



WMATA expands summer shutdown

Track work to last six days longer than expected

BY MISSY SCHROTT

After promising that the summer shutdown of all Alexandria Metro stations would be complete by Labor Day, the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority announced on April 18 that construction has been extended by six days.

The construction involves extensive platform maintenance at the Braddock Road, King Street and Eisenhower Avenue Metro stations, and will cause all six stations

SEE **WMATA** | 14

INSIDE

Real Talk

Is owning a vintage home worth it?
Page 23

Sports

SSSAS girls' lacrosse team shoots for playoffs.
Page 16



PART 1 OF A SERIES

Scooters bolt into Alexandria

Dockless devices arrive in city, draw concern from residents

BY CODY MELLO-KLEIN

With spring in full bloom, the birds are out and chirping in Alexandria, and joining the flock, to the dismay of many residents, is a new breed of Bird.

Electric and nimble, the tech company Bird's dockless, motorized e-scooters are popping up on every sidewalk and street corner, not to mention the odd flower bed, in Old Town as part of the city's pilot program for the high-tech transportation phenomenon. And Bird is only one of seven flocks that have permits to roost in all parts of Alexandria.

SEE **SCOOTERS** | 10

PHOTO/MISSY SCHROTT

To add or delete

City councilors propose budget cuts to offset new spending

BY MISSY SCHROTT

Council held its preliminary add/delete session for the fiscal year 2020 budget on Tuesday night. During discussion, councilors widely expressed a commitment to finding a delete for every addition in order to maintain the existing tax rate.

The discussion was based on additions councilors have suggested for City Manager Mark Jinks' proposed \$761.1 million budget.

"This is probably the most important part of the budget process here as we work to reconcile amendments that each member of council has made," Mayor Justin Wilson said.

Based on the proposed additions, council will have to cut \$243,000 to balance the budget. While the additions total about \$838,000, the city's revenue in the proposed budget will go up by about \$595,000 from revenue re-estimates, a prisoner agreement from

SEE **BUDGET** | 15



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SCOOTERS

FROM | 1

While some residents view the scooters as a convenient way to get to the Metro or work, many are concerned about perceived public safety hazards caused by this disruptive technology and are left questioning the rules and regulations governing this new presence in Alexandria.

“I can honestly say that in all my years living in Old Town, I have never seen an issue ignite such immediate and strong concern as this one has,” Greg Wilson, an Old Town resident, said in an email.

A migrating flock

The city’s scooter pilot program is part of a larger, nationwide movement toward electric, dockless transportation, one that has swept through Virginia rapidly and, at times, unchecked like wildfire.

In August 2018, Bird descended on Richmond with a fleet of unsanctioned scooters. By the time the city



PHOTO / MISSY SCHROTT

Lime, Skip and Bolt are three of the scooter companies participating in the pilot program.

The sudden appearance of hundreds of scooters in Alexandria the last few months has left many residents outraged, while raising questions of accountability and safety. This is the first article in a multi-part series exploring the issue.

government learned of the new presence in its city, people were already riding the scooters.

Richmond officials sent out Department of Public Works employees to collect the scooters, and, by the afternoon of the same day, Bird scooters were off the streets. Richmond’s city council ended up approving a permit program for companies like Bird, which went into effect in March 2019.

A similar unpermitted rollout occurred in Arlington, which adopted its own pilot in October 2018. By that time, however, riders were coming into Alexandria from Arlington and D.C. on scooters that the city government had no way to regulate.

“This is really a story that’s played out across all these disruptive technologies whether it’s food trucks, whether it’s Uber and Lyft. They’re all technologies that kind of show up and force the government to catch up,” Mayor Justin Wilson said. “We said, ‘How do we put some sort of regulatory framework around these to determine whether this is something we want to figure out how to accommodate or just ban?’”

City council approved the pilot program on Nov. 13, 2018 and the first approved scooters began appearing in January 2019.

By this point, scooters were officially a presence in Virginia, and as local municipalities worked to control the flood of e-scooters, state

legislators rushed to craft a bill to regulate the devices. The bill passed through the Virginia General Assembly on Feb. 21, and Gov. Ralph Northam signed the bill in late March.

The bill outlines several regulations pertaining to the maximum speed – 20 miles per hour – and weight – 100 pounds – of the devices, while also mandating that riders use hand signals and yield to pedestrians. Riders must also be 14 years or older to ride a scooter, according to the bill, and are permitted to ride on sidewalks. Notably, the bill provided local governments the freedom to adapt these regulations to suit their particular needs – as well as the ability to ban scooters outright.

Alexandria city officials used that freedom to craft a pilot program that upheld many of the same rules and regulations, while prohibiting scooters on sidewalks. Other changes in Alexandria include a minimum age of 18 years, not 14, and the maximum speed is 15 miles per hour, not 20.

Six of the seven scooter companies permitted in the nine-month pilot program have begun operating in Alexandria. The seven permitted companies are Lime, Lyft, Bird, Bolt, Skip and Spin, which are currently operating, while Jump is permitted but not yet operational, according to Yon Lambert, director of the Department of Transportation and Environmental Services, and Christine Mayeur, Complete Streets Coordinator in T&ES.

Process and procedure

If a company wants to deploy scooters in Alexandria, it needs to fill out an application, provide certificates of insurance and pay both \$5,000 in surety bonds and a \$5,000 permitting fee in

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SCOOTERS FROM | 10

compliance with the Memorandum of Understanding, according to Mayeur. T&ES and its permitting department then reviews and signs the application and issues a permit.

The MOU outlines the rules and regulations that any company must comply with in order to operate in Alexandria.

According to the MOU, companies must respond “promptly,” or within two hours of a report or complaint from a user. The MOU also limits companies to a maximum of 200 devices, although companies can request an additional 25 devices if their 200 devices have been used an average of at least three trips per day. According to data gathered by T&ES, there are an average of 700 to 800 scooters deployed per day in total by all six companies operating in Alexandria.

Mayeur said she monitors the 200-device limit closely.

“Every time I see a number that’s over 200, even if it’s 202, I’m contacting [the company],” Mayeur said.

By design, the bulk of responsibility has been placed on the scooter companies. Per the MOU, the companies are charged with educating riders on parking rules and city and state laws and with providing data to the city.

At Tuesday night’s city council legislative meeting, Lambert talked about difficulties T&ES has encountered so far in enforcing the MOU and said the city has the ability to unilaterally change some aspects of the pilot program. Several changes are in the works, Lambert said, and T&ES employees will soon begin impounding scooters when permitted companies are in violation and non-responsive.

A disruptive technology

While the MOU is designed to keep companies in check, it does not control rider behavior, which remains a concern for many residents.

“I think the way it’s coming here, as it has in many communities, the technology is way ahead of the legislators. There are no regulations,” Mike Doyle, founder of Alexandria Families for Safe Streets, said. “... It’s a tragedy waiting to happen with the way these scooters are being handled by people that are oblivious to road safety rules, that blow through stop signs.”

There has been one reported crash and two minor injuries related to scooters, all of which were due to mechanical issues with the devices themselves, according to Mayeur. Virginia state law doesn’t require bike riders or scooter riders over the age of

14 to wear helmets.

It’s no coincidence that the number of complaints has risen exponentially in the last few months. The majority of the seven permitted companies rolled out scooters in late February and

SEE **SCOOTERS** | 12

“ I think the way it’s coming here, as it has in many communities, the technology is way ahead of the legislators. There are no regulations. ... It’s a tragedy waiting to happen ...”

- Mike Doyle, founder, Alexandria Families for Safe Streets



PHOTO/MISSY SCHROTT

Scooters lie on the sidewalk on King Street.

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HOW THE SCOOTERS GOT TO ALEXANDRIA

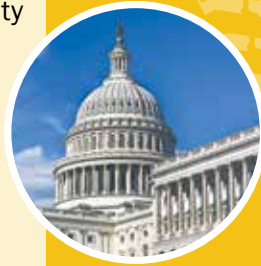
A timeline of dockless scooters in D.C., Arlington and Alexandria

SEPTEMBER 2017

Dockless Bikeshare established in Washington D.C. and Montgomery County

MARCH 2018

Dockless scooters come to D.C.; Alexandria first sees dockless bikes



JUNE 2018

Dockless scooters come to Arlington

NOVEMBER 2018

Alexandria City Council approves a dockless scooter pilot program



DECEMBER 2018

Dockless scooter pilot program launches in Alexandria

Dec. 28

Permit issued to Lime

FEBRUARY 2019

Feb. 6

Permit issued to Jump

Feb. 12

Permit issued to Lyft

Feb. 21

Permit issued to Bird

Feb. 22

Permit issued to Bolt

MARCH 2019

Scooter bill signed by Governor Ralph Northam

APRIL 2019

April 3

Permit issued to Skip

April 3

Permit issued to Spin



SCOOTERS

FROM | 11

early March, just as the sun started to shine and flowers started to bloom. Lambert said 79 percent of the 22,000 trips that have been taken over the past four months of the pilot occurred in the last month.

Old Town and Del Ray have been hot spots for scooters, but the sheer number of scooters on Alexandria's streets has drawn intense opposition from residents who are tired of seeing toppled heaps of scooters in front of their doors and blocking sidewalks.

"A couple of weeks ago I came out of my house — I live in the Torpedo Factory apartments on North Union Street — to find two scooters blocking the sidewalk," Diana Banat, an 83-year-old resident, said. "They were too heavy and entangled for me to pick up and as I passed them, I tripped and almost fell."

Other residents believe the haphazardly parked scooters mar Old Town's historic charm.

"The residents here love its charm and the history we inherited," Michael Maibach, an Old Town resident, said in an email. "This is why tourists come here from all over the world. They don't come here to rent scooters, but to walk our sidewalks, enjoy our old homes and tall trees and see where George Washington once lived and gathered our nation's Founders."

Accounts from residents also noted underage riders and scooters barreling down sidewalks at high speeds.

The responsibility of educating riders might fall on the companies, but on-the-ground behavior rarely matches the safety guidelines outlined in an app's terms of agreement. Enforcement still falls on police and the city, and in Alexandria scooters present a new enforcement challenge for police officers

and city officials.

"The difficulty from our perspective sometimes is our ability to capture them. They move rather quickly and disappear rather quickly," Alexandria Police Chief Michael Brown said. "... We are working our way through that in trying to do the enforcement."

The pilot program's emphasis on corporate responsibility has created a challenge for city staff.

Riders and pedestrians' first course of action should be contacting the company with complaints and reports, especially with parking, Mayeur said.

"They have the contractors, they have the staff on the ground that can come and respond," Mayeur said. "They have two hours per our MOU to respond."

