



To:

Alexandria Transit Company Board of Directors
Mayor Justin Wilson
City Council

joseph.quansah@alexandriava.gov
justin.wilson@alexandriava.gov
CityCouncil@alexandriava.gov

Transit Capital Program Manager, T&ES, Transit Services

Steve Sindiong

steve.sindiong@alexandriava.gov

DASH: Director of Planning and Scheduling

Martin Barna

martin.barna@alexandriava.gov

cc:

Carter Flemming, President Seminary Hill Association

Tom Fulton, Vice President Seminary Hill Association

Babette Smith, Area 6 Seminary Hill Association

From:

Park Place Condominium Board of Directors
2500 North Van Dorn Street, Suite 118
Alexandria, VA 22302

bod@parkplaceva.com

Date: February 09, 2021

Subject: North Van Dorn Street Bus Service Restoration: Reconsider Line 36 Routing

The Park Place Condominium Board of Directors is disappointed to see the elimination of services to our stretch of North Van Dorn Street in the proposed new DASH network. Park Place served on the Alexandria Transit Vision (ATV) Stakeholders Working Group. ATC adopted the ATV, which provided services to us through the proposed N10 route, and our community formally demonstrated support for the adopted ATV as described in the appendix below. Further, our Board expressed the need for this transit service to the Planning Commission and City Council in testimony and letters concerning SUP2019-0043.

Routing along our stretch of Van Dorn likely provides better ridership and equitable access than routing on North Early Street; a shift or split in service serving Van Dorn should be of great community benefit and minimal harm. Restoration of service is essential for our residents, businesses, and neighbors.

Restoration of Van Dorn Service is Essential

Park Place is one of only two residential high rises in the entirety of the Seminary Hill/Strawberry Hill Small Area Plan (Park Place and 4600 Duke Street are the only RC zoned parcels). This type of housing attracts residents who need and want transit at their doorstep. We are market-affordable, provide stair-free living essential to persons with disabilities and the elderly (including 38 units owned by ARHA specifically for these needs), and are attractive to car-free and car-light households. We have at least 65 units with no registered vehicles and at least 167 units with only one car; the real numbers are likely higher. Last, our businesses and neighbors also require these services.

North Van Dorn Street Bus Service Restoration: Reconsider Line 36 Routing



Van Dorn Service more Beneficial than Early St Service; Minimal Realignment Impacts

At least 2000 feet with a grade separate us from the nearest DASH bus stops both currently and in the proposed new DASH network. The split in the originally proposed N10/N11 routing around Fort Ward Park clearly serves a greater number of households along the N10 Menokin-Van Dorn-Braddock alignment compared to the N11 Menokin-Early-Braddock alignment.

Choice between these two alignments should be of minimal consequence for residents of the **Waypoint**. Its 81 households will be able to access all bus services along the King St Service Road, about 150 yards walking distance from its entrance with a flat grade. This compares to an approximate 60 yards to its stop on Menokin, which is limited to services only from the Early alignment, forgoing combined service from King and Van Dorn. Preference between these two alignments is a likely wash for the **Braddock Lee Apartments** as the Early alignment has 7 buildings whereas Van Dorn's has 6.

The Van Dorn alignment serves **Park Place's** 3 medical offices, daycare, and 399 residential units, and it also serves several buildings of the **Encore Apartments** and **ARHA Scattered Sites II: W. Braddock Road – B** (4505-4519 W. Braddock Road). Comparatively, the Early alignment serves 38 single family residences on North Early Street and 63 homes encompassing Marlboro Estates' streets and 3 cul-de-sacs. The Van Dorn alignment runs along primary collector roads with signaled intersections, while the Early alignment proposes frequent service through two unsignaled intersections and a residential road lacking a double yellow line. The benefits of serving Van Dorn's higher density zoning and a greater number of households could not be clearer.

Please Restore Van Dorn Street Bus Services

A Van Dorn Street alignment works toward DASH's proposed planning framework prioritizing ridership and equitable access. Further, it directs benefits of the I395 Commuter Choice Grant Program to communities directly abutting and impacted by the freeway. We believe there is a reasonable case to either: 1) reroute all DASH service along Early to Van Dorn, or 2) provide split routing around Ft. Ward Park, as proposed in the ATV, so that both alignments receive service. Such proposals: 1) are a likely wash to the needs of Braddock Lee Apartments, as their 13 buildings are effectively evenly split amongst the two alignments and 2) still serve the Waypoint well as it has King St Service Road stops within less than 500 feet, which unfortunately are just less than a graded half-mile from us. Service to Van Dorn not only has greater ridership potential, but it better provides equitable access through service to many low-income residents, minority residents, senior citizens, and persons with disabilities.

We seek the support of ATC (DASH), the City, and neighboring organizations including SHA to provide a solution.

Sincerely,
Park Place Condominium Association
Board of Directors

bod@parkplaceva.com



Appendix: Community Background and Original Association Position on the ATV

Park Place Condominium is next to the Braddock Lee Apartments and Fort Ward Park. Park Place is a high rise consisting of 399 residential units, including 56 three bedroom units and 115 two bedroom units. Park Place also has commercial units with three medical practices, a soon-to-arrive daycare center, and the building's management.

Park Place was served by all day bus service, seven days a week, through 2015, when WMATA's 25 bus lines were eliminated. This was just before Park Place was able to realize better pedestrian access to the bus stop through the 2016 North Van Dorn Street Complete Streets Project, which created a new crosswalk at our bus stop. We are currently only served by peak hour 22F bus services.

Our businesses require full day bus service for their patients, patrons, and employees. Our residents require these services as well, especially our seniors, our residents with disabilities, and our residents without cars. 38 of Park Place's residential units are owned by the Alexandria Redevelopment and Housing Authority, specifically dedicated to elderly persons and persons with disabilities.

The Park Place Board put out a survey in November 2019 asking about bus service usage and a formal Association position on the ATV. We received 35 responses.

The Association Position was strongly supported by 89% of survey respondents. No respondents were opposed, only one was neutral, and three simply supported the position instead of strongly supporting it.

94% of respondents said their bus use would increase with the new services in the ATV.

Our Association Position stated in 11/13/2019 testimony to ATC is as follows:

- Park Place Condominium supports the Alexandria Transit Vision Plan.
- We welcome the return of all-day bus service proposed by the new N10 route. We value the route's connectivity to the West End Transitway and its connection to metro in the near-term vision.
- We also value peak services currently provided by WMATA's 22F, with its metro connection using the 395 Express Lanes. We are happy to see the current service level maintained in the near-term vision, but have concerns with the plan's service reductions in the long-term vision.
- We request a solution in the long-term plan that maintains current peak service quality with single-seat metro connectivity.
- We value the plan's overall improvement in service provided by the network, and value maintenance of and improvements of service levels in our immediate vicinity to include the King Street corridor.
- We thank staff efforts for proposing the N10's routing work-around of the intersection of Kenmore Ave and Seminary Road. We look forward to continued engagement with the City and other stakeholders to improve transportation on the Van Dorn Street corridor.
- The Association supports the plan and seeks the support of DASH, the City of Alexandria, WMATA, and other regional authorities to ensure that our residents, businesses and community will be well served.