


City of Alexandria, Virginia

MEMORANDUM

DATE: APRIL 1, 2011

TO: THE HONORABLE MAYOR AND MEMBERS OF CITY COUNCIL

FROM: JAMES K. HARTMANN, CITY MANAGER 

SUBJECT: CONSIDERATION OF ADOPTION OF A COMPLETE STREETS RESOLUTION FOR NEW ROADWAYS IN NEW DEVELOPMENTS IN THE CITY AND FOR CITY CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT AND MAINTENANCE PROJECTS

ISSUE: Consideration of adoption of a complete streets resolution for new roadways in new developments in the City and for City capital improvement and maintenance projects.

RECOMMENDATION: That City Council adopt the Complete Streets Resolution (Attachment 1).

DISCUSSION: As part of the City’s commitment to multi-modal transportation, and consistent with the City’s guiding policies including the Council’s Strategic Plan, the Transportation Master Plan and Eco-City Alexandria, a Complete Streets Resolution has been prepared for Council consideration. Complete Streets policies have been adopted by many jurisdictions to ensure that roadway projects will safely accommodate all users including pedestrians, bicyclists, transit riders, persons with disabilities and motor vehicles. The proposed resolution, if adopted, would apply to new roadway projects in new developments, as well as to City Capital Improvement Projects and maintenance projects.

The City of Alexandria has recently adopted a number of plans and policies supporting and recommending a Complete Streets approach for the City. These include:

- 2008 Transportation Master Plan;
- 2010 Strategic Plan;
- 2010 Environmental Action Plan;
- Bicycle and Pedestrian Mobility Plan; and
- Small Area Plans

The Transportation Commission (Commission) worked with staff from Transportation and Environmental Services (T&ES), Planning and Zoning (P&Z) and the City Attorney's Office to craft proposed language for a Complete Streets Resolution. Staff also received comments for consideration from the Office of Environmental Quality and the Alexandria Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee. The Commission accepted public comments on the proposed resolution and input was received from members of the public, including support from bicycle advocates and Partnership for a Healthy Alexandria.

Key elements of the resolution include annual reporting requirements to the Commission, including instances where discretion was exercised in applying the Complete Streets Resolution for capital improvement projects, maintenance projects, Small Area Plans, and development cases with supporting data that indicates the basis for the decision. It was also specified that all Small Area Plan and development case staff reports shall contain a section discussing the Complete Streets review.

Public comment in support of adopting a Complete Streets Resolution was received from Partnership for a Healthy Alexandria and a number of bicycle advocates. At the January 5, 2011, Commission meeting, staff recommended support of the adoption of a Complete Streets Resolution and the development of a Complete Streets Checklist, as opposed to an ordinance, due to the potential for added time to planning and implementation, fiscal constraints, limited staff resources and a need to apply this Complete Streets concept to an initial set of projects and development before committing the concept to an ordinance. Nearly all U.S. jurisdictions have Complete Streets policies and practices and not ordinances. Given that the current urban conditions of Alexandria may not always provide the flexibility for Complete Streets application, how this policy will work and its cost in application will need to be determined by initial experience. At its meeting on March 2, 2011, the Commission recommended that City Council adopt a Complete Streets Resolution. The Transportation Commission's request to adopt the Complete Streets Resolution can be found in Attachment 2.

Staff supports the adoption of a Complete Streets Resolution and the development of a Complete Streets Checklist to ensure that a Complete Streets review is institutionalized and is considered for all new development projects and City roadway projects, and Complete Streets infrastructure is constructed in all projects to the extent feasible. The Complete Streets Resolution and Checklist would ensure accommodation of bicyclists, pedestrians, transit vehicles, persons with disabilities and vehicles as appropriate and feasible.

FISCAL IMPACT: The development of a comprehensive design manual, as referenced in the resolution, would provide design guidance to City agencies, design professionals, private developers and community groups for the improvement and maintenance of streets and sidewalks. The development of the design manual will require additional staff resources and/or consultant services, at approximately \$150,000 to \$200,000 that is not proposed for funding in the FY 2012 proposed budget as it represents a lower priority than other requests. It is estimated that the addition of the components of the Complete Streets requirements could add to projects' cost in either the form of additional infrastructure requirements or use of additional land area. The added costs would be project specific depending on the circumstances. For City government projects, added potential costs are largely going to fall on transportation projects where CIP funding limitations will be an influencing factor in project design.