If one of these companies does not respond within two hours, the city can confiscate the scooter in question. The company is then responsible for paying any penalties or fees incurred by illegally parking devices, according to the MOU.

SEE **SCOOTERS**

| 33

“

A couple of weeks ago I came out of my house ... to find two scooters blocking the sidewalk. They were too heavy and entangled for me to pick up and as I passed them, I tripped and almost fell.”

- Diana Banat, an 83-year-old resident of the Torpedo Factory apartments

SCOOTERS FROM | 12

“One thing that we can certainly do is impound vehicles,” Lambert said. “That’s one area where we’re looking at whether we might need to start doing a little more frequently because of the concerns with improper parking.”

T&ES staff will more aggressively patrol hot spots like Old Town and Del Ray for violations during the duration of the pilot, according to Lambert.

In the most extreme cases, if an operator does not correct a violation of the MOU within one week, the city can suspend or revoke its permit with the operator, although T&ES has not yet taken this action. In response to a question from Councilor John Chapman at Tuesday’s legislative meeting, Lambert also confirmed that the city has the right to unilaterally end the pilot at any time.

Four months into the pilot program, city staff is facing tremendous pushback from the public on a program that is, by pure statistical usage metrics, a success.

“We think people are using them and using them properly to get to transit, but we’re also seeing things that give us pause,” Lambert said. “We are seeing a lot of scooters that are being improperly parked and they’re being parked where they are blocking ramps or entrances and exits to businesses. We have lots of concerns about safety.”

More than 100 city residents signed a letter addressed to the mayor, members of city council and the city attorney that urged staff to cancel the pilot. Meanwhile, the numbers indicate that the program is popular with riders.

Moving forward in the pilot, T&ES staff, alongside police, are trying to adapt to and accommodate a disruptive new presence, Lambert said.



Left: A young woman rides a Bird scooter on King Street.



Right: Bolt and Lime scooters parked in front of la Madeleine at the corner of King and Pitt streets.

PHOTOS/MISSY SCHROTT

The APD aims to start conducting targeted enforcement efforts on weekends to tackle the highest volume of scooter-related traffic violations, Brown said, and T&ES is exploring ways to mitigate the parking issues that plague the program.

“We have been looking at where it wouldn’t impact parking and where we have

the space on the street to designate some spaces for the scooters to either be staged or parked by users and then asking that the vendors reflect that in their apps,” Mayeur said.

According to Lambert, T&ES is also looking at ways to work with operators to geofence certain areas in Alexandria so that the apps

prohibit riders from parking in those areas.

The pilot program is still in a fledgling state, even as riders rush to take flight and city officials, police officers and residents try to adapt and wrestle with a disruptive technology.

“I think we need to come up with a set of rules that works for Alexandria. If

that means [scooters are] not part of the future, that’s certainly fine. If there’s some way to come up with a set of rules that makes sense, then that works too,” Wilson said. “... The question is, ‘Is this something that’s like [Uber] or is this something that’s not able to be accommodated?’”

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Our View

A scooter invasion

There's an old tale, likely an urban legend, that in 1895, when the first two automobiles arrived in an Ohio town, they promptly drove down Main Street and crashed into each other. The new transportation technology was poorly understood and unregulated and, not surprisingly, resulted in disaster.

True or not, that story is analogous to what's currently happening in Alexandria with motorized scooters.

In January, scooters started popping up all over Alexandria, mostly in Old Town and Del Ray, to no fanfare and with little warning. During the past few months, more and more scooters have appeared bearing the names of six separate companies, with a seventh approved but not yet operational.

Under a nine-month pilot program approved last November, more than 1,400 scooters can potentially, and legally, roam city streets and be deposited on sidewalks throughout Alexandria.

In a multi-part series that begins today on page one with the story, "Scooters bolt into Alexandria," the Times will explore various aspects of the scooter issue. We will do likewise on our opinion pages, both in editorials and in letters from readers.

As council began discussing the issue near the end of Tuesday night's marathon budget work session/legislative meeting, Mayor Justin Wilson jokingly said, despite the public outcry, if scooters are the biggest problem facing Alexandria, then our city is clearly in good shape.

While the mayor is technically right – scooters don't pose an existential threat to our city – it's also difficult to recall an issue that caused as much disruption in such a short time in Alexandria.

There are many facets to this topic. Like many technological innovations, dockless scooters have sprung up seemingly overnight and spread like kudzu through a southern field. Cities have been left playing catch up, as across the country, e-scooter operators have set up shop first and asked for permission later, and then only when they were forced to do so.

So our pilot program is a reaction to an existing reality. Which is not to say that scooters can't be rounded up and expelled if Alexandrians decide we don't want them.

Our chief concern right now is with the process. Why didn't we ban the unauthorized scooters when they cropped up last year and have a discussion about whether they're wanted or appropriate in Alexandria before launching a pilot?

Pilot programs, when advocated by city staff as this one appears to be, quickly become fait accomplis. "Success" is measured by usage data, without a city-wide discussion about whether such usage is even desirable.

Put another way, not every technological innovation is a step forward. We are reminded of the old Steve Martin movie, "The Jerk," in which Martin's character invents a new form of eyeglasses, that, unfortunately, result in vision problems for wearers. A millionaire after the innovation, Martin winds up broke and homeless after being sued.

And so we ask, would scooters be a net gain for Alexandria? What are the potential benefits and do they counteract the obvious drawbacks in safety and aesthetics?

Like city council members, we have been hearing from

Opinion

"Where the press is free and every man is able to read, all is safe."

- Thomas Jefferson



Your Views

Public safety must be budget priority

To the editor:

City council is engaged in what I believe is their most challenging annual task: finalizing the city's budget. Because budget dollars are a finite resource, they must prioritize between competing requirements that are all important.

That said, it is my opinion that public safety must always be the highest priority. Without it as a foundation for life in the city, all else that might be provided in any budget is rendered moot.

With that as perspective, I am writing to bring visibility to two critical public safety issues, both within the Alexandria Fire Department: compensation and placing four firefighters instead of three on all AFD engines, per federal guidelines. It would by no means break the budget to correct them both, and I believe strongly that we should.

To compare compensation, Alexandria lags behind all other Northern Virginia

jurisdictions in compensation for all classification titles and has the lowest starting salary in the region. Our non-competitive salaries hurt recruitment and retention. More than half of our EMTs and firefighters have less than 10 years of service and experience, and one-third has less than five years.

It costs more than \$100,000 to train and equip one firefighter, and more than \$8,000 for one paramedic certification. By lagging behind in both starting and career compensation in the AFD, the city is truly being pennywise and pound foolish. We simply cannot afford the loss of personnel and the investment we've made in their training. We must stem the bleeding in both recruitment and retention.

With respect to engine manning, federal research and field experiments established the four-person engine crew as the

Hutchings proposes custodian plan

Would keep 20 positions in ACPS budget, outsource 10

BY CODY MELLO-KLEIN

After months of public outcry, a plan is in the works to address the 30 Alexandria City Public Schools custodians who could lose their jobs with the passage of the fiscal year 2020 budget.

Superintendent Dr. Gregory Hutchings, Ed.D., proposed the plan, which involves salvaging 20 custodian positions and decreasing ACPS' substitute teaching funding, during the May 9 school board meeting.

Without the new plan, ACPS' FY2020 proposed budget involves outsourcing the positions of 30 custodians with 20 years of experience or less to private contractors. At the core of the issue is the school board's decade-long promise to establish an attrition plan

SEE **SCHOOLS** | 12



PART 2 OF A SERIES

A one-mile revolution

For riders, scooters are more than just a fad

BY CODY MELLO-KLEIN

One mile. For drivers, it is a distance easily crossed. For runners, a mile is only the start of a workout. For commuters, though, that seemingly short distance can present problems; it might be only a 20- to 25-minute walk, but a mile can make all the difference.

"There's a lot of times where I need to go somewhere between a mile and a mile and a half [away]," Ethan McAfee, an Old Town resident, said. "For me, my house to my office in Old Town is 1.2 miles, and historically your options would be, I'm either going to walk - and walking would take like

SEE **SCOOTERS** | 10

Black house renovation advances

Council affirms BAR decision on historic Old Town property

BY MISSY SCHROTT

The Hugo Black house controversy came to a peak in the crowded city council chambers on Tuesday evening, when council unanimously voted to allow the renovation project to move forward.

Specifically, council voted to affirm the Board of Architectural Review's

SEE **BLACK** | 8

INSIDE

Crime

Serious offenses in Alexandria decrease
Page 6

Tying the Knot

ACPS Superintendent Greg Hutchings shares his love story
Page 15

Theater

"Love's Labor's Lost" features a dynamic cast
Page 24

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SCOOTERS

FROM | 1

20 minutes, give or take – [or] I would drive, which it kind of seems silly to drive a mile, but that’s kind of the default.”

A 20-minute walk is nice for some, but when time is of the essence, that mile can seem like a gaping chasm. Recently, however, McAfee and others have found a solution to their mile-long problem.

“I started taking scooters,” McAfee said. “All of a sudden you’re no longer hav-

ing to drive; you’re no longer having to find parking spaces. That 20-minute walk becomes an eight-minute scooter ride.”

While a chorus of outrage echoes across Alexandria over the presence of e-scooters, many residents – mostly younger commuters – have flocked to the disruptive technology for convenience and accessibility. Others, including visitors, ride them for enjoyment. Within four months of the launch of the city’s scooter pilot program in December 2018, riders

“Your short car ride can now quickly become a short scooter ride. That decreases the amount of traffic, decreases the amount of parking issues, decreases the amount of car congestion.”

– Ethan McAfee,
Old Town resident

had taken more than 22,000 trips, according to the Department of Transportation and Environmental Services.

For some, a simple joy-

ride one sunny day quickly evolved into a daily routine.

“That was kind of the genesis of it. ‘Hey, that looks fun; it will be interesting to try once and get it under my belt,’” Travis Niles, an Old Town resident who works in D.C., said. “... But then as time progressed, it legitimately started affecting my daily schedule.”

Niles, like a lot of commuters, travels to and from the Metro every day. Before scooters, he’d either drive and face the challenge of parking near the Metro, or take DASH buses.

“[Scooters are] far more predicable than DASH and more nimble than a car,” Niles said.

West End resident Chris Sims relies on public transportation to get to his job in Old Town since he doesn’t own a car. The scooters have become an extension of his daily travel routine, he said.

“Usually I’ll take the bus to the Metro station at King Street Metro or Braddock Metro and then take the scooter somewhere I need to go,” Sims said.

The ubiquity of the scooters, a quality that some residents have bemoaned, has opened up travel for other residents, especially commuters.

