandria, which has led to closures while funding can be identified for repairs. This causes disruptions in travel patterns for pedestrians and cyclists and makes it more difficult for Alexandrians to choose non-vehicular travel options that can help reduce greenhouse gases and decrease congestion on City streets. Additionally, the

City is working on a trail pavement index that will help staff understand trail conditions and identify areas that need improvements. The Transportation Commission recommends that the budget include funding to do a comprehensive review of the trail system and to bring the trail system up to a state of good repair including maintaining trail pavement conditions and replacing damaged trail infrastructure.

Additionally, the Transportation Commission believes that transit service is critical to providing the most vulnerable access to jobs and essential services and to reducing greenhouse gases and reducing the City's climate impacts. The Alexandria Transit Vision Plan laid out a framework network to expand access to low-income and minority populations. Fully funding the proposed network will not only improve access for most Alexandria residents but will also make DASH service more efficient. The budget should also take into account funding for the City's transit partners and look for opportunities to improve (or maintain) levels of services provided by regional operators including Metro and Virginia Railway Express.

Finally, the Commission recognizes the important work of the on-going Energy and Climate Change Action Plan and the City's efforts to increase attention to the Climate Emergency through the creation of the new Office of Climate Action. The Commission supports these efforts and encourages the City to fund projects and programs that are consistent with the related transportation goals. This includes increasing efforts to expand the electric vehicle fleet within the City and partner organizations such as DASH and Alexandria City public schools, promoting new publicly accessible infrastructure for electric vehicle charging throughout the City and other efforts that will encourage the community to adopt electric vehicles.

We thank you for your consideration of these priority areas to help the City advance its strategic goals.

Sincerely,

Oscar Gonzalez

Chair, Alexandria Transportation Commission

cc: Alexandria Transportation Commission
Yon Lambert, Director, T&ES
Hillary Orr, Deputy Director, T&ES
Christopher Ziemann, Chief of Transportation Planning Division, T&ES
Megan Oleynik, Urban Planner, T&ES