



City of Alexandria, Virginia

MEMORANDUM

DATE: MAY 14, 2018

TO: THE HONORABLE MAYOR AND MEMBERS OF CITY COUNCIL

THROUGH: MARK B. JINKS, CITY MANAGER 

FROM: YON LAMBERT, DIRECTOR, DEPARTMENT OF
TRANSPORTATION AND ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES 

SUBJECT: CENTRAL ALEXANDRIA TRAFFIC STUDY

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY: The purpose of this memorandum is to update the City Council on the Central Alexandria Traffic Study and the final recommendations of the Task Force. The Task Force was formed with the goal of identifying and finding consensus on solutions to mitigate cut-through traffic that did not positively impact one neighborhood or street while negatively impacting another. Within the next year, staff is proposing to implement the following recommendations:

- PM Peak right turn restriction pilot from southbound East Taylor Run Parkway and Moncure Drive
- Reconfigure the East Taylor Run Parkway at South View Terrace intersection
- Add new and upgrade crosswalks throughout the four neighborhoods
- Design a midblock crossing on West Taylor Run Parkway to Angel Park
- Provide speed cushions on East Taylor Run, Yale Drive and North Jordon Street and upgraded cushions on West Taylor Run Parkway
- Begin to redesign the Duke Street at West Taylor Run Parkway intersection

Additionally, the City is accelerating recommendations in the study area from many existing city plans, through the resurfacing program and grant funded projects. **Through these programs and proposed improvements, each of the four neighborhoods will see major safety improvements.**

BACKGROUND: In 2015, in response to concerns about increased traffic volumes and diversion through neighborhoods in Central Alexandria, T&ES staff performed a small-scale traffic analysis, held several community meetings, and conducted a community survey to gather feedback about potential mitigation measures. This process found that there was little consensus for staff proposed mitigation measures in the Seminary Hill, Clover College Park and Taylor Run neighborhoods. However, remaining community concerns from this process led to the initiation of the Central Alexandria Traffic Study and the creation of a Task Force.

In June 2016, the City Manager updated City Council on staff efforts to initiate a comprehensive traffic and origin-destination study in the neighborhoods of Seminary Hill, Seminary Ridge, Clover College Park, and Taylor Run. To facilitate direct cooperation and input from the study area neighborhoods, an eight-member task force was created, with two representatives from each of the four neighborhoods.

The Task Force kicked off the first of their six meetings in July 2016 and began working with staff to determine the scope of the study and the intersections and locations within the study area where data would be collected. Data was then collected and analyzed during the spring and summer of 2017. Traffic counts were performed at 29 study area intersections, and vehicle volumes, speeds, and Bluetooth origin-destination data was collected at 23 checkpoints throughout the study area. The data collection map can be viewed in Attachment 1. Staff reviewed and discussed the results of the study with the Task Force during the fall and winter of 2017, and by January 2018, staff asked Task Force members to rank the three main study objectives to help staff prioritize mitigation recommendations. The three objectives identified increasing safety, reducing congestion and reducing cut-through volume. All four neighborhoods ranked reducing cut-through volume as the top priority to consider when developing recommendations.

DISCUSSION: After reviewing and prioritizing all community input, staff presented the Task Force with a list of recommended mitigation measures at their February 2018 meeting. The recommendations proposed by staff are summarized below.

Short Term Improvements

1. PM Peak right turn restriction pilot from southbound East Taylor Run Parkway and Moncure Drive
2. Reconfiguration of the East Taylor Run Parkway at South View Terrace intersection
3. New and upgraded crosswalks throughout the neighborhoods
4. A midblock crossing on West Taylor Run Parkway to Angel Park
5. Additional speed cushions on East Taylor Run, Yale Drive and North Jordon Street and upgraded cushions on West Taylor Run Parkway
6. Begin to redesign the Duke Street at West Taylor Run Parkway intersection

While staff is moving forward with the implementation of these improvements, one staff proposal did not get full support by the Task Force members and is therefore not being implemented. Staff recommended a PM Peak left turn restriction pilot from southbound Quaker Lane onto Trinity Drive, but some of the neighborhoods surveyed residents and ultimately did not support these proposed turn restrictions. The turn restriction pilot listed in item 1 will go to the Traffic and Parking Board for a public hearing in May 2018. Staff will then implement the restrictions through signage and will work with the Alexandria Police Department to enforce the new regulations. Staff will monitor this change through the evaluation plan provided in Attachment 2 and follow up with the community to determine its effectiveness.

