

# Alexandria Transit Company

## Policies of the Board of Directors

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### **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION POLICY**

*Initial Approval Date: 11-09-2022*

*Amendment Date(s):*

**Policy Statement:** It shall be the policy of the Alexandria Transit Company Board of Directors to incorporate public participation in decision-making to the greatest extent possible. Such participation shall follow Virginia Freedom of Information act regulations and shall follow the principles of Roberts Rules of Order (as amended), and generally the policies of the City Council for the City of Alexandria, Virginia.

**Policy:** The Board shall take public comment in accordance with the standards established hereafter at each regular meeting so long as sufficient time exists within the meeting agenda/docket. Public comment does not include public hearings, which are addressed separately within this policy.

**Format:** Public comment is accepted at the beginning of each meeting of the Board of Directors unless otherwise announced by the Chair of the Board. Such comment may be regarding any matter under or not under the direction of the Board, so long as such comment is within the guidelines and is not pertaining to a personnel matter.

There is a limit of ten (10) speakers during the public comment period of the meeting, at the discretion of the Chair, additional speakers may be permitted or deferred until the end of the regular meeting. There is no limit to the number of speakers for a public hearing.

**Speaking Time:** A speaker shall limit their remarks to three (3) minutes and shall speak only once on any agenda item. Except that one officer or other designated member speaking on behalf of each neighborhood civic association or unit owners' association desiring to be heard on an agenda item shall be allowed five (5) minutes. To obtain five minutes, the individual must identify as a designated speaker, and identify the neighborhood civic association or unit owners' association they represent, at the start of your presentation.

A speaker may be stopped if their comments become irrelevant or unnecessarily repetitious. The Board Secretary shall arrange for a timekeeping method or timekeeper to ensure that each speaker stays within the allotted speaking time.

**Format:** Speakers are asked to notify the Secretary of the Board in advance of the meeting if they wish to pre-register to speak. Such pre-registered speakers will be called upon first in an order determined by the Chair or presiding member. Following pre-registered speakers, the Chair will invite additional speakers to indicate their desire to comment.

**Comments in writing:** Speakers are encouraged to prepare and deliver to the Board Secretary for distribution to the Board written statements of their positions.

**Public Hearings:** As a matter of business, Public Hearings are provided during specially designated periods for certain docket items. These include, but are not limited to: Budget Deliberations, Budget Drafts, Budget Approvals, Transit Development Plan (TDP) Deliberations, TDP Drafts and TDP Approvals, service changes regardless of size or scope, fare collection policy changes regardless of size or scope. Public hearings are separate from public comment however they shall follow the same guidelines as outlined above.

**Speaking during the Meeting:** No person may speak on any docket or non-docket item at any time during the meeting outside of the Public Comment or Public Hearing period. Attendees who disrupt the meeting, act out, or in any way seek to prohibit the Board from continuing its business will be asked to leave the meeting at the discretion of the Chair or presiding member. Any attendee who refuses to leave the meeting upon violation of this provision may be subject to removal.

**Public Comment Period:** Upon the start of the public comment period, the Chair or the presiding member shall read the public comment welcome and introduction as follows:

*We are about to convene into the public comment period of our meeting. All DASH Board meetings include a public comment period at the beginning of the meeting as we believe it is crucial for us to hear from our riders and community members.*

*The Board is here to listen, however, please keep in mind that the public comment period is not designed to be a discussion. Accordingly, please do not expect the Board to respond to your concerns or questions tonight. We take any concerns and questions seriously and need sufficient time to process and research any issues, if need be. Board members will respond to your questions and concerns at a future meeting or have the proper staff member get back to you at the appropriate time.*

*Please note that personnel matters are not a part of the public comment period, however, please know that we take any personnel questions seriously, you are asked to contact the DASH administration with any such concerns.*

*We ask that all speakers and members of the audience maintain civility and respect for any divergent views that others possess, further we ask that speakers please address their comments to the Board directly rather than the audience.*

*The Board will take pre-registered speakers first and then I will invite others who wish to speak who may not have pre-registered. For future meetings, you may pre-register on the website [dashbus.com](http://dashbus.com) on the Board of Directors page.*

*I will now call the first speaker. Please remember that each individual speaker is allotted 3 minutes for your comments, if you are speaking on behalf of a neighborhood civic association or unit owners' association please identify yourself accordingly to be recognized for 5 minutes.*