“What it’s doing is for people who are using the Metro, it’s providing that last mile connectivity,” McAfee said. “... Now with the scooters you can be 10 blocks, 20 blocks away and still consistently use the Metro without

having to walk half an hour to get there.”

For these riders, scooters are more than just a fad; they are a convenient new mode of transportation that can remove the need for a car.

“They are a great and green way to get around town, and I know we use our car less now that we’ve started using scooters,” resident Katie Ray said in a Facebook message.

“Your short car ride can now quickly become a short scooter ride,” McAfee said. “That decreases the amount of traffic, decreases the amount of parking issues, decreases the amount of car congestion.”

While some riders are using the scooters for business, just as many are using them for pleasure. On sunny days, the joyriders populate the city’s streets, parks and, to the concern of many pedestrians, sidewalks.

According to the city’s memorandum of understanding that every scooter company must sign, riders must be 18 years or older and cannot ride on sidewalks.

Several younger riders said they enjoy the scooters because they offer an easy way of getting around Old Town without the need to rely on their parents for rides. Some scooter companies now require riders to take a picture of driver’s licenses or other I.D. either during the sign-up process or before a ride.

Rider behavior has been a sticking point for many who oppose the pilot program. Those who ride the scooters insist that many of the complaints – sidewalk riding and improper parking – are edge cases, highly visible examples of the worst behavior.

“They sort of amplify, or make more visible, those bad habits that we have contained in all of us,” Niles

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SCOOTERS FROM | 10

said. "If you are already going to be inconsiderate and leave something in the way and diminish a public good, you were already going to do that. The scooter didn't change it."

However, even riders like Niles admit to engaging in the alleged poor behavior, often out of necessity due to Alexandria's road infrastructure.

"Sometimes riding on the sidewalk is unavoidable because of where you are," Niles said. "If you're on certain permutations of one-ways, it's faster to ride on the sidewalk."

Niles said he dismounts during these sidewalk detours; however, many riders do not take such precautions. Temporary signage reminding people not to ride on sidewalks has sprung up throughout Alexandria in recent weeks.

Safety is one area of behavior where those who are for and against scooters differ. Virginia does not require riders over the age of 14 to wear helmets, and several riders admitted that wearing a helmet for the distance and duration of a scooter ride feels unnecessary.

"In general, we all feel we 'should' but no one actually does," McAfee said in an email. "I think most people just view it as a 'short trip' and are willing to risk it. I feel it is a different mindset than someone commuting 10 miles on their bike because the speeds are slower and the distance is much shorter."

A recent study conducted by University of California Los Angeles researchers found that in only 4 percent of 249 scooter-related injuries, the riders were wearing helmets.

Some companies, including Jump and Skip, are starting to offer helmets to their riders. Jump is working on a



PHOTO/MISSY SCHROTT
Bolt and Lime scooters are parked near the intersection of Pitt and King streets in Old Town.

partnership with VeloCity Bike Cooperative in Del Ray to offer riders free helmets, and Skip's safety promotion allows riders to purchase a helmet for about \$10. Niles did not initially use a helmet but has since purchased one through Skip's safety promotion.

While they may seem carefree, several riders said they, too, have concerns about scooters. Sims admitted that sometimes, especially late at night, the vehicles are not charged, at which point a convenience quickly becomes inconvenient.

In many cases, riders shared the concerns of their fellow residents who oppose the scooters.

"I think it's a good thing for tourists and residents, I just wish people would take more care of them because sometimes you'll see them stacked up on the corner and just on the ground and it looks really bad," Sims said.

Several riders voiced support for designated parking areas in high traffic areas like Old Town and Del Ray, an idea that T&ES staff has been exploring as part of the pilot program.

"Obviously [scooters] are point-to-point and [you can] discard them wherever you want, but if you offer people safe places to leave them,

like Capital Bikeshare has their docking stations, that's something you can do as an incentive to cluster them in strategic areas and get people to return them in a responsible way," Niles said.

And even those who ride the scooters are troubled by the sheer number of scooters and scooter companies that have arrived in Alexandria.

"The cost of entry was really low, so every scooter company did it. What ended up happening is that we have too many scooter brands and too many scooters," McAfee said. "What will likely happen, my hope, is that the city agrees to go from seven scooter companies to two or three."

More distressing for riders is the discourse that has swirled around the scooters and between relatively younger riders and relatively older residents.

"I am fearful that Old Town is becoming a place where any change is viewed as bad," McAfee said. "With any change and with any technological progress, we have to look at it as a tradeoff."

If the 22,000 trips are any indication, many residents have embraced this latest form transportation technology. For some, a mile makes all the difference.

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PART 3 OF A SERIES

Safety on the streets

Is the city's e-scooter program dangerous?

BY CODY MELLO-KLEIN

Scooters first started rolling into Alexandria late last year, bringing with them a wave of anxiety over public safety.

The city is now five months into its nine-month long e-scooter pilot program, and the initial swell of public concern has somewhat died down as the city has attempted to adapt the program to Alexandria's streets. But the pilot is still a work in progress and safety remains a point of concern.

SEE **SCOOTERS**

| 6

PHOTO/MISSY SCHROTT

Council considers zoning issues

Mayor suggests eliminating restaurant SUPs at legislative meeting

BY ARYA HODJAT
AND MISSY SCHROTT

Alexandria City Council members discussed a number of issues related to zoning requirements, including the need for a comprehensive approach to concessions

from developers, at its May 28 legislative meeting.

During the discussion, Mayor Justin Wilson also stated his desire to eliminate the requirement for restaurants to obtain special use permits in areas that are zoned commercial.

The discussion took place during council's public hearing for the fiscal year

SEE **ZONING**

| 5

Clerk of court election approaches

Ben Ortiz and Greg Parks face off in June 11 primary

BY CODY MELLO-KLEIN

Ben Ortiz and Greg Parks will compete for the Democratic nomination for Alexandria's clerk of court in the June 11 primary election.

The two candidates began campaigning for the office after Ed Semonian announced earlier this

year that after 40 years as clerk of court, he would not seek reelection for his sixth eight-year term.

No Republicans have announced their intent to run for the position, according to the Alexandria Office of Voter Registration.

Semonian will finish out his final term in the courthouse, and the candidate elected in the

SEE **CLERK**

| 9

INSIDE

Sports

T.C. girls' soccer makes state semifinals.

Page 12

Finance

Save for college with a 529 plan.

Page 14

SCOOTERS

FROM | 1

Rider behavior, as well as state laws that require only those under the age of 14 to wear helmets, have left residents expecting the worst — and there is data that indicates concerns about scooter safety have merit.

“It’s a tragedy waiting to happen with the way these scooters are being handled by people that are oblivious to road safety rules, that blow through stop signs,” Mike Doyle, founder of Alexandria Families for Safe Streets, said.

Residents have reported riders operating on sidewalks, which is prohibited, according to the city’s permits with the seven scooter companies. Various residents have also reported seeing users riding scooters through stop signs and stoplights and going down the center of the street, the latter of which creates traffic congestion.

Improperly parked scooters have created problems for some of Alexandria’s se-



Two riders share one scooter near the waterfront. Traveling with more than one rider on a scooter is explicitly against many of the companies’ rules and regulations.

PHOTO/HAL HARDAWAY

nior residents.

“I came out of my house — I live in the Torpedo Factory apartments on North Union Street — to find two

scooters blocking the sidewalk,” Diana Banat, an 83-year-old resident, said in an email. “They were too heavy and entangled for me

to pick up and as I passed them, I tripped and almost fell.”

The Inova Alexandria Hospital emergency department has not seen a flood of scooter-related injuries this year, according to Dr. Jeremy Graf, chair of the department.

However, residents have reported some close calls.

“Our neighbors in the 100 block of Prince [Street] shared that their teenage son had been hit by a scooter last week,” Greg Wilson, an Old Town resident who started a petition against the scooter program, said in an email. “Fortunately, he was fine, but scared by the experience.

“Another signatory to our letter shared that she nearly hit a young child who had darted into the street on a scooter,” he said in an email. “Fortunately, for her, she was able to stop the car in time, but it was frightening for all involved.”

Many of the concerns

around scooters are a symptom of how new the technology is, Graf said. Pedestrians, drivers and even police are still uncertain how to interact with the devices on the street.

“When someone’s on a walking path and there’s a bicyclist that decides to use that path instead of the road, people can predict the speed, predict the maneuverability,” Graf said. “Scooters can be a little more difficult.”

The unpredictability presents a problem for the Alexandria Police Department. Officers can only do so much to enforce traffic laws with vehicles that quickly scoot in and out of traffic, Chief Michael Brown said.

“Our traffic safety section is aware of it. Our patrol units are aware of it,” Brown said. “We briefed them on what’s required by the operators of those scooters when the scooters were first deployed.”

To compound enforcement challenges, there is no category for scooters under Virginia law, which makes tracking and reporting scooter traffic stops or citations difficult. Brown said officers have stopped riders, but that it is difficult to determine how many, given these reporting issues.

“We’re also looking at trying to get a sense or a tempo of how often or what the frequency of use is,” Brown said. “That will allow us to do some extra deployment in [high traffic] areas.”

Police can enforce the laws, but rider education and awareness largely fall under the purview of the seven e-scooter companies currently permitted to operate in Alexandria. Making sure each company is regulating its riders has been a

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SEE **SCOOTERS**

| 7

SCOOTERS FROM | 6

challenge for city officials.

“There are challenges with the quantity, there’s challenges with where they’re being left; and challenges with the companies’ ability to keep up with regulating the impact of their users’ actions and behaviors,” Mayor Justin Wilson said.

While corporate responsiveness has been an ongoing issue throughout the pilot program, some companies have taken steps of their own to ensure the safety of their riders.

One company, Bird, has given away more than 65,000 helmets to its users worldwide and has put in place measures it claims will increase the safety of riders.

“We strive to improve and enhance the well-being of our riders and communities through concrete action, including: requiring riders to confirm they are 18 or older, providing an in-app tutorial on how to



There are challenges with the quantity, there’s challenges with where they’re being left and challenges with the companies’ ability to keep up with regulating the impact of their users’ actions and behaviors.”

– Mayor Justin Wilson

ride a Bird and how to park it and posting clear safety instructions on each Bird,” a Bird spokesperson said in a statement.

“The scooter doesn’t drive itself,” Maggie Gendron, director of strategic development and government affairs for Lime in the D.C. area, said. “It is driven by the rider and there are

certainly behavioral tactics that we expect from our riders.”

Lime orchestrates in-person educational events for the public throughout the region based around rules of the road and proper use of its devices, Gendron said.

