


## City of Alexandria, Virginia

10  
3-14-09

## MEMORANDUM

DATE: FEBRUARY 19, 2009

TO: THE HONORABLE MAYOR AND MEMBERS OF CITY COUNCIL

FROM: JAMES K. HARTMANN, CITY MANAGER 

SUBJECT: RECEIPT OF THE REPORT OF THE AD HOC MOTORCOACH TASK FORCE, SCHEDULING CERTAIN RECOMMENDATIONS FOR PUBLIC HEARING ON MARCH 14, AND REFERRAL OF CERTAIN RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE TRAFFIC AND PARKING BOARD

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**ISSUE:** Motorcoach management.

**RECOMMENDATION:** That Council receive this report, schedule recommendations 1 through 7 below for public hearing on Saturday, March 14, and refer recommendations 8 through 10 to the Traffic and Parking Board for consideration and public hearing (report pages which explain each recommendation are listed below):

1. Approve the concept of voluntary on-line motorcoach registration, and request staff to create, for future Council consideration, such a registration system including fees and daily limitations on certain types of motorcoach trips for implementation by March 2010 (page 45);
2. Create the on-line registration system, and allocate \$25,000 ~~from Council's FY 2009 Contingent Reserve~~ from the T&ES FY 2009 snow removal budget savings (page 46);
3. Request that the City Manager instruct Transportation and Environmental Services (T&ES) staff to conduct counts of motorcoach operations in 2009 (page 47);
4. Request that the City Manager reconvene the Ad Hoc Motorcoach Task Force as currently constituted to review long-term motorcoach management strategies (page 48);
5. Request that the City Manager instruct T&ES to provide quarterly motorcoach updates to the Task Force and to Council, including progress reports on motorcoach counts, development of walking tours and a registration system (page 48);

6. Request that the City Manager instruct the Police Department to enforce existing City ordinances more aggressively with respect to motorcoach traffic and parking, and request that the Police Department collect and report data on motorcoach enforcement activity (page 49);
7. Request that the City Manager instruct the Police Department to continue its transportation management efforts on the unit block of King Street (page 50);
8. Permanently designate the unit block of King Street one-way westbound to allow for safer traffic flow and provide better transportation management (page 51);
9. Designate the south side of Jamieson Avenue between Holland Lane and South West Street as short-term (2-hour) motorcoach parking between the hours of 8:00 a.m. and 8:00 p.m. Spaces on Jamieson Avenue will provide new short-term motorcoach parking in addition to existing short-term parking on North Union Street at Robinson Terminal and on the 900 block of North St. Asaph Street (page 52); and
10. Designate new 30-minute motorcoach parking spaces in the following locations (page 53):
  - a. Two spaces at 112-118 North Washington Street, and
  - b. Two spaces at 110-112 South Washington Street.

Note: The above recommendations reflect the Task Force recommendations, but have been slightly reworded so they are actionable by Council.

**BACKGROUND:** Tourism is vital to Alexandria's local economy, and motorcoaches and tour buses perform functions that benefit the City in many respects. However, motorcoach operations at times conflict with residential neighborhoods and the City's important historic fabric. This report outlines the recommendations of the City's Ad Hoc Motorcoach Task Force, which was established by the City Manager in April 2008 to develop a proactive approach to motorcoach management and present its findings to City Council. The report centers around ten recommendations that are actionable by Council and can be implemented in the short term. The report also includes an outline for a long-term process that will allow the City to legally and proactively manage motorcoach transportation in the future. The Task Force wishes to emphasize that it is essential for the short-term recommendations contained within this report to be coupled with institutional strategies that will provide the City with the capacity and regulatory authority necessary to permanently manage motorcoaches in Alexandria.

**DISCUSSION:** To help the City address issues related to motorcoach transportation, the City Manager appointed an Ad Hoc Motorcoach Task Force in April 2008 comprised of five residents, five business/industry representatives, one representative from the Historic Alexandria Resources Commission and five staff/City Council members, including staff from Transportation & Environmental Services and Police.

Working collaboratively, the Task Force's goal was to develop a proactive approach to motorcoach management that recognizes the economic value of the industry and balances its operational needs with measures to limit intrusive effects on Alexandria's neighborhoods, the environment, quality of life, traffic and parking. The Task Force reviewed best practices and sought to build consensus on measures that balance the multiple interests of the City.