In addition to the proposed improvements, the City is working to implement recommendations in the study area from the Pedestrian and Bicycle Master Plan, Safe Routes to School Walk Audits and Vision Zero Action Items. Seminary Road and Cambridge Road are being resurfaced in the next year and are under consideration for traffic calming, safety and accessibility improvements as part of the Complete Streets Program. Staff also secured grant funding for pedestrian and bicycle safety improvements at Seminary Road and Howard Streets and is advancing the design of this project. Through all of these programs and proposed improvements, each neighborhood will see major safety improvements.

In addition, the presidents of the impacted Civic Associations provided a letter that makes longer term policy recommendations to City Council. The full list can be viewed in Attachment 3. The staff supported recommendations are below:

1. Proactively engage regional leaders to provide cross-jurisdiction transportation choices.
2. Redesign the West Taylor Run Parkway at Duke Street Intersection, with the primary objectives of reducing cut-through traffic and improving safety.
3. Accelerate Corridor “B” design with the goal of reducing cut-through traffic on Central Alexandria neighborhood streets, improving safety, and providing more efficient mobility.
4. Prioritize Duke Street for Traffic Adaptive Signal Control implementation.
5. Promote and encourage greater use of transportation alternatives in Alexandria and in neighboring jurisdictions.

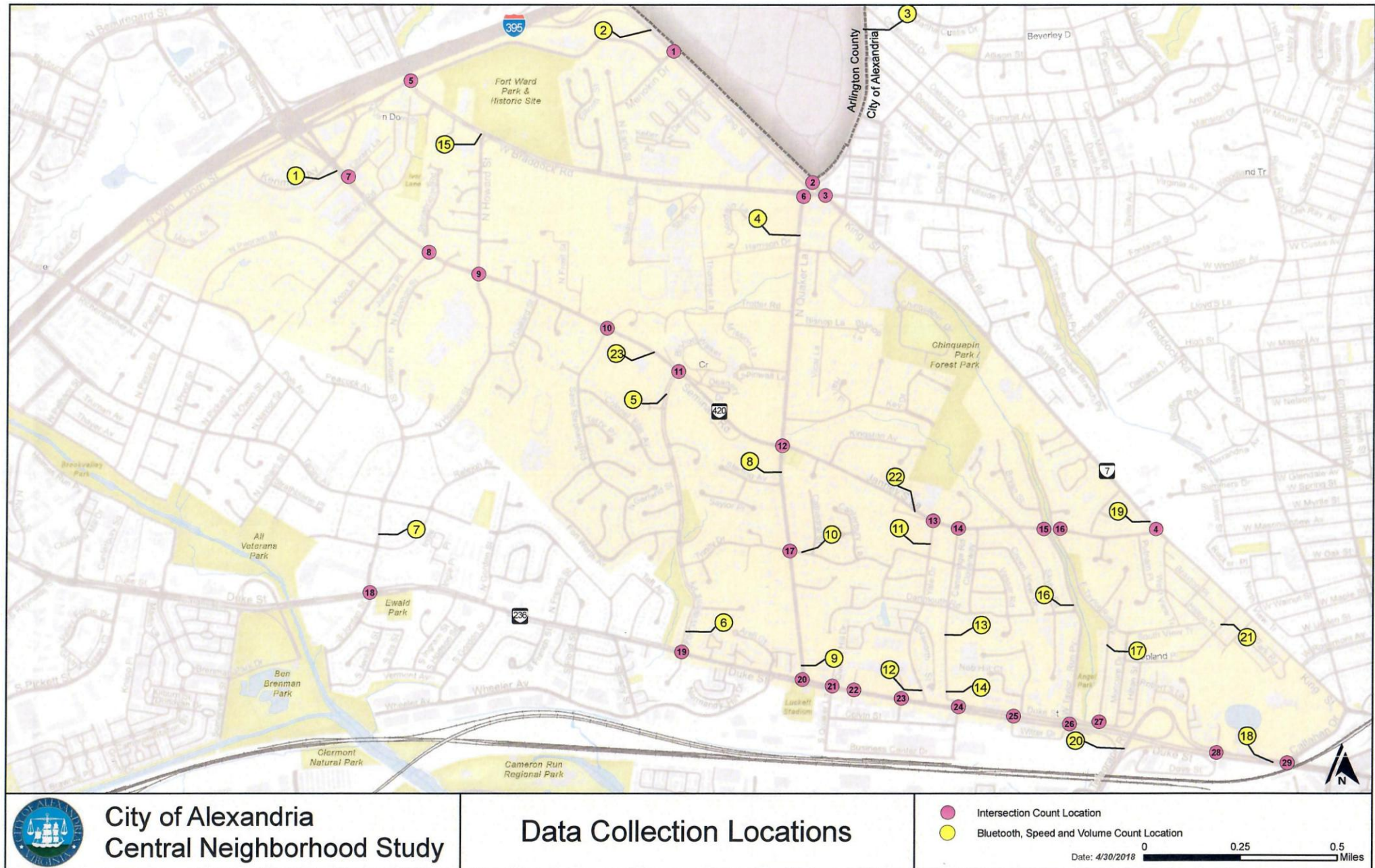
Throughout the process, the Task Force proposed mitigation measures that staff did not support as they are not in line with City Council approved policies or guidance in adopted plans. The main request was to restrict access on certain streets to resident only or through a permit system. While City Council does have the power to declare a No-Through Street, non-resident restrictions and residential permitting systems discriminate against citizens from other communities and are not permissible. A No-Through Street would restrict *all* traffic passing entirely through the neighborhood at the designated times—it may not favor certain people over others.

