The attached is being presented to the Traffic and Parking Board at its Monday, April 27 hearing. The item is also on Council’s Tuesday docket. We will update you on Tuesday night after the Traffic and Parking Board has had its hearing.
MEMORANDUM

DATE: APRIL 24, 2009

TO: TRAFFIC & PARKING BOARD

FROM: RICHARD J. BAIER, P.E. INTERIM DIRECTOR, DEPT. of RECREATION, PARKS & CULTURAL ACTIVITIES and CHAIR, MOTORCOACH TASK FORCE

SUBJECT: SHORT-TERM MOTORCOACH PARKING

ISSUE: Continuation and resolution of March items related to short-term motorcoach parking.

RECOMMENDATION: That the Traffic & Parking Board consider the recommendations of the Motorcoach Task Force related to:

- A request to remove 26 existing parking spaces on the south side of Jamieson Avenue from Holland Lane to South West Street and install Motorcoach Parking signs 8 am to 10 pm.

At its March 23 meeting, the Board deferred this request and instructed the Task Force to return in April to present two other locations, or no locations.

BACKGROUND: At its regular meeting on March 24, City Council approved a Traffic and Parking Board recommendation to change the unit block of King Street to one-way westbound and to install motorcoach loading and unloading spaces on Washington Street. However, it deferred a request to install parking on Jamieson Avenue with the provision that staff would return to the Traffic and Parking Board in April with at least two alternate locations and a no-park alternative. Council also issued a proviso that the recommendation go back to the Motorcoach Task Force in April for further review.

At its meeting on April 22, the Motorcoach Task Force revisited potential parking locations it had previously studied and considered new locations, including some suggestions by members of the Motorcoach Task Force. The locations under consideration are intended for short-term (two- to three-hour) motorcoach parking for approximately five (5) buses. Patron loading or unloading at these locations is highly unlikely. Additionally, City Code §9-12-164 stipulates that buses parked in designated spots must turn off their motors when parked. It is expected that these locations would be used primarily during peak motorcoach visitation periods between the months of March and June and after 5 pm on weekdays and on weekends.
DISCUSSION: The list of locations considered by the Task Force is provided as Attachment A (“Motorcoach Task Force Parking Review, April 22, 2009”). At its meeting, the Task Force eliminated all but three locations, which are described in detail below.

The Traffic and Parking Board also requested a “no park” alternative (an option to add no additional short-term motorcoach parking to the existing supply). The Motorcoach Task Force discussed this option and agreed that it could not support a “no park” alternative. The Task Force members believe that short-term parking must be added to the existing supply to prevent drivers from performing “rolling idles” (i.e. driving slowly around Old Town streets either looking for legal parking options or waiting to load patrons) which is more harmful to residents than adding new parking. Additionally, the provision of adequate short-term parking is a fundamental component of the Task Force recommendations to City Council for motorcoach management.

The Task Force recommends the locations described below in the following order of priority:

1. 3540 Wheeler Avenue (Maintenance Facility, Dept. of General Services and ACPS Bus Barn): This location was ranked as the new #1 potential short-term parking location by the Task Force. The site is approximately 2.8 miles from Market Square (a heavily used loading and unloading area) and 250 feet to amenities such as fast food. It is entry # 27 in Attachment A. The Task Force expressed concern about traffic congestion on Duke Street and whether that may deter some operators from using this location. However, the Task Force generally agreed that the Wheeler Avenue location was easily accessible by coaches, not immediately proximate to residents and extremely close to amenities (food/drink/conveniences) for operators. The Task Force proposes five spaces in this location to be available on weekends and between 5 pm and 10 pm on weeknights. This location will be available through June 15, 2009 and will be reassessed at that time.

2. 900 block of South Royal Street: This location was ranked as the #2 potential short-term parking location by the Task Force. The site is approximately 0.7 mile from Market Square and approximately 1,400 feet from driver amenities. It is entry # 32 in Attachment A. The Task Force expressed concern about the site’s proximity to a school and residents. Motorcoach parking on S. Royal is proposed for weekends and weeknights, after 5 pm.

3. Jamieson Avenue: The original recommendation by the Task Force and provided for consideration to the Traffic & Parking Board was ranked as the #3 possible location. This site is 1 mile from Market Square and 1,175 feet to driver amenities. It is described in detail in the attached Docket Report. The Task Force proposes to reduce its request for spaces needed on Jamieson Avenue to 12 from 26. The space would provide approximately 275 feet of parking, or enough space for approximately five (5) motorcoaches. By reducing the original request and moving the spaces to the western section of the block, the parking would be more than 330 feet from adjacent residents. The Task Force also considered whether to recommend potential infrastructure improvements to the intersection of South West Street and Jamieson Avenue to address concerns about traffic congestion and pedestrian safety.

ATTACHMENT: City of Alexandria Motorcoach Task Force Parking Review, April 22, 2009