Attachment 7

Alexandria Transit Company
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February 24, 2014

Alexandria Transportation Board
c/o Robert Grabacz
Alexandria City Hall
301 King Street
Alexandria, VA 22314

Please find below my comments regarding the issue of bike lanes on King Street.

Safe Travel for All Modes

Alexandria Transit Company (ATC) operates 79 DASH buses and trolleys along most of the City's street network. As we travel along streets with high traffic volumes, DASH bus operators must be alert and drive very defensively to maintain safe operations of their vehicles, while looking out for the other guy. This includes awareness of the other vehicles, pedestrians, and cyclists. Fortunately, in DASH's almost 30 year history, we have never had a collision with a cyclist, but we have had some near misses.

Although there can be arguments made on both sides of the bike lane issue, there are a number of facts stand out from all of the research that has been done on separated or protected bike lanes. According to 2010 data on cyclist collisions in Toronto, the number one cause of reported cyclist injuries (a total of 141 for 2010) was being sideswiped by another vehicle travelling in the same direction. The second most common cause of injuries (131 reported injured) was cyclists being struck by opened vehicle doors. New York's Prospect Park protected bike lane project led to a 21% reduction in injuries to all street users. In addition to making streets safer, studies cite that protected bike lanes increase the perception of safety, or comfort level, of cyclists, which is an important contributor to increased ridership. As an example, Montreal's investment in quality bicycle infrastructure has led to a 35-40% increase in bicycle ridership between 2008 and 2010. Approximately, forty- two percent of Montréal's bicycle network is separated from car traffic.

Evidence is beginning to accumulate that purpose-built bicycle-specific facilities reduce crashes and injuries among cyclists, providing the basis for initial transportation engineering guidelines for cyclist safety. Street lighting, paved surfaces, and low-angled grades are additional factors that appear to improve cyclist safety. A recent study on protected bike lanes from a group of researchers lead by Anne Lusk of the Harvard School of Public Health found that protected lanes, also called "cycle tracks" have a 28% lower risk of injury than comparable reference

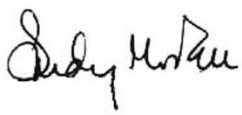
streets. In addition to this, the Montreal cycle tracks used in the study were found to attract 2.5 times more cyclists than the reference streets.

A study of cyclist injuries and behavior in Toronto and Vancouver published in the American Journal of Public Health provides weighty evidence for advocates of dedicated bike infrastructure precisely because there has been a long standing belief from many transportation professionals that the exact opposite to be true. For years, they've counter-intuitively argued that you're actually better off learning to ride alongside cars than having your own bike lane. New research out of Canada has methodically done just this, parsing 14 route types – from that bike-ambivalent major street to sidewalks, local roads with designated bike lanes, paved multi-use paths and cycle tracks – for their likelihood of yielding serious bike injuries. As it turns out, infrastructure really matters. Your chance of injury drops by about 50 percent, relative to that major city street, when riding on a similar road with a bike lane and no parked cars. The same improvement occurs on bike paths and local streets with designated bike routes.

In one of the first U.S. studies of its kind, researchers at the Johns Hopkins Center for a Livable Future at the Bloomberg School of Public Health have found that bike lanes in Baltimore improve cyclist safety, in a paper published in the Journal Accident Analysis and Prevention on March 27, 2012. The study looked at drivers' behavior around cyclists on roads with and without bike lanes, and the good news is that drivers pass significantly wider when cyclists are in bike lanes.

Alexandria Transit supports the City's efforts to make all alternative modes of transportation safer and more attractive. The studies that I have cited above and many others that have been conducted in recent years, all provide the same conclusion, that bicycle infrastructure lowers bicycling injury risks and increases bicycle use. ATC certainly supports infrastructure enhancements for all alternative transportation options, particularly, if they are proven to reduce injuries and make our streets safer.