Staff will begin updating the Transportation Master Plan later this year and at that time will revisit guiding principles and policies for how people move across Alexandria. In keeping with modern transportation planning best practices, the adopted Complete Streets Policy, existing Transportation Master Plan and the City Strategic Plan all strongly promote equal access to city streets and interconnectedness of public roadways.

ATTACHMENTS:

1. Data Collection Map
2. Traffic Evaluation Plan
3. Civic Association Presidents’ letter

cc: Emily A. Baker, Deputy City Manager
Hillary Orr, Deputy Director of Transportation, T&ES
Bob Garbacz, Division Chief of Traffic Engineering, T&ES
David Soares, Transportation Engineer, T&ES



Central Alexandria Traffic Study Evaluation

Before and After Data will be collected on at the following locations:

Vehicle Turning Movement Counts

- King Street at Janney's Lane
- Janney's Lane at East Taylor Run Parkway
- Janney's Lane at West Taylor Run Parkway
- East Taylor Run Parkway at Duke Street Access Road
- Duke Street at West Taylor Run Parkway

Speed and Volume Counts (Tube Counts)

- Upland Place
- East Taylor Run Parkway
- West Taylor Run Parkway
- Cambridge Road
- Yale Drive
- North Jordan Street

Vehicle Queue Length

- West Taylor Run Parkway southbound approach to the Duke Street Access Road traffic signal

April 10, 2018

Mayor Silberberg and City Council members,

On June 24, 2016, the City Manager authorized the creation of the Central Alexandria Study Task Force (“Task Force”). The goal of this task force, as outlined in the memorandum to City Council, was to gain input from a group comprised of two members of each of the participating civic associations that would make up the task force for a large scale, comprehensive data collection. The task force would then meet to review themes from the data and potential mitigation measures. The data collection process for this study was initially presented to the Task Force on October 4, 2017 and, based on task force feedback, City Staff produced a second, more comprehensive data summary on December 22, 2017. Finally, on February 22, 2018, City Staff presented the Task Force with short, medium and long-term improvement and policy recommendations derived from the study. This letter serves as the collective response from these four civic associations to the long-term improvement and policy recommendations outlined by the City on February 22nd.

As presidents of our respective civic associations, we commend the City for undertaking a study of traffic origin and destination, volumes, and routing patterns within Central Alexandria. The Central Alexandria Traffic Study has confirmed residents’ anecdotal observations that regional cut-through traffic exacerbates local traffic congestion; 42 percent of traffic in Central Alexandria originates and ends outside our area! The four civic associations in the Central Alexandria Traffic Study area unanimously agreed—when asked to choose between cut-through traffic, safety and congestion—that reduction of cut-through traffic is our top priority as it addresses both quality of life and safety concerns within our communities. This letter supplements the Task Force work by providing seven longer-term recommendations aimed at achieving that objective. The attachment to this letter explains each of these recommendations in more detail.


- Proactively engage regional leaders to provide cross-jurisdiction transportation choices.
- Redesign the W. Taylor Run - Duke Street Intersection, with the primary objectives of reducing cut-through traffic and improving safety.
- Accelerate Corridor “B” design with the goal of reducing cut-through traffic on Central Alexandria neighborhood streets, improving safety, and providing more efficient mobility.
- Prioritize Duke Street for Traffic Adaptive Signal Control implementation.
- Prototype 15 mph neighborhood slow zones in Taylor Run Citizens’ Association (TRCA) and Clover College Park Civic Association (CCPCA) neighborhoods.
- Promote and encourage greater use of transportation alternatives in Alexandria and in neighboring jurisdictions.

- Continue Central Alexandria Traffic Study Task Force efforts.

The Task Force report will contain other recommendations more easily accomplished and achievable within reasonable funding priorities. Paramount in each of these recommendations, as well as other potential modifications to neighborhood roadways, is our request for extensive community engagement.