ATTACHMENTS:

Attachment 1: Complete Streets Resolution

Attachment 2: Transportation Commission letter in support of the Resolution

STAFF:

Mark Jinks, Deputy City Manager

Richard J. Baier, P.E., LEED AP, Director, T&ES

Faroll Hamer, Director, Planning & Zoning

Abi Lerner, P.E., Deputy Director, T&ES

Sandra Marks, Division Chief, T&ES

Carrie Sanders, Principal Transportation Planner, T&ES

Resolution No. _____

WHEREAS, the term “Complete Streets” describes a comprehensive, integrated transportation network with infrastructure and design that allows safe and convenient travel along and across streets for all users, including pedestrians, bicyclists, riders and drivers of public transportation, as well as drivers of other motor-vehicles (i.e., cars, trucks, vans, motorcycles, SUVs, etc.), and people of all ages and abilities, including children, older adults, and individuals with disabilities; and

WHEREAS, streets that are not designed to provide safe transport for all users present a danger to pedestrians, bicyclists, and riders of public transportation, most especially children, older adults, and people with disabilities; many of whose traffic-related injuries and fatalities are preventable, and the severity of whose traffic-related injuries could readily be decreased by implementing Complete Streets approaches; and

WHEREAS, the Council wishes to encourage walking, bicycling, and the use of public transportation as safe, convenient, environmentally friendly, and economical modes of transportation that promote health and independence for all people; and

WHEREAS, Complete Streets are essential in providing safe routes to school for children; and

WHEREAS, the Council recognizes that the careful planning and coordinated development of Complete Streets infrastructure offers long-term cost savings for local and state government, benefits public health, and provides financial benefits to property owners, businesses, and investors, while creating a safe, convenient, integrated transportation network appropriate for the land use or the context of the street for all users; and

WHEREAS, sedentary lifestyles and limited opportunities to integrate exercise into daily activities are factors contributing to increased obesity among adults and children and numerous correlated adverse health consequences; and

WHEREAS, streets are a key public space, shape the experience of residents and visitors to the City of Alexandria, directly affect public health and welfare, and provide the framework for current and future development; and

WHEREAS, the one-third of Americans who do not drive include a disproportionate number of older adults, low-income people, people of color, people with disabilities, and children, and the inequitable distribution of safe alternative means of travel adversely affects their daily lives; and

WHEREAS, the dramatic increase in the population of older and very old adults that will be seen by 2020 and 2030, requires that changes be made now to street design and transportation planning; and

WHEREAS, the Council wishes to build upon the City's existing policies that recognize the importance of addressing the transportation needs of pedestrians, bicyclists, and public transportation riders, such as the Transportation Master Plan, Eco-City Action Plan, 2010 Strategic Plan, the Pedestrian and Bicycle Mobility Plan, and several small area plans; and

WHEREAS, the Council wishes to encourage public participation in community decisions concerning street design, and would provide opportunities for public input in the development of future street design guidelines and would incorporate public comments into a final document; and

WHEREAS, the Council recognizes the importance of Complete Streets infrastructure and modifications that enable safe, convenient, and comfortable travel for all users, such as sidewalks; shared use paths; bicycle lanes; automobile lanes; paved shoulders; street trees and landscaping; planting strips; curbs; accessible curb ramps; bulbouts; crosswalks; refuge islands; pedestrian and traffic signals, including countdown and accessible signals; signage; street furniture; bicycle parking facilities; public transportation stops and facilities; transit priority signalization; narrow vehicle lanes; raised medians; and dedicated transit lanes, and those features identified in the Transportation Master Plan; and

WHEREAS, the Council desires that its streets form a comprehensive and integrated transportation network promoting safe, equitable, and convenient travel for all users while preserving flexibility, recognizing community context, and using the latest and best guidelines and standards;

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED
BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF ALEXANDRIA**

1. That the Department of Transportation and Environmental Services shall make Complete Streets practices a routine part of everyday operations, shall use transportation programs and projects identified in Small Area Plans, development cases, and City maintenance and Capital Projects, to improve the transportation network for all users and shall work in coordination with other departments, agencies, and jurisdictions to achieve Complete Streets to the maximum extent possible throughout the City. To accomplish this, the Department of Transportation and Environmental Services shall develop a Complete Streets checklist based on all the City's multi-modal planning and policy documents to ensure that a Complete Streets review is conducted for all development and for City roadway projects.