Other scooter companies, including Skip and Jump, have also started giving away or selling helmets to their users. Jump is partnering with VeloCity Bike Cooperative in Del Ray to give out free helmets to its riders.

Whether riders take advantage of these opportunities is another matter, and it remains unclear whether e-scooter companies will be able to enforce or ensure the safety of their riders.

Two recent studies from the Centers for Disease Control and the University of California, Los Angeles outlined that the concerns around scooter safety are well-founded.

SEE **SCOOTERS** | 30

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SCOOTERS

FROM | 7

The UCLA study found hospitals in the Los Angeles area, where scooters have a longer track record than in Alexandria, had seen an uptick in scooter-related injuries. The study analyzed 249 cases where people had been sent to the hospital for scooter-related injuries in the span of a year.

Ninety-two percent of those people were riders, only 4 percent of whom were wearing helmets. Forty percent of the 249 injuries sustained were head injuries.

“With every injury — whether we see it on a bike or a motorcycle or a scooter — the injuries are significantly more severe if the driver is not wearing a helmet,” Graf said.

The CDC study, based on data collected in Austin, Texas across 87 days in fall 2018, found similar data

points. Almost 200 people were involved in confirmed scooter-related incidents. Only one was wearing a helmet.

Fifty-five percent of those injuries were sustained in the street while 33 percent occurred on the sidewalk. The remaining 12 percent happened in various other locations, including parking lots, parking garages and pedestrian and bike paths.

Notably, 10 percent of the incidents involved a motor vehicle. The rest involved riders hitting immobile objects or surfaces, like a pothole or curbside, and driver-induced incidents, such as braking hard or tipping over.

The CDC study found that, based on the number of rides taken in the time span of the study, there were 20 rider injuries per 100,000 e-scooter trips. The

CDC also notes that there have been fewer than a dozen e-scooter-related fatalities nationwide.

While Alexandria Inova Hospital has yet to see a significant increase in the number or intensity of scooter-related injuries, Graf said the hospital is still monitoring them. The primary concern for the hospital is the potential for serious head injuries, Graf said.

There’s the potential for concussions, which can result in loss of consciousness, headaches, memory loss or vomiting. But there are even more severe issues, Graf said, especially with a riding population that is largely not wearing helmets.

“[There] are things like skull fractures, whether just isolated or something called depressed skull fractures where there’s displacement of the bone,” Graf said “And

then even more severe than that would be bleeding, either bleeding in the brain tissue itself or in the areas between the skull and the brain.”

Much like with bicyclists, a hard brake can send riders flying over the handlebars and facing serious, non-head related injuries, Graf said.

“If you fly over the handlebars, depending on your speed, we worry about the handlebars hitting you on your abdomen underneath your ribs,” Graf said. “... The one thing we worry about is that if you go over the handlebars, underneath the ribs we worry about a splenic injury or a liver injury. Those end up being tears or bleeds that can be really significant or life threatening.”

For the moment, Graf’s concerns remain based on prior experiences with bicyclists and motorcyclists. But

studies like those run by the CDC and UCLA reveal the nationwide context in which those concerns exist.

It’s unclear how much greater use of helmets, along with rider education and police and corporate enforcement, can increase the safety of e-scooters. Some Alexandrians want stricter regulations, while others want to cancel the pilot program all together. But the one thing they all want is safety on Alexandria’s streets — sooner rather than later.

“What will happen is that somebody is killed, maybe more than one, and then people are going to be up in arms and then [the city will] start to react,” Doyle said. “Don’t wait for the death of one or more people on these scooters or the injuries of the pedestrians and scooters.”

-cmelloklein@alextimes.com

Classifieds

LEGAL NOTICES



BOARD OF ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW DESIGN GUIDELINES COMMITTEE MEETING JUNE 13, 2019

The City of Alexandria Board of Architectural Review (BAR) Design Guidelines Committee will hold a meeting on the date and time listed below to update the graphics of the 1993 BAR Design Guidelines and to create new guidelines to illustrate the policies adopted by the Parker-Gray district in 2013. This meeting is open to the public; however, no public testimony or comment will be received.

DATE: THURSDAY, JUNE 13, 2019

TIME: 8:00 to 9:00 AM

PLACE: ALEXANDRIA CITY HALL PLANNING & ZONING LIBRARY

301 KING STREET, ROOM 2100
ALEXANDRIA, VIRGINIA 22314

For further information, contact the Department of Planning & Zoning at 703-746-4666.

For reasonable disability accommodation, contact Graciela.Moreno@alexandriava.gov or 703.746.3808, Virginia Relay 711.



Board of Architectural Review LEGAL NOTICE OF A PUBLIC HEARING

A public hearing will be held by the Board of Architectural Review on WEDNESDAY, June 19, 2019 beginning at 7:00 PM in the City Hall Council Chambers, second floor of City Hall, 301 King Street, Alexandria, Virginia on the following applications:

BAR #2019-00037 OHAD

Request for partial demolition/capsulation at 605 Prince Street
Applicant: Billy Klipstein, LLC

BAR #2019-00038 OHAD

Request for addition, alterations and rooftop HVAC waiver at 605 Prince Street
Applicant: Billy Klipstein, LLC

BAR #2019-00191 OHAD

Request for alterations and signage at 501 South Washington Street
Applicant: Mount Vernon Petroleum Realty LLC

BAR #2019-00207 OHAD

Request for alterations at 702 South Royal Street
Applicant: Robert Cvejjanovich

BAR #2019-00208 OHAD

Request to install small cell facility on utility pole on public property adjacent to 911 Jefferson Street
Applicant: AT&T

BAR #2019-00209 OHAD

Request for partial demolition/capsulation at 430 North Union Street

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PART 4 OF A SERIES

Counting on accountability

City's scooter pilot aims to hold companies accountable, liable

BY CODY MELLO-KLEIN

With most school years coming to an official end this month, summer will likely be the busiest and most demanding for Alexandria's e-scooter pilot program, raising alarm bells for some residents.

Questions about accountability and liability linger in the background of a program that has seen high ridership and equally high community concern. The memorandum of understanding each of the seven permitted scooter companies signed with the city outlined a concrete division of liability from the outset. But how the city can modify the program to consistently hold companies accountable to the MOU is still unclear.

SEE SCOOTERS | 16



Seminary Road to be restructured

Proposed shift from four to three lanes draws frustration from residents

BY ARYA HODJAT

The city's plan to convert a stretch of Seminary Road from four to three lanes has been met with opposition from residents throughout the controversial community engagement process.

The proposed changes are part of the Seminary Road Complete Streets Project. Seminary Road is scheduled for repaving in fall 2019, and per the city's Complete Streets policy, the Department of Transportation and Environmental Services has been studying potential structural changes to occur at the same.

After a community engagement process that began in spring 2018, city staff's recommendation for the road is to narrow the

stretch of Seminary Road from Saint Stephens Road to Zabriskie Drive from four to three lanes – two westbound and one eastbound – and install a new crosswalk and median island. The recommendation needs approval from the Traffic and Parking Board and city council before it can be implemented.

During the community engagement process, T&ES established three concept alternatives for potential changes to the stretch of Seminary Road from North Howard Street to North Quaker Lane. Alternative one involved maintaining the existing, four-lane layout. Alternative two proposed altering the stretch to accommodate two westbound lanes, one eastbound lane and two bike lanes. Alternative three suggested narrowing the stretch to just two travel lanes, a center

SEE SEMINARY | 14

INSIDE

Business

Boutique fitness studio Row House to open in Old Town North.
Page 6

Health & Wellness

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Page 19

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“Because the scooter companies operate on a philosophical belief system that there should be as little regulation as possible ... that puts the city almost immediately at a great disadvantage.”

– Yvonne Callahan,
Old Town Civic Association vice president



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RiverRenew is a major public sewer infrastructure program, owned and implemented by Alexandria Renew Enterprises, to achieve cleaner, healthier waterways in Alexandria.

RiverRenew has worked with the National Park Service to develop an Environmental Assessment that evaluates potential impacts of the RiverRenew program. The RiverRenew team will discuss this Environmental Assessment with the public at three upcoming Community Listening Sessions.

Learn more at
riverrenew.com/community.



On June 25, the City Planning Commission will consider the Development Special Use Permit application for the RiverRenew tunnel system. This event is also open to the public.

Mon., June 24
6:00 p.m. - 9:00 p.m.*

The Basilica School of St. Mary
400 Green Street (Outfall 002)

Wed., June 26
6:00 p.m. - 9:00 p.m.*

Charles Houston Recreation Center
901 Wythe Street (Outfall 001)

Thu., June 27
6:00 p.m. - 9:00 p.m.*

AlexRenew Environmental Center
1800 Limerick Street (Outfalls 001, 002, 003/4)

*Events are an Open House format. Please plan on staying approximately 30 minutes.

SCOOTERS

FROM | 1

“There’s indemnity language in the MOUs so that the city is indemnified,” Yon Lambert, director of the Department of Transportation and Environmental Services, said. “The legal liability is with the companies themselves.”

In light of recent safety studies that indicate scooter-related injuries are on the rise nationwide, some companies have implemented a sizable payout policy for liability coverage.

“The safety of our riders and community is a top priority,” a Lime spokesperson said in a statement. “Lime’s insurance policy offers at least \$1 million in liability coverage for each incident, which meets or exceeds all requirements from cities, college campuses and businesses. We recognize that every incident is unique and requires an individual approach, and we have a process in place to fully investigate all claims.”

In a program as new as this pilot, with technology as new as electric scooters, rider behavior is a constant challenge to city rules and regulations. Per the MOUs, the city is not paying out when those rules are broken and incidents occur, but residents are concerned Alexandrians could pay the real price.

Virginia is one of only a handful of states with a contributory negligence law. This law dictates that if a person’s negligence contributed to the accident, he or she would not be entitled to collect damages, according to online legal database Justia. This law could complicate things for scooter companies and riders, according to Mike Doyle, founder of Alexandria Families for Safe Streets.

“If the victim [is] deemed to be 1 percent at

fault, the car or the driver that crashed into them and killed them or seriously injured them is exonerated in terms of the law,” Doyle said.

Liability is clearly defined in the MOU, but delegating financial responsibility and ensuring corporate accountability are two different things. The city handles the latter with communication when possible, and action when necessary, according to city officials.

For some concerned residents, the contrast in how local government and large companies operate creates an uneven power dynamic.

“Because the scooter companies operate on a philosophical belief system that there should be as little regulation as possible ... that puts the city almost immediately at a great disadvantage,” Yvonne Callahan, vice president of the Old Town Civic Association and a former lawyer, said.