The Motorcoach Task Force incorporated community input into its regular meetings throughout the process. Members of the Motorcoach Task Force made periodic updates to community groups, including meetings of the Old Town Civic Association and the Alexandria Chamber of Commerce. A community-wide meeting was held at Lyles-Crouch Traditional Academy on January 26, 2009.

At the beginning of its efforts, the Motorcoach Task Force established a web page ([www.alexandriava.gov/motorcoach](http://www.alexandriava.gov/motorcoach)) and established an eNews group that provided regular updates via eNews to citizens interested in the group's progress. Task Force meeting notes, minutes, presentations and reports were posted by staff to the City website after each meeting. Many comments were received from residents at the meetings, which contributed to formulating the recommendations.

**Motorcoach Task Force Recommendations:** The Motorcoach Task Force believes it has achieved a consensus on a balanced framework of short-term motorcoach management strategies with a blend of operational measures, enforcement and education. The short-term recommendations contained within the attached report reflect the recommendations in the attached *Ad Hoc Motorcoach Task Force Short-Term Recommendations Report*.

Additionally, the Task Force wishes to emphasize that City Council should set a firm goal of 2011 to acquire the regulatory authority from the Commonwealth of Virginia to either change the Code of Virginia (§46.2-1304) so that Alexandria may locally restrict the operation of nonscheduled buses over designated streets in its jurisdiction, or to seek a Charter Amendment to enact more specific local regulation. The methodological approach to acquire the legal authority to regulate motorcoaches in the long-term is outlined in Appendix A of the attached report. Additional community outreach before the Traffic and Parking Board public hearing is being planned.

In the interim, the Task Force believes that an incremental approach to motorcoach management is a practical and cost-effective solution to issues related to motorcoach traffic without having to resort to radical changes that may inadvertently harm tourism.

**FISCAL IMPACT:** The immediate fiscal impact of this program will be \$25,000 to conduct traffic counts of motorcoaches during representative weeks in 2009. This cost can be funded through the Dept. of Transportation & Environmental Services existing FY 2009 professional services budget. The work program includes a category for transportation studies that was intended to be a catch-all for this type of study.

Implementing recommendation #2 would require funding of approximately \$25,000 ~~from Council's contingent reserves~~ for development of an on-line registration system. At Council's February 24<sup>th</sup> meeting, Council requested that staff rethink the then-recommended funding source. If Council decides to fund recommendation #2 from contingent reserves, \$25,000 could be reallocated from part of the contingent account originally set aside for AEDP. These funds will not be needed for the originally designated purpose in FY 2009, but by using these funds, the year-end surplus carryover to help fund the overall FY 2010 City budget would be reduced by \$25,000. This \$25,000 could be obtained from FY 2009 savings in the T&ES snow plowing and de-icing budget resulting from less-than-anticipated snow removal activity this winter.

Recommendation #7 will require approximately \$80,000 annually to cover Alexandria Police Department overtime. In FY 2009, the City added \$80,000 to the Police Department's overtime budget for the National Harbor initiative, which supports transportation management in the Lower King Street area. To continue this effort in FY 2010 and beyond, the Police Department would need to have those funds budgeted annually. These funds are included in the FY 2010 proposed budget.

**ATTACHMENT:** *Ad Hoc Motorcoach Task Force Short-Term Recommendations Report; Motorcoach Task Force Agendas, Meeting Minutes and Presentations*

**STAFF:**

Richard J. Baier, P.E., Director, Department of Transportation & Environmental Services  
David Baker, Chief, Alexandria Police Department  
Yon Lambert, Pedestrian/Bicycle Coordinator, Transportation & Environmental Services

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3-14-09  
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MAR 13 2009