Respectfully yours,



Sandy Modell
General Manager
Alexandria Transit Company (DASH)

ALEXANDRIA

Environmental Policy Commission

February 24, 2014

Thomas "Jay" Johnson, Jr.
Chair, Traffic & Parking Board
City of Alexandria
Alexandria, VA 22314

Dear Chairman Johnson:

I am writing on behalf of the Alexandria Environmental Policy Commission to ask the Traffic and Parking Board to recommend adoption of traffic calming and pedestrian and bicycling access improvements along King Street, in conjunction with a road resurfacing project. In addition to providing better safety for all modes of transportation, the project would help to achieve the City's Eco-City multi-modal transportation goals by improving access to King Street Metro in this important corridor. We ask the Traffic and Parking Board to endorse the original King Street Complete Streets and traffic calming project proposal, including separate designated bicycle lanes along both sides of King Street for the length of the project. The original proposal best addresses the strong concerns for public safety expressed by Alexandrians.

As you know, City Council adopted a Complete Streets policy almost three years ago, with the explicit goal of getting people out of their cars and encouraging walking and biking. The resolution stated that the City "shall incorporate Complete Streets infrastructure into existing public streets", and noted that streets are a "key public space" directly affecting public health and welfare. The resolution also stated that "Council recognizes the importance of Complete Streets infrastructure," and explicitly included sidewalks, bicycle lanes, and narrow vehicle lanes as part of such infrastructure.

Our commission wrote to the Traffic and Parking Board in November of last year, urging support for the King Street Complete Streets project, including the use of designated bike lanes through the length of the project area. Subsequently, our commission endorsed the compromise King Street Complete Streets project as approved by Transportation & Environmental Services Director Rich Baier in December. We believed the compromise project, while not ideal, would have expanded and improved pedestrian and bicycling access and safety for residents, and complied with Alexandria's Complete Streets policy. Due to strong interest among Alexandria's residents, the consideration process has been extended and community and advisory groups have another opportunity for input.

The primary concern expressed by opponents of the project has been its impact on safety. We believe the project will significantly improve, not reduce, safety along this section of King Street. Transportation research shows that:

- narrowing vehicle lanes results in noticeably slower vehicle speeds[i];

(over)

- almost all accidents involving bicyclists occur in environments in which there is not a bicycle lane on the bicyclist's side of the roadway, with more than two-thirds of bicyclist-vehicle accidents occurring when the bicyclist shared a through lane with a vehicle[ii];
- the presence of designated bicycle facilities, such as on-road marked bike lanes, is associated with the lowest risk of bicycling injuries[iii];
- crash risks on major streets are lower without parked cars and with bike lanes[iv];
- designated bike lanes increase the likelihood of bicycling[v];
- the likelihood that a pedestrian or bicyclist will be struck by a motorist varies inversely with walking and biking rates[vi].

The original King Street Complete Streets project proposal, which includes separate designated bicycle lanes along both sides of the length of the project, will maximize users' safety. We believe the increased safety these lanes would provide for pedestrians and cyclists on a daily basis is more important than the occasional parking inconvenience experienced by a few households. By approving full bike lanes for King Street, the Traffic & Parking Board can make Alexandria safer and more liveable for the entire community, helping residents throughout the area—including those who do not have a car—to live healthier and economically productive lives while minimizing their impact on the environment.

The King Street traffic calming and pedestrian and bicycling expansion project is a critical step in meeting Alexandria's commitment to be an Eco-City. We request that you support the full extent of King Street bike lanes as originally proposed between W. Cedar Street and Janneys Lane.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Scott Barstow
Chair, Environmental Policy Commission

CC: Mayor Bill Euille
Alexandria City Council

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[i] *Highway Capacity Manual, 2010.* Transportation Research Board, American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO), and Federal Highway Administration. Transportation Research Board, Washington, D.C., 2010.

[ii] Hallett, I., Luskin, D., Machemehl, R. 2006. *Evaluation of On-street Bicycle Facilities Added to Existing Roadways*. Center for Transportation Research, The University of Texas at Austin. Austin, Texas.

[iii] Reynolds, C. et al. 2009. *The impact of transportation infrastructure on bicycling injuries and crashes: a review of the literature.* Environmental Health 2009. 8:47.

[iv] Teschke, K. et al. 2012. *Route infrastructure and the risk of injuries to bicyclists: A case-crossover study.* American Journal of Public Health. vol. 102, issue 12: 2336-2343.

[v] Buehler, R., Pucher, J. 2012. *Cycling to work in 90 large American cities: new evidence on the role of bike paths and lanes.* Transportation. 39:409-432.

[vi] Jacobsen, P.L. 2003. *Safety in numbers: more walkers and bicyclists, safer walking and bicycling.* Injury Prevention. 9:205-209.