2. That every street project shall incorporate to the extent possible Complete Streets infrastructure sufficient to enable reasonably safe travel along and across the right-of-way for each categories of users; provided, however, that such infrastructure may be excluded upon written approval, to be documented and reported, by the Director of the Department of Transportation and Environmental Services, when documentation and data indicate that:
 - a. Use by non-motorized users is prohibited by law;
 - b. The cost would be excessively disproportionate to the need or probable future use;
 - c. There is an absence of current or future need; or
 - d. Inclusion of such infrastructure would be contrary to public safety or would be unreasonable or inappropriate in light of the scope of the project.

That, as appropriate, the Director of the Department of Transportation and Environmental Services shall review capital and maintenance projects to ensure the integration, accommodation, and balance of the needs of all users are considered in all transportation projects.

That, as appropriate, the Director of the Department of Transportation and Environmental Services and the Director of Planning and Zoning shall review all Small Area Plans and development cases to ensure the integration, accommodation, and balance of the needs of all users are considered. They shall also ensure that all Small Area Plan and development case staff reports discuss how each plan and/or development case is consistent with the Complete Streets Resolution.

The staff reports for the Small Area Plans and the development cases shall also document where the Director of the Department of Transportation and Environmental Services and the Director of Planning and Zoning exercised discretion in applying the Complete Streets Resolution with supporting data that indicates the basis for the decision. A biannual report listing instances of discretion will be provided to the Transportation Commission.

3. That, as feasible, the City of Alexandria shall incorporate Complete Streets infrastructure into existing public streets to improve the safety and convenience of users and construct and enhance the transportation network for all users.
4. That, if the safety and convenience of users can be improved within the scope of pavement resurfacing, restriping, or signalization operations, such projects shall implement Complete Streets infrastructure to increase safety for users.
5. That, as feasible, the City of Alexandria will conduct trainings on Complete Streets best practices for personnel responsible for the design, construction, and maintenance of streets.

6. That the Director of Transportation and Environmental Services shall, upon request, provide indicator data as referenced in the Alexandria City Council Strategic Plan to report on the City's progress toward meeting strategic goals for users to travel in safety and comfort on foot, by bicycle, and using public transportation.
7. That the Director of Transportation and Environmental Services shall report to the Transportation Commission biannually regarding the steps taken to implement this resolution, all instances where the Director of Transportation and Environmental Services exercised discretion, and the Director of Planning Zoning exercised discretion for Small Area Plans and development cases, and actions that would need to be taken by the Transportation Commission or other agencies or departments to implement this resolution.
8. This resolution will be reviewed for reenactment two years from the date it is adopted.

ADOPTED: _____, 2011

William D. Euille, Mayor

ATTEST:

Jackie M. Henderson, MMC, City Clerk

**Alexandria Transportation Commission
301 King Street
Alexandria, VA 22314**

Mayor William D. Euille and Members of City Council
City Hall
301 King Street
Alexandria, VA 22314

March 18, 2011

Re: Complete Streets Resolution

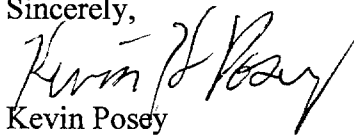
Dear Mayor Euille and Members of City Council:

At its March 2, 2011 meeting, the Transportation Commission (Commission), moved to recommend that the City Council adopt the Complete Streets Resolution. A sub-committee of the Commission was established to work with staff from Transportation and Environmental Services (T&ES), Planning and Zoning (P&Z) and the City Attorney's office to craft proposed language for a policy resolution. The Complete Streets policy supports the recommendations in the City's 2008 Transportation Master Plan, City Council's Strategic Plan and the Eco-City Charter.

Complete Streets policies are adopted to ensure that roadway projects will safely accommodate all users. These include pedestrians, bicyclists, transit vehicles, persons with disabilities and motorists. The policy will primarily affect new projects and new development, though it will also be applied to 'retrofit' projects.

We appreciate your consideration of the Commission's request to adopt a Complete Streets resolution.

Sincerely,



Kevin Posey
Chair, Alexandria Transportation Commission

Attachments: Draft Complete Streets Resolution

cc: Alexandria City Council
Alexandria Transportation Commission

RESOLUTION. 2444

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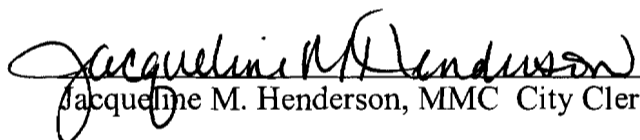
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8. This resolution will be reviewed for reenactment two years from the date it is adopted.

Adopted: April 12, 2011



WILLIAM D. EULLE MAYOR

ATTEST:



Jacqueline M. Henderson, MMC City Clerk