



▶ TRANSPORTATION CHOICE

▶ CONNECTIVITY & MOBILITY

▶ QUALITY OF LIFE

## City of Alexandria Comprehensive Transportation Master Plan

# Overview

THERE IS AN INTEGRATED, MULTIMODAL TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM THAT EFFICIENTLY AND EFFECTIVELY GETS PEOPLE FROM POINT "A" TO POINT "B". -City Strategic Plan 2004-2015

## Vision

Envision walking out of your front door and down a streetscaped sidewalk, safely crossing the street at a well marked, signalized intersection that made you feel like you, the pedestrian, had priority. Then, after safely crossing the street, you arrive at the transit stop, but this is no ordinary transit stop. This is a Smart Stop that provides attractive shelter from the morning sun. You check the information kiosk for the arrival time of your transit vehicle. Realizing that you have two minutes until the vehicle arrives, you decide to arrange for dinner reservations via a web enabled service offered at this stop. Then, you check to see what transit vehicle you should plan on boarding for the trip to Old Town later that evening for dinner. When you are done making plans for the evening, your vehicle arrives, right on time.

You board the transit vehicle, settle into a comfortable seat, and check on your estimated arrival time on the variable message board at the front of the vehicle. You take out your PDA and organize your day as the vehicle departs and quickly leaves the congested automobile traffic behind as it travels along its own dedicated lane. You watch the bicyclists commuting safely along the bicycle lanes dedicated along this corridor and pedestrians sipping their morning coffee on the landscaped walkway, and before you know it, you are at your destination — sooner than if you had decided to drive yourself.

This is the City of Alexandria's transportation future. With the update of the City's Transportation Master Plan the City seeks to initiate an unprecedented paradigm shift, putting Alexandrians first, and providing them with innovative options for transportation. The successful implementation of this Plan will allow all Alexandrians the opportunity to choose, on a daily basis, if they want to walk, bike or take transit to their destination. The goal of this concept oriented Master Plan is to successfully integrate and link these three transportation modes together, providing connectivity and accessibility to all of Alexandria's recreational, cultural, and economic assets, as well as the assets of the greater Northern Virginia region.

### *Transportation Vision*

*The City of Alexandria envisions a transportation system that encourages the use of alternative modes of transportation, reducing dependence on the private automobile. This system will lead to the establishment of transit-oriented, pedestrian friendly village centers, focused on neighborhood preservation and increased community cohesion, forming a more urban, vibrant and sustainable Alexandria. The City will promote a balance between travel efficiency and quality of life, providing Alexandrians with transportation choice, continued economic growth and a healthy environment.*

# Guiding Principles

In response to citizen input, the City has established the guiding transportation principles which, collectively, form a new template for transportation decision making within the City of Alexandria, and aim to establish the City of Alexandria as a regional leader in the development of innovative transportation solutions. Citizens are seeking a wholesale change in the way the City addresses transportation issues in the form of sustainable alternatives that promote transportation choice; enhance connectivity and mobility; and maintain the City's high quality of life.

The seven guiding principles provide the framework for this transportation plan, and seek to encourage a paradigm shift in the way Alexandrians think and act when it comes to traveling. This shift in thinking aims to overcome the traditional approach that the City has taken in the past, assuming the primary use of the automobile in the design and operation of its infrastructure. In the 21st Century, Alexandria must embrace all methods of overcoming automobile dependency. Regional projections show that population and job growth are expected to continue to increase within the City and region, placing further pressure on transportation infrastructure that is currently over stressed. The essential character of Alexandria's land use, the future quality of life for City residents, and the accessibility of all City assets is dependent upon how the City manages its transportation system. This Plan establishes the goals, strategies, actions and policies that will guide these critical management decisions.

The adoption of this Transportation Plan is a very exciting time in the City of Alexandria. Feedback received from citizens and stakeholders throughout the Plan development process indicates that Alexandrians are not willing to accept the status quo. The new paradigm rejects the notion that traffic congestion be considered a necessary evil that goes along with living in close proximity to the Nation's Capital. The problem of congestion not only impacts the required time for daily commutes, it has a negative impact on the quality of life of all Alexandrians—resulting in increased travel times for necessary trips to the grocery store, library, restaurant and post office. Congestion limits the activities of individuals with mobility impediments and those without access to automobiles; it discourages walking and physical activity; it contributes to poor air quality; and it also impacts the City's economic base, deterring tourists from visiting the City during certain times of the day and year, and deterring the establishment of new businesses. With the adoption of this plan, the City of Alexandria recognizes the concerns of its citizens and the inconveniences that congestion has caused, and strives to return the City streets to the citizens of Alexandria.