Thank you for undertaking this study. We look forward to continuing to work with City Staff to achieve cross-neighborhood objectives of reducing cut-through traffic and associated safety benefits.

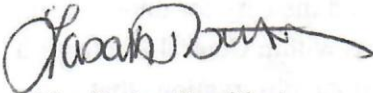
With respect,



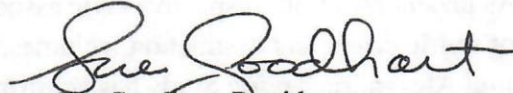
Nancy R. Jennings, President,
Seminary Hill Association, Inc.



Hendrick Booz, President
Taylor Run Citizens' Association



Lisa Porter, President
Clover College Park Civic Association



Sue Goodhart, President
Seminary Ridge Civic Association

CC: City Manager, Mark Jinks
Director of Transportation and Environmental Services, Yon Lambert
Transportation Commission
Traffic and Parking Board

Traffic Study Recommendations

1. Proactively engage regional leaders to provide cross-jurisdiction transportation choices.

The Task Force recommends that City leaders proactively engage regional leaders to provide additional cross-jurisdiction transportation choices. The Central Alexandria Traffic Study confirmed residents' anecdotal observations that local traffic congestion is exacerbated by regional cut-through traffic. Location-based services data indicated that 42% of traffic originated and ended outside of Central Alexandria; 26% of those trips originated in Maryland, with about half of these trips (13.7%) ending in Washington DC. Fairfax County contributed a similar amount of cut-through traffic (24%). Regional efforts to provide more transportation choices to Prince George's County and south Fairfax County residents are key to reducing cut-through traffic in Alexandria. Suggestions should include, but not be limited to, commuter parking in Prince George's County with bus service to Huntington and King Street metro and other destinations.

2. Redesign the W. Taylor Run - Duke Street Intersection.

The Task Force recommends initiating a study to redesign/reconfigure the Duke Street/West Taylor Run intersection as soon as possible. This effort would look at multiple options aimed at reducing cut-through traffic on Central Alexandria neighborhood streets and improving safety for pedestrians and local residents. The Task Force strongly recommends that the City engage and involve external experts (such as other municipal traffic managers and industry partner engineers) with relevant experience in measurably reducing similar cut through traffic congestion and requests that the City provides for robust community engagement.

3. Accelerate Corridor "B" design with the goals of reducing cut-through traffic on Central Alexandria neighborhood streets, improving safety, and providing more efficient mobility.

The City Manager's proposed budget includes funding for design efforts for Corridor "B", Duke Street, beginning in 2022. The Task Force recommends accelerating design efforts sooner for the Central Alexandria portion, with the goal of reducing cut-through traffic in neighborhoods, increasing the safety of pedestrians and local residents, and providing efficient mobility through this corridor.

4. Prioritize Duke Street for Traffic Adaptive Signal Control implementation

According to the City Manager's proposed FY2019-2028 Capital Improvement Program (CIP), Phase I design of Traffic Adaptive Signal Control will begin in FY19, with construction

starting in early FY21. This traffic management strategy - in which traffic signal timing changes, or adapts, based on actual traffic demand—allows traffic signals to adjust to actual traffic demand and flow rather than variables that are less effective predictors of traffic patterns, such as time of day. Reference: City Manager's Proposed FY2019-2028 CIP, Page 13.64

The Task Force recommends that Duke Street Corridor be included in Phase 1 of the Traffic Adaptive Signal Control program.

5. Prototype 15 mph neighborhood slow zones in TRCA and CCPCA neighborhoods.

The City's 2017 Vision Zero Action Plan includes a mid-term strategy to "Develop a neighborhood slow zone program with selection criteria, a request process, and launch an application-based program, through engineering and design improvements to reduce vehicle speeds." The City's work plan includes identifying selection criteria by August 2018 and launching the neighborhood application process by December 2018.

The Task Force recommends that City accelerate the development of this program and prototype the process in TRCA and CCPCA neighborhoods.

6. Promote and encourage greater use of transportation alternatives in Alexandria and in neighboring jurisdictions.

The Task Force recommends that the city more aggressively promote the use of transportation alternatives, particularly among its largest employers. The City's "GO Alex" program, with its Transportation Management Plans (TMP) is currently used by 500 of the City's employers. The Task Force recommends additional steps be taken to help Alexandria employers more effectively promote and incentivize transportation alternatives. The Task Force also recommends that City leaders work with regional partners to reduce single occupancy vehicle trip volume.

7. Continue Central Alexandria Traffic Study Task Force efforts.

The Task Force recommends a continuing Task Force role in addressing the goals and cross-neighborhood issues identified in this letter. The continuation of the Task Force does not relieve the City of responsibility for community engagement with residents for individual projects.