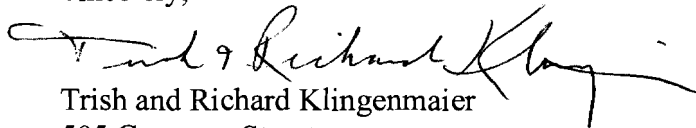
March 11, 2009

Members of the City Council  
City of Alexandria, Virginia

As residents of Alexandria for over 20 years, we have been cognizant of the ever increasing presence of large motor coaches on the streets in the historic district. We have noted their inability to safely maneuver our narrow streets and the damage done to the trees that line those streets. We have also witnessed utility lines pulled from homes due to the height of the tour buses. The weight of the large buses is such that older houses often vibrate as the buses go by, eventually causing visible cracks in the walls of residences. These houses were not constructed to withstand this sort of stress. Pollution of the environment by idling buses as well as the potential damage to our historic homes is an ever present concern to all who live here. Consequently, we have been following closely the work of the special Motor Coach Task Force that has been attempting to address this issue for the past several years. We have even attended a number of the public sessions hoping to learn of some positive, near term steps to be taken in this regard. While the Task Force Report addresses a wide range of concerns to both the residents and the business community, it is essential the overall focus not be on the perceived benefits of tourism alone, particularly as it may impact negatively on the historic fabric of the city, i.e., its historic structures, the very reason tourists come to Alexandria in the first place.

After reviewing the latest Task Force Report, we are encouraged by the report's emphasis on gaining State Legislative authority for the City of Alexandria to regulate motor coach traffic. We urge the City Council to expeditiously press forward with this goal. In the interim, we ask that the City Council carefully weigh the consequences of any interim measures or proposals relating to motor coach activity that would further exacerbate the effects of motor coach traffic in our city's residential neighborhoods.

Sincerely,



Trish and Richard Klingenmaier  
505 Cameron Street  
Alexandria, Virginia

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3-14-09



"Chet and Sabra Avery"  
<cs.avery@comcast.net>

03/16/2009 01:36 PM

To "Alexandria eNews" <enews22387@enews.alexandriava.gov>  
cc <timothylovain@aol.com>, "Del Pepper" <delpepper@aol.com>,  
<Jackie.Henderson@alexandriava.gov>, "Jim James Hartmann"  
<jim.hartmann@alexandriava.gov>, "Ludwig Gaines"  
bcc

Subject Re: Traffic and Parking Board

It looks like Old Town wants other parts of the City to bear the brunt of having motor coach parking. Why not place the motor coach parking at the Masonic Temple and have temporary parking for drop offs and pick ups at one site that could schedule two buses at a time for 15 minutes?

Chet and Sabra Avery  
16 East Linden Street  
Alexandria, Virginia 22301  
703 549-4617

----- Original Message -----

**From:** Alexandria eNews

**To:** eNews Subscribers

**Sent:** Monday, March 16, 2009 1:08 PM

**Subject:** Traffic and Parking Board

**CITY OF ALEXANDRIA  
TRAFFIC AND PARKING BOARD  
MONDAY, MARCH 23, 2009 7:00 P.M.  
301 KING STREET, 2ND FLOOR  
COUNCIL CHAMBERS**

**D O C K E T**

1. Announcement of deferrals and withdrawals.
2. Election of Officers.
3. Approval of minutes for the February 23, 2009, Traffic and Parking Board Meeting.
4. STAFF REPORTS AND UPDATES

**UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

5. Consideration of a recommendation to place a certificate of public convenience and necessity to operate a taxicab company in the City of Alexandria on probationary status for failure to provide the minimum level of dispatch service required by City Code Section 9-12-33(c).

**NEW BUSINESS**

6. ISSUE: Consideration of a request to on the west side of the 300 block of South Reynolds Street

to remove on parking space on the east side of the first EOS-21 Condominium driveway south of Duke Street.

7: ISSUE: Consideration of requests by the Motorcoach Take Force:

A. Consideration of a request to change the unit block of King Street from two-way operation to one-way westbound.

B. Consideration of a request to remove 26 parking spaces on the south side of Jamieson Avenue between Holland Lane and South West Street and install Motorcoach Parking signs, 8:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m..

C. Consideration of a request to:

1. Remove 6 metered parking spaces on the west side of North Washington Street south of Cameron Street and designate space for 30-minute motorcoach loading/unloading;and

2. Relocate the existing Dash bus stop on the east side of the 100 block of South Washington Street 20 feet and designate 100 feet for 30-minute motorcoach loading/unloading.

NOTE: The City of Alexandria complies with the terms of ADA. An individual with a disability who wishes to request an accommodation may contact the Department of Transportation and Environmental Services at 703-838-4411 or TTY/TTD 703-838-5056. Please provide at least 7 calendar days advance notice. Amplified sound devices are available from the sound technician in the City Council Chamber.

NEXT TRAFFIC & PARKING BOARD PUBLIC HEARING APRIL 27, 2009

Sent on: 03/16 13:08