City officials said they are working on ways to make sure companies respond to complaints and follow the terms of the MOU.

Although residents can report improperly parked scooters and other breaches of the MOU to the city, they are encouraged to report issues directly to individual companies. Several residents have reported that companies often fail to respond to an issue in the given amount of time outlined in the MOU. In these cases, the city has the authority to take action.

“What the city is going to be able to begin doing is ensuring that they are being responsive by – where we see scooters that are improperly parked – call the company, give them their time, allow them to



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SCOOTERS

FROM | 16

come out and move the scooter per the MOU," Lambert said. "But if it has not been moved, then we're going to look at impounding those scooters."

T&ES has already started impounding a small number of scooters from companies that fail to respond per the terms of the MOU, T&ES Deputy Director Hillary Orr said. Once a scooter is impounded, the company in question must pay the city for the cost of transporting and storing it. The process behind impounding scooters is still a work in progress.

"This is one of the elements of the pilot that staff is working through in

“What the city is going to be able to begin doing is ensuring that they are being responsive by -where we see scooters that are improperly parked - call the company, give them their time, allow them to come out and move the scooter per the MOU. But if it has not been moved, then we're going to look at impounding those scooters.”

- Yon Lambert, Department of Transportation and Environmental Services, director

coordination with other jurisdictions," Orr said. "We are using the pilot to determine the best and most effective mechanism for holding scooter companies

accountable."

One potential mechanism would allow T&ES to go a step further than

SEE **SCOOTERS**

| 29



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- 6/23 Bethesda Big Train (home)
- 6/24 Giants (home)
- 6/26 Braves (away)
- 6/27 DH: D.C. Grays (home)
4:00 p.m. and 6:30 p.m.
- 6/29 DH: Thunderbolts (home)
4:00 p.m. and 6:30 p.m.
- 6/30 Braves (home)

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SPORTS

ALEXANDRIA ACES REPORT

The Alexandria Aces are Alexandria's collegiate summer baseball club that competes in the Cal Ripken Collegiate Baseball League. Home games take place at Frank E. Mann Field and away games take place throughout the D.C. metro area.

CAL RIPKEN COLLEGIATE BASEBALL LEAGUE

Team	Record
Alexandria Aces	3-7
Bethesda Big Train	8-4
D.C. Grays	5-5
FCA Braves	5-6
Gaithersburg Giants	5-7
Silver Spring - Takoma T Bolts	6-4

Scores this week:

June 14

Aces W 9-3 @ Gaithersburg Giants

June 15

Aces W 10-4 vs. FCA Braves

June 16

Aces L 10-5 vs Bethesda Big Train

June 16

Aces W 8-4 @ Bethesda Big Train



City staff's projection on what the stretch of Seminary Road from Saint Stephens Road to Zabriskie Drive will look like, once the vehicle lane is removed.

SEMINARY FROM | 14

an enhanced quality of life," according to the FHA's website.

A road diet was implemented on part of King Street in 2017. City data reports that in the first year following the implementation of the road diet, there were zero pedestrian fatalities, and average vehicular speed decreased. However, traffic delays at one intersection increased.

Doyle said he considered the King Street renovation a success.

"What they've done is exactly what street engineering is about," Doyle said. "It changed the speed of the cars. ... The safety on the street has been improved for all road users – the pedestrians as well as the cyclists – and it hasn't had a material effect in people's drive time."

Other residents view the King Street road diet as a failure, noting the bike lane is underutilized and the restructuring has made traffic worse.

Carter Flemming, president of the Seminary Hill Association, is among those unhappy with the King Street renovation.

For the Seminary Road project, Seminary Hill Association, along with the Clover College Park Civic Association, Seminary West Civic Association, North Ridge Citizens' Association, Brookville-Seminary Valley Civic Association and Seminary Civic Association, proposed a fourth alternative, which called for

narrowing the existing four vehicular lanes and more strictly enforcing the 25-mph speed limit.

"It's not about saving five seconds [of traffic]. It's about changing the dynamic of a major arterial road, and causing drivers to cross over in a short period of time into different lanes of traffic," Flemming said.

Flemming added that the city should not be removing car lanes in such a high-traffic road, citing a recent survey from The Washington Post that showed a majority of residents in the D.C. metro area used their car as their main form of transit.

"I don't think that anyone's opposed to the city encouraging people to use other modes of transportation," she said. "But, as the article says, the car is still king."

Jonathan Krall, the former chair of the Alexandria Bicycling and Pedestrian Advisory Committee, called the city's plan for Seminary Road "terrible," and said a road diet would be the best option.

"The plan that they're putting out doesn't have bicycle lanes. I mean, there's a little drawing of bicycles in the plan, but those are bicycles placed smack dab in the middle of a road designed for 35 miles per hour," Krall said.

Krall, who is also a member of Grassroots Alexandria, said that it was necessary to foster bike lanes, given the impact of vehicular emissions on climate change.

"We need to shift, in general, to less energy-consuming transportation," he said.

Joe Sestak, a former Pennsylvania congressman who now lives in Alexandria, questioned whether the city was being forthcoming in its reasons for repaving the road, since a section not slated for road narrowing has had three times as many accidents since 2015 than the one being narrowed.

State traffic records show that since 2015, there have been 22 accidents, with nine of them resulting in injury, on the stretch of road under discussion – Seminary Road from North Howard Street to North Quaker Lane.

In contrast, the stretch of road from Kenmore Ave. to North Howard Street – for which no changes are scheduled, but which is marked by the city to be "considered for short-term and mid-term improvements" – saw 68 accidents in that same span of time, 24 of which resulted in injury.

Sestak also pointed to U.S. Census data, which shows the eastern section of Seminary Road has a higher median income rate than the western section.

"People [with] low income, they never really get a voice. Nobody goes over there to do town hall for them," Sestak said. "The biggest deficit we have in America today is the lack of trust in government. This is not the way to try to justify something on the issue of safety ... if you're con-

cerned about the safety on Seminary, do it in the part you're not even doing anything in."

Orr said the entirety of Seminary Road up to I-395 was originally part of the current repaving plan, but had to be delayed due to complications, including the high level of traffic in the area and existing projects by the state transportation department.

"We felt comfortable proposing something from Howard [Street] to the east, and kind of leaving the lane configuration from Howard to the west alone, with some pedestrian safety modifications at some of those intersections alone, just because of the unknowns with higher traffic volume in that section of the roadway," Orr said.

She added that potential changes to Seminary Road west of Howard Street would be "a little bit outside of the scope of what we do with a typical resurfacing project," and city staff is currently considering options for a long-term, standalone project on that stretch of road. There is no timeline yet for when such a project would take place, Orr said.

The staff recommendation is currently scheduled to be considered by the city Traffic and Parking Board on June 24. It would then go before city council for a public hearing and final vote in September. Repaving would begin shortly afterward if the plan receives final approval, Orr said.

-ahodjat@alextimes.com

SCOOTERS FROM | 18

impounding, Lambert said.

"The MOU has a termination clause, so if we decide it gets to a point where we need to terminate the MOU, there certainly are ways for us to do that," Lambert said. "We're not at that point yet."

Backed by data that pours in monthly, the city's efforts to hold companies accountable are still evolving, even as residents continue to call for accountability from the companies and the city. Being able to collect certain key data points will help the city improve its ability to ensure corporate accountability, Orr said.

"The companies vary," Orr said. "... When we call the companies they seem pretty responsive so far, but what we need to see from them is when all the calls came in, when all the complaints were addressed."

Adapting to a new form of technology that plays by its own rules and defies standard enforcement efforts remains a challenge for the city. In a program like this, disruptive technology can quickly become dangerous. For the city, keeping corporations accountable could ensure the success of the program – and the safety of the city's residents.

In the next part of this ongoing series, the Times will explore how much power the city has to enforce and regulate scooters in the face of a new state bill that goes into effect next month.

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PY Metro southern entrance scaled back

Escalators will likely be removed from design plans

BY MISSY SCHROTT

City council voted unanimously to simplify the design of the southern entrance of the Potomac Yard Metro Station at its legislative meeting Tuesday.

Council's decision directs staff to work with the

SEE **METRO** | 3

INSIDE

Public Hearing

Council approves a Green Building Policy update with stricter standards. Page 7

Arts

The Free Flowing Musical Experience is far from an ordinary cover band. Page 13

Events

Residents gather at weekend festivities throughout the city. Page 14



PART 5 OF A SERIES

State bill regulates e-scooters

New laws give local governments more power

BY CODY MELLO-KLEIN

Since the early days of Alexandria's e-scooter pilot program, voices of opposition have called for more regulation of the vehicles and their riders – or outright cancellation of the program.

The former is being addressed by a new state bill, some provisions of which take effect July 1 and others Jan. 1, 2020.

SEE **SCOOTERS** | 10

PHOTO/MISSY SCHROTT

Traffic board votes on Seminary

Board recommends maintaining road at four lanes

BY ARYA HODJAT

The Alexandria Traffic and Parking Board voted 3-2 on Monday night to recommend that Seminary Road remain a four-lane street, with the addition of two new traffic lights.

Board chair William Schuyler, vice chair Jim Lewis and board member Ann Tucker voted in favor of the four-lane proposal. Board members Kevin Beekman and Casey Kane voted against the proposal. Members Randy Cole and Jason Osborne were absent.

"This appears to be more controversial than we expected," Schuyler said to a full room of attendees at the beginning of the meeting.

The Seminary Road Complete Streets Project has been in the works since July 2018, with the street scheduled to be repaved and

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ALEXANDRIA ACES REPORT

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CAL RIPKEN COLLEGIATE BASEBALL LEAGUE

Team	Record
Bethesda Big Train	14-5
Silver Spring-Takoma T-Bolts	9-7
D.C. Grays	9-10
Gaithersburg Giants	9-11
Alexandria Aces	6-10
FCA Braves	6-10

Scores this week:

June 19

Aces W 6-3 @ Gaithersburg Giants

June 21

Aces L 15-9 @ Silver Spring-Takoma T-Bolts

June 21

Aces W 5-2 @ Silver Spring-Takoma T-Bolts

June 23

Aces L 13-5 vs Bethesda Big Train

June 24

Aces L 4-2 vs Gaithersburg Giants

June 24

Aces W 14-8 vs Gaithersburg Giants



PHOTO/MISSY SCHROTT

A new state bill, parts of which go into effect July 1, aims to define e-scooters in the state code and give local governments the power to regulate the vehicles.

SCOOTERS FROM | 1

The new bill increases the ability of localities to regulate scooters in some ways, but there is still confusion and uncertainty regarding certain aspects of the pilot program.

Outright cancellation of the program is no closer to happening, although the new bill does not change the city's existing right to cancel its pilot program at any time.