## *Guiding Transportation Principles*

- 1. Alexandria will develop innovative local and regional transit options.*
- 2. Alexandria will provide quality pedestrian and bicycle accommodations.*
- 3. Alexandria will provide all its citizens, regardless of age or ability, with accessibility and mobility.*
- 4. Alexandria will increase the use of communications technology in transportation systems.*
- 5. Alexandria will further transportation policies that enhance quality of life, support livable, urban land use and encourage neighborhood preservation, in accordance with the City Council Strategic Plan.*
- 6. Alexandria will lead the region in promoting environmentally friendly transportation policies.*
- 7. Alexandria will ensure accessible, reliable and safe transportation for older and disabled citizens.*

# What Does This Plan Contain?

This Plan was developed by the members of the Ad Hoc Transportation Task Force and the City of Alexandria to ensure the wise, effective, and sustainable planning of the City's transportation future. The Transportation Master Plan is a concept oriented Plan that was developed to identify innovative approaches to addressing the direction of Alexandria's transportation future. This Plan establishes a multimodal vision that will guide the City forward in its transportation decision-making process.

The Transportation Master Plan includes six sections and an extensive appendix.



## Section One

Studies show that a reduction in the intensity of the peak hour traffic congestion within the City is not a realistic long-term aspiration. As congestion increases, alternative transit services that provide seamless travel, time savings for commuters, real-time travel information, desirable passenger amenities, and an enjoyable travel experience will become more desirable.

This **City of Alexandria Transit Concept** outlines a progressive vision for the future of travel throughout the City of Alexandria with a system of innovative transit vehicles operating along three primary transit corridors within secure rights-of-way dedicated exclusively to transit use. This plan is an innovative vision for the development of clean, efficient, enjoyable transit services that travel in dedicated lanes, enhancing mobility throughout the City and region for commuters, residents and visitors alike.



## Section Two

The most important elements of walkability are easily defined but often elusive. Well-connected streets with pleasant sidewalks or paths, attractive landscaping and easy-to-cross intersections are vital to a successful pedestrian network. The character of traffic is also of vital importance: If our streets are too wide or traffic is too heavy or fast, people will not walk.

The **Pedestrian Section** of the Transportation Plan calls for a city where public spaces, including streets and off-street paths offer a level of convenience, safety and attractiveness that encourages and rewards the choice to walk regardless of age or ability. This section outlines supportive policies and targeted infrastructure investments that will place the City as a leader in the region of creating pedestrian friendly streets.



## Section Three

A community that is bicycle-friendly is one that pays extra attention to its quality of life. The **Bicycle Section** of the Transportation Plan seeks to help Alexandria become a genuine bicycle-friendly community by expanding the city's on- and off-street bikeway network by outlining supportive policies and targeted infrastructure investments.

It is a blueprint for creating a safe and convenient bicycle network that will increase the number of Alexandrians who bicycle for all trips shorter than five miles. With "complete streets" designed to enable safe travel by all users and routine accommodations for bicyclists, the City can make bicycling a viable transportation option in Alexandria.

# What Does This Plan Contain?



## Section Four

The streets of Alexandria represent the largest public resource within the City. Predominately urban in nature, the City of Alexandria must capitalize on its history as a walkable urban environment, and must ensure that future plans and development serve all modes of travel in a safe, efficient and context sensitive manner. City streets serve many functions providing citizens of all ages and degrees of mobility the ability to walk down the sidewalk to grab a cup of coffee, speak with their neighbors, walk their children to school, or bicycle to work.

The **Streets Section** outlines approaches and techniques that will ensure streets are designed to safely accommodate all modes of travel, while preserving community character.



## Section Five

Parking is an essential component of the City of Alexandria's transportation system. The City's parking resources consist of private and public parking garages, lots, and curbside parking. All of these resources must be managed effectively in order to provide residents and visitors with needed parking.

This **Parking Section** of the Transportation Master Plan provides a background of the City of Alexandria's existing parking policies, identifies the guiding principles for the City in the management of parking, and identifies specific actions and strategies for the City to undertake in order to manage parking resources in a cost effective manner that contributes toward the overall vision of the City.



## Section Six

This section explores decisions that impact the ultimate Transit Concept, bicycle, pedestrian, street and parking cost. The section also identifies potential funding mechanisms and implementation approaches that will assist in aiding the City see its transportation vision become a reality. Where applicable, other Master Plan elements that can be funded by similar sources and coordinated in unison with delivery of the Transit Concept project will be incorporated in the presentation of funding options.

The **Funding & Implementation Section** of the Transportation Plan provides a listing of federal state and local funding resources that the City may utilize to fund the identified actions, strategies and plan concepts. The process and policies for identifying project funding priority and implementation are also identified in this section.