House bill 2752, which aims to define e-scooters in the state code and grant local governments the authority to regulate scooters on their own terms, was proposed by Del. Todd Pillion (R-4) near the start of the Virginia General Assembly 2019 session in January. It was quickly passed by the assembly in February and signed by Gov. Ralph Northam in March.

Once it takes effect, the bill will make several changes to Title 46.2, the section of the Code of Virginia that addresses motor vehicles.

Altered language in section 46.2-100 now defines motorized scooters as any vehicle that is designed to allow a rider

to sit or stand, has no vehicle identification number issued by a manufacturer, is powered in any way by an electric motor, weighs less than 100 pounds and has a maximum speed of 20 miles per hour.

Several other sections in the amended Title 46.2 outline regulations for rider behavior. Riders cannot operate scooters on highways and must be 14 years or older to ride, unless supervised by someone 18 years or older, according to the new law.

Under the city's pilot program, the seven permitted companies are able to determine the minimum age of its riders. The majority of companies operating in Alexandria require riders to be 14 years or older or, in some cases, have a valid driver's license. The new state law will outweigh previous regulations set by the companies.

The language defining motorized vehicles and certain regulations for rider behavior will go into effect on July 1.

For many, the most significant and relevant aspects of the state law involve sidewalk riding and the city's ability to

regulate it. Many of these provisions of the bill will go into effect on Jan. 1, 2020.

Once effected next year, section 46.2-903 will state that e-scooters can be ridden on sidewalks "unless otherwise prohibited." Section 46.2-904 will grant a county, city or town the ability to prohibit scooters "on designated sidewalks or crosswalks" through a local ordinance, while section 46.2-1315 will officially grant localities the power to establish pilot programs as long as they are in compliance with Title 46.2.

Notably, none of HB2752's changes to Title 46.2 impact the ability for a locality to cancel its pilot program. The city still has the power to cancel or suspend its pilot program at any time, if city council decides to do so.

Part of section 46.2-904 also addresses the parking issues that have concerned Old Town residents. It states that scooters can't be parked anywhere "that impedes the normal movement of pedestrian or other traffic or where such

SCOOTERS FROM | 10

parking is prohibited by official traffic control devices.” This provision goes into effect July 1.

A violation of section 46.2-904 or any ordinance adopted in line with this section is punishable by a civil penalty for riders of up to \$50. According to Alexandria Police Chief Michael Brown, officers still face challenges enforcing scooter regulations – most notably stopping riders who can maneuver quickly and easily through traffic. Ongoing enforcement challenges leave it unclear how this aspect of the bill will be enforced.

Localities will only be able to regulate scooters according to the provisions of this title but can choose to what extent they do so, according to state law.

Under the old state code, city officials faced challeng-

es regulating sidewalk riding, Hillary Orr, deputy director of the Alexandria Department of Transportation and Environmental Services, said.

“As I understand, right now we could ban scooters on certain sidewalks ... but you have to [designate] every block,” Orr said. “That’s the challenge and then trying to help people understand where those blocks are.”

The city has prohibited sidewalk riding as part of its program, but the ambiguity in state and local laws that address scooters has hindered enforcement efforts.

“There are gaps in the current law, which make it difficult for us to enforce some of the laws that people are accustomed to,” Brown said.

The simple act of defining scooters under the new state code grants city government the power to pursue more serious scooter regulation, especially as it pertains to sidewalk

riding, Orr said.

“The city could make its own ordinance against it,” Orr said. “That’s where the city has the authority to regulate scooters riding on sidewalks, once they’re defined in state code.”

Although the additions to Title 46.2 ostensibly empower the city, some language indicates that these new state-level regulations could impinge on local regulations, at least for a specific period of time.

Language toward the end of Title 46.2 outlines that section 46.2-1315 will not impact “existing regulations, ordinances or pilot projects currently being implemented.” But additional language complicates the city’s given ability to regulate sidewalk riding.

“It allegedly gives a municipality like Alexandria the authority to prohibit scooters on sidewalks. But there’s

SEE **SCOOTERS** | 25

MO SEIFELDEIN CALLS FOR SUSPENSION OF SCOOTERS

Councilor Mo Seifeldein is calling for the temporary suspension of the city’s e-scooter pilot program, according to a June 20 news release.

“There are safety concerns and then there are equity concerns,” Seifeldein said in an interview. “And then given the rise of death for scooter riders – 11 in the nation – I think that’s significant, and I wouldn’t want anything like that to happen in Alexandria.”

The city has the power to cancel or suspend its pilot program at any time if council decides to do so. So far, Seifeldein is the only member of city council to call for the program’s suspension.

Seifeldein said he called for the temporary suspension in order to talk with staff, community members and the local law community about how the city can address safety and equity concerns, regulate scooters and evaluate potential ways forward for the program.

“I’ll be reaching out to law students and law professors and staff and community members to try to sit down and figure out the best way to approach this issue and whether it is approachable at all,” Seifeldein said in an interview.

The city’s pilot program ends in September, although city staff is able to extend the program by two months while collecting and analyzing data to make a recommendation to city council. Seifeldein aims to suspend the program before city council adjourns for the summer.

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SEMINARY FROM | 8

"If Seminary Road is as bad as they say it is, I might move, because I'm worried I'll die on my way home... but the reality is, Seminary Road is safe," Curry said. "I don't want to sit in endless traffic. I'm getting older, and I don't want to spend all my time left there."

Carter Flemming, the president of the Seminary Hill Association, argued that the speed limits on Seminary Road needed to be enforced more strictly.

Data from the Alexandria Police Department recorded 1410 traffic stops on Seminary Road during 2018, with 945 of them occurring between North Howard Street and North Quaker Lane.

"55.3% of the citations is-

sued for Seminary Rd in 2018 were in the N. Quaker Lane to the N. Howard stretch," according to a police report. "This corridor is 33.3% of the length of Seminary Rd. in Alexandria."

Corey Ballantine, a lieutenant in the Alexandria Police Department, wrote in an email that "all traffic violations are enforced" on the road and that it is patrolled by officers.

Ella Knight, who spoke in favor of a road diet, said she regularly walks half a mile alongside Seminary Road and feels unsafe given the presence of a hill on the road, as well as lack of crosswalks.

"I would much rather have more traffic than dead pedestrians," Knight said.

Bishop Jim Mathes, the

dean of students at Virginia Theological Seminary — for which the road is named — voiced similar concerns about the hill, speaking in favor of a road diet.

"I see bikers coming up that hill, and I first admire their stamina, but then I fear for their safety," he said. "It seems like a small price to pay, a few minutes ... for a safe space for all residents."

Others argued that the plan would serve to further congest Seminary Road, and pushed back against the addition of a sidewalk with the road diet. The sidewalk would cost \$1.5 million, according to estimates from city staff.

City council's final vote on the project remains tentatively scheduled for September.

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SCOOTERS FROM | 11

another code section that mandates that that is not to go into effect until January 2020," Yvonne Callahan, a retired lawyer and current vice president of the Old Town Civic Association, said.

Section 46.2-903, which allows scooters to ride on sidewalks unless prohibited by a local ordinance, will not take effect until January 2020. Section 46.2-904, which allows a city to create an ordinance to prohibit scooters on "designated" sidewalks will go into effect on July 1. The latter affords localities some measure of control until the delayed effective date of the former.

While certain sections of the pilot don't take effect until January 2020, others could limit the city's power if certain actions aren't taken by January 2020, Callahan said.

"[Section 46.2-1315] also provides that the city may establish a licensing agreement with the scooter companies," Callahan said. "... The city is given the authority to license scooters, but if they don't do

that by January 2020, they lose the right to do it."

The City of Alexandria does not currently operate with licensing agreements, which would resemble licensed taxi operations. Instead, it uses a permitting system.

Section 46.2-1315's January 2020 cutoff only negates the city's ability to license. It does not affect a city's ability to set up a pilot program or permit, control or ban scooters under its own pilot program.

"It does not appear to set any kind of 'start a pilot or you're dead,'" Callahan said. "There's no language to that effect except that it does say, [paraphrased] 'This act shall not be construed to impact any pilot project currently being implemented as authorized by existing law.'"

The delayed effective date for certain sections of the bill could complicate the city's regulatory efforts, but it also provides the city with more time to evaluate the effectiveness of its own program, Craig Fifer, the city's communications director, said.

"If the new law had an effective date of July 1, we may

have had to make a decision without enough data and analysis," Fifer said. "The January 2020 effective date for some provisions doesn't have a foreseeable impact on our local authority to regulate via an ordinance."

The city's charter still affords it some authority. According to section 2.04 of the city's charter, the city can regulate the operation of vehicles, manage and control traffic and prevent any obstruction of rights-of-way, Fifer said.

The new state law aims to give cities like Alexandria more power to control a transportation revolution that arrived with little warning. While delayed start dates for specific code sections could impact just how much power the city really has at the moment, city staff are looking forward to wresting back some control in a situation that has left people in the community, and in city hall, with more questions than answers.

"The new legislation lets the city define how the program looks," Orr said.

-cmelloklein@alextimes.com

BANSAL FROM | 6

hospital was fined thousands of dollars from the federal Department of Health and Human Services for a high rate of patient infection and injuries that occur during hospital stays. The hospital was one of 751 nationally to be penalized in 2017, incurring a fine of \$580,009.

According to a 2018 Inova quality report, Inova Alexandria lowered its rates of bloodstream, catheter, c. diff and patient safety complications from 2017 to 2018.

David Cleary, a member of Inova Alexandria's Quality Board, said the hospital had generally excelled in terms of safety standards.

"For whatever reason, there was a lapse a couple of years back," he said. "When you have thousands of patients a year, it's difficult to not have one slip by. But my goodness, they're careful about that."

Cleary said he was especially impressed with the hospital's bookkeeping, pointing to their statistics on

injuries and infections.

"If you'd go down there, they'd show you all the charts," Cleary said. "It's just mind-boggling, all the statistics that they keep."

Bansal said such a focus was necessary.

"I think if you focus on patient safety, quality experience, you actually improve your outcomes, which will then help you decrease your cost," she said.

Lowering cost of care is another major focus of Bansal's. She said she wants Inova Alexandria to provide cost-efficient care, partly by building trust between patients and doctors.

"It's not about, you know, saving money. It's about how can we provide healthcare in the most resource efficient manner," Bansal said.

As for following her early dreams of starting a non-profit, Bansal said she hasn't ruled it out yet.

"I'm open to any opportunity. But I'm waiting for my kids to go to college," she said, with a laugh.

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PART 6 OF A SERIES

Are scooters on the right path?

Staff memo to council includes stats, feedback, next steps

BY CODY MELLO-KLEIN

Alexandria's e-scooter pilot program is nearing the end of the road in September, and community members have lingering questions about the program's merits and faults. A recent pilot program update memo from city staff to city council answers some of those questions – and raises others.

The memo, sent to council by city staff on July 23, provides a detailed update, with ridership data, crash and accident statistics and projected next steps the city will consider taking with the program.

SEE **SCOOTERS** | 5



PHOTO/MISSY SCHROTT

Lower King pedestrian zone proposed

Council to consider impact of three-block closure in Old Town

BY MISSY SCHROTT

From the historic Trafalgar Square in London to the eight-block-long pedestrian mall in Charlottesville, it's not unusual for cities to feature pedestrian-only zones in major dining and shopping districts. With a recent proposal, Alexandria could be next.

Mayor Justin Wilson and Councilor John Chapman have requested that city staff look into closing the unit block, 100 block and 200 block of King Street to vehicle traffic, according to a May 14 memo to city council.

"There is very much a yearning for rethinking the way we use public space," Wilson said. "Here, you have a space that attracts a lot of people, a lot of visitors, a lot of residents, and I think there's a way to make that even more vital, even more attractive to the community."

In the memo, Wilson and Chapman requested that staff look into expanded outdoor dining, streetscape infrastructure enhancements, programming expansion, expanded bicycle infrastructure and public art integration.

"It's very much looking at [King Street] as a broader

community amenity," Wilson said. "I think the way I envision this, at least in my head, is you're expanding outdoor dining, you're expanding activities that are occurring there and events. You're using it as almost essentially a park, where today it's asphalt and a street."

Staff is planning to bring a recommendation to council this fall with a process and timetable for studying a lower King Street pedestrian zone, according to Sarah Godfrey, city public information officer.

Since staff is still in the early stages of crafting the proposal, a clear image of what the pedestrian-only zone would look like has yet to emerge. Parameters hav-

SEE **PEDESTRIAN** 10

INSIDE

Alexandria Harmonizers
Local barbershop chorus visits Alexandria's sister city.
Page 8

Foodie
Turn up the summer heat with Boston Beach jerk chicken.
Page 11

Arts
The Little Theatre puts on 'The Producers.'
Page 14

SCOOTERS FROM | 1

After being approved in November 2018, the city's e-scooter pilot program commenced in January 2019 with Lime, the first permitted scooter company, launching its fleet of dockless electric vehicles onto the city's streets. Since then, five more companies have received permits and signed memorandums of understanding with the city. All permits expire on Sept. 30, although the city is able to administratively extend the program until the end of October while staff evaluates the program and crafts a recommendation for council.

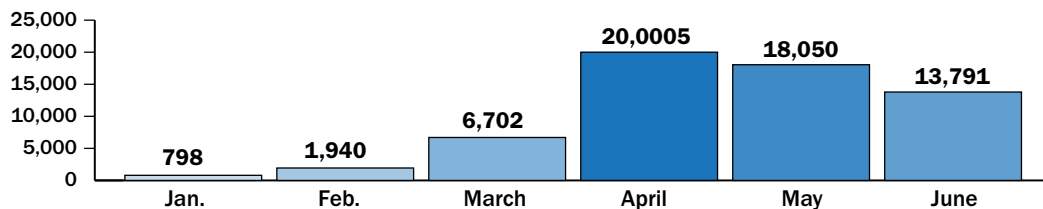
Community concerns around safety, parking and the program's aesthetic impact on Old Town have been present since the beginning, and the memo documents hundreds of complaints from residents during the memo's January through May timeframe. But data in the memo also reveals usage levels that indicate the program has taken off with riders.

From January through the end of May, 18,050 registered users of the apps have started or ended 101,515 scooter trips in Alexandria, according to the memo. Eighty percent of those trips took place in April and May. Between January and May, riders travelled 91,644 miles, with the average trip lasting between 10 and 15 minutes and spanning just under one mile.

The total number of trips roughly coincides with the arrival of summer, the change in weather and rise in tourism, according to the memo. Riders took 4,198 trips in February. That number quickly jumped to 13,845 in March and then to 42,200 in April before falling to 39,682 in May.

According to the memo, the six scooter companies currently permitted to operate in the city - Lime, Lyft, Bolt, Bird, Skip and Spin - have each deployed 50 to 180 vehicles per day on average, totaling, on average, 650 to 700 scooters in Alexandria per day. Per the MOU, each

TOTAL ACTIVE USERS



DATA/ CITY OF ALEXANDRIA

The rise in the number of active users roughly coincides with the arrival of summer and rise in tourism, according to the staff memo.

company can deploy a maximum of 200 scooters.

A handful of crashes and injuries have been reported since the pilot began, though the memo notes that the number of actual crashes is likely higher than the reported tally.

"It is acknowledged that known crashes and injuries are likely less than the actual total due to non-reporting," according to the memo.

The memo notes two crashes, neither of which resulted in police reports or injuries, while the Times has learned of two additional crashes in recent weeks.

The first crash occurred in April when a rider was hit

by a car and received only "minor scrapes," according to the memo. The second occurred in May and "involved the rider and property damage" near North West and Princess streets.

A third crash occurred on July 18, but, due to the memo's data only extending through May, was not included in the report. In this case, a man was hospitalized after crashing a scooter near the intersection of Gibbon and South Royal streets. The man suffered a minor head injury and was transported to the George Washington University Hospital where he was treated and

released, according to Craig Fifer, the city's communications director.

A fourth crash occurred on Saturday at the intersection of Main Line Boulevard and Potomac Avenue, according to a city news alert. The rider was transported

to the hospital, and no other vehicle was involved with the crash.

The scooter companies also reported six "minor injuries" between January and May involving riders and the scooters, including hand pains caused by rough riding and incidents with potholes or other immobile street objects.

Community members have had ongoing concerns about safety for riders and pedestrians along with improper parking and riding. According to the memo, community members voiced those concerns, en masse, to both staff and the companies.

SEE SCOOTERS | 6



PHOTO/MISSY SCHROTT

From January to May, the city's e-scooter pilot program saw 18,050 registered users travel 91,644 miles, starting or ending 101,515 trips in Alexandria, according to a staff memo.

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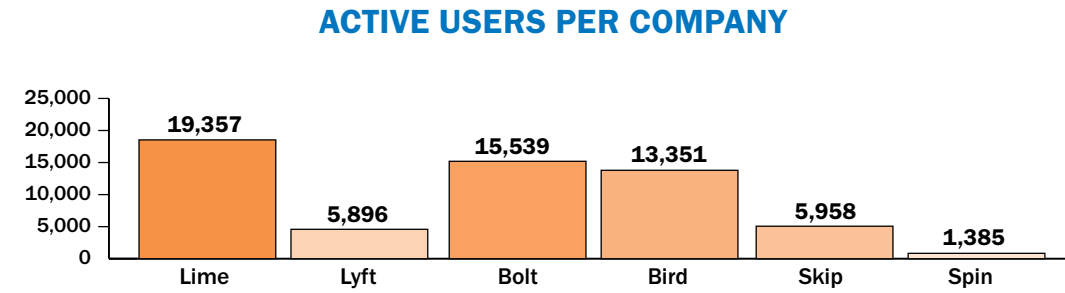
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SCOOTERS FROM | 5

Community members reported 97 parking issues and 324 “other” issues to the scooter companies. Meanwhile, city staff received around 800 comments or reported issues from the community, the city’s Call.Click.Connect service received 213 tickets and the dockless mobility email address received more than 500 emails.

Staff’s memo to council notes common themes from the community input it received, including improper parking of scooters; pedestrian safety especially for elderly people and those with disabilities; the loss of Old Town’s historic character; and questions about the law and legislation around scooters. The city has been evaluating community input — particularly from those in Old Town where 65 percent of scooter usage takes place — and making some mid-pilot adjustments based on the feedback.

Some of those mid-pilot



DATA/CITY OF ALEXANDRIA

Lime, which was the first company permitted to operate in the city in January, has the most active users, followed by Bolt, which was permitted on Feb. 22, and Bird, which was permitted on March 1.

adjustments were implemented early in the pilot program. For instance, the city posted variable message boards on King Street and near the waterfront in May, warning scooter operators that sidewalk riding is prohibited.

The city also communicated to the companies the need to increase or modify safety messaging in the apps themselves, according to the memo. Some companies, including Bolt, now show notifications about local rules every time the app is opened. Others, such as Bird, have safety messaging, but users

have to look for it in the “How to Ride” section of the app.

The city is also working on its own form of rider education.

“One of the things that we’re currently working on right now is kind of like a door hanger but it’s a scooter hanger where we’ve got information for users,” Hillary Orr, deputy director of the Department of Transportation and Environmental Services, said.

The city worked with the Alexandria Police Department to increase targeted enforcement and education

efforts on weekends in areas where ridership is high. Those efforts resulted in six citations for sidewalk riding and reckless driving and 138 stops where officers warned and educated scooter riders after stop sign violations, sidewalk riding or underage operation.

The city also formed its own enforcement effort: a scooter task force made up of T&ES employees who straighten, report and impound scooters. The MOU states that a company must retrieve any improperly parked vehicle within two hours, or the city can im-

pound it and charge the company for the time and staff hours required to transport and house the vehicle.

T&ES staff straightened 230 scooters, reported three improperly parked scooters and impounded 31 scooters. Staff also noted several instances of vandalism to the scooters, such as people putting the vehicles into trash cans, kicking them and even throwing them into bodies of water.

Other adjustments to the pilot, including geofencing and scooter corrals, have taken longer to implement.

“We have worked with the companies to geofence certain areas based on feedback based on the community,” Orr said. “Right now, people can ride through those areas. What the geofencing means, and what the technology is right now, is that people cannot start or end a trip there.”

So far, the city has geofenced Market Square,

SEE SCOOTERS

| 22



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SCOOTERS

FROM | 6

Waterfront Park, the City of Alexandria Marina and areas around Alexandria Metro stops for the duration of the summer Metro shutdown. The private streets in and around Ford's Landing Townhomes were also geofenced after the homeowners' association sent a letter to the scooter companies requesting the area be off limits for scooters.

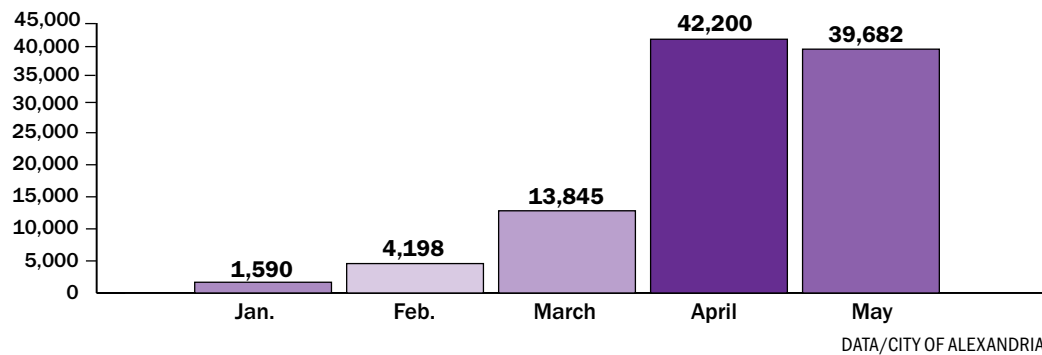
Staff is also trying to implement scooter corrals "that will not impact vehicle parking" in 10 high-use areas, according to the memo. The first corrals are set to be installed in Old Town this weekend, Orr said in an email.

Staff is considering a variety of other major changes to the program, like mandating that all companies require riders to have a driv-

er's license and strive for more equitable deployment throughout the city. But with two months left in the pilot, city staff are currently intent

on collecting and evaluating data from the companies and community before a recommendation is made to city council, Orr said.

TOTAL TRIPS



DATA/CITY OF ALEXANDRIA

Eighty percent of the total trips taken by e-scooter riders occurred in April and May.

"We're not going to be making any adjustments before [September] because it's not worth the time to go through that with the companies," Orr said. "What we're looking at is, if we don't cancel, what adjustments would we want to include in the MOUs. We have some general thoughts on that, but we're also going to be basing that on input from the community."

Looking past September, the staff memo cites the potential for a phase two pilot, one that would allow staff additional time to adapt to a rapidly changing technology before implementing something permanent.

"Other cities have gone through the pilot process, they've seen what's worked and what hasn't worked, what regulations need to be changed and before instituting a full-fledged program that's a little bit harder to alter, they'll go through a phase two [pilot] because technology is changing so fast," Christine Mayeur, T&ES' Complete Streets program manager, said. "There are things that are changing that a phase two pilot could help us test out, to see what's working and allow us to be a little more flexible."

Whether a phase two pilot is part of staff's recommendation or not is still uncertain. Staff are still inundated with messages from concerned residents, while ridership remains high. The city will have to sort through community input, company-provided data and its own internal numbers to determine whether there is a path forward for e-scooters in Alexandria, and if so, how that path should be constructed.

"The community input that we get as we do outreach over the next few months will really help us figure out if that's the right move and also what we would want to look at during the [phase two] pilot if we went down that path," Orr said.

-cmelloklein@alextimes.com

Obituary

Nancy P. Resende

January 13, 1952 - July 31, 2019

Nancy, an Alexandria resident since 1981, died near her Old Town Alexandria home on July 31. Born in Charleston, West Virginia and raised in suburban Wilmington, Delaware, Nancy moved to the Washington, D.C. area after graduating from Madison College (now JMU) with her high school sweetheart and husband, Joe, in 1973 where she



taught elementary school in Calvert County for 25 years. In addition to her devotion to family and friends, Nancy's passions included golfing, running and cooking. She was a member of Mount Vernon Country Club (Alexandria), Cripple Creek Golf & Country Club (Bethany Beach, DE) and Naples Grade Golf Club (Naples,

FL). Nancy is survived by her husband, two brothers and sisters-in-law, Joe's mother, several nieces/nephews and their spouses, and a growing number of grand nieces/nephews. In lieu of flowers, Nancy requested that donations be made to St. Jude Children's Hospital and/or Pediatric PANDAS Network.

Joyce Conkin Zanone

Joyce Conkin Zanone, 79, passed away peacefully in her sleep at home on June 25, 2019.

She was born in the Beech Creek community of Rogersville, Tennessee on Oct. 9, 1939 and after graduating from high school was recruited by the U.S. Navy to come to Washington D.C. to work as a secretary.

Joyce met the love of her life, John Zanone, and they were married in 1960. Joyce worked at the City of Alexandria Department of Recreation and was involved in many volunteer causes.

She will be mourned by her husband, John, her children, Priscilla Goodwin (Michael), Jay Zanone (Jen) and Dante Zanone (Becky). Another daughter, Mary Var-



gas, preceded her in death. She is also survived by a loving sister, Janice Cobb, and ten grandchildren.

Services will be held at Blessed Sacrament Catholic Church on August 31st at 11am, services arranged by Everly-Wheatley Funeral Home.

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PART 7 OF A SERIES

Equity in the e-scooter program

Geographically isolated residents miss out on scooter craze

BY CODY MELLO-KLEIN

On June 20, city councilor Mo Seifeldein released a statement calling for the suspension of Alexandria's e-scooter pilot program. In the statement, he cited two primary points of concern: safety and equity.

The issue of safety has been a constant point of concern for residents and the city since the pilot program started in January and

SEE **SCOOTERS**

| 6

PHOTO/MISSY SCHROTT

Torpedo Factory set to celebrate its centennial

Art center marks 45 years

BY HANNAH HIMES

The Torpedo Factory has housed everything from torpedoes and dinosaur bones to World War II files and, now, the works of more than 165 artists.

Located on North Union Street along the waterfront, the building's 100th anniversary is this November.

Brett Johnson, director of the Torpedo Factory Art Center said the anniversary is a testament to Alexandrians' interest in history and the city's commitment to preserving beautiful buildings.

"I think the bigger significance is the art center turning 45," Johnson said. "That's a rare feat in general, showing the commit-

SEE **CENTENNIAL**

| 10



PHOTO/CODY MELLO-KLEIN

Back to School

Alexandria City Public Schools kicked off the 2019-2020 school year on Tuesday. For more photos, see page 14.

INSIDE

Sports

B.I. football wins first home game in four years

Page 12

Pets

Barking at dog parks sparks controversy

Page 17

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SCOOTERS FROM | 1

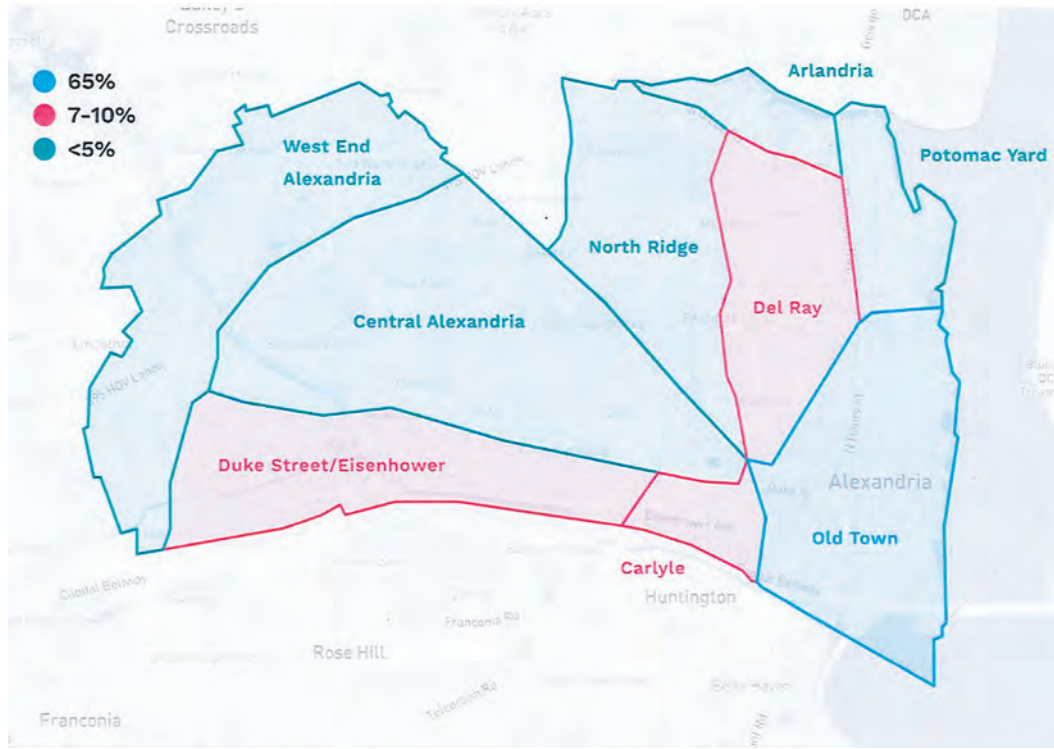
gained speed in March. But on the question of equity, there has been far less discussion.

“Considering that companies have designated drop off areas for those who charge and release scooters, the lack of e-scooters in West Alexandria, where many underserved communities reside, is concerning,” Seifeldein said in the statement.

That concern lingers. The question of equitable distribution of the city’s burgeoning e-scooter fleet that Seifeldein raised in June remains largely unanswered. However, in an industry that prioritizes usage and a new form of mobility that emphasizes last mile connections, there might be a reason why scooters are not deployed equitably across Alexandria’s neighborhoods.

According to a usage map included in a July 23 staff memo, 65 percent of the city’s e-scooter ridership takes place in Old Town. Del Ray, Duke Street/Eisenhower and Carlyle each have somewhere between 7 and 10 percent of ridership, while Central Alexandria, North Ridge, Arlandria, Potomac Yard and the West End each account for less than 5 percent of the city’s total usage.

The high amount of usage in Old Town is not surprising, according to Christine Mayeur, Clean Streets program manager in the Department of Transpor-



MAP/CITY OF ALEXANDRIA

A July staff memo detailed e-scooter usage across the city. Compared to Old Town, in which 65 percent of the city’s usage has occurred, neighborhoods outside the city center have had far less usage and deployment.

tation and Environmental Services.

Old Town is a hub of the city’s business, retail and culinary communities, and it is in close proximity to public transit stops. All of that goes into the market assessment that dictates where each of the city’s seven permitted scooter companies choose to distribute their devices, Mayeur said.

“It seems that scooter operators are doing their own market assessments or looking at the potential demand or interest in the scooters, across Alexandria and other cities for scooter ridership,” Mayeur said.

“They then deploy the devices based on both the market that exists for rides and a data feedback loop of where people are riding and their destinations.”

Scooters often function as a “last-mile connection” for commuters. For scooter companies trying to maximize usage and profit, it makes little sense to deploy in neighborhoods that are far from Metro stops or high-traffic areas like King Street, Mayeur said.

“These devices work great as an option for a last-mile connection, so thinking of it that way already dictates the areas where it

makes the most business sense to deploy,” Mayeur said.

Some scooter companies said that deployment is based on “need.”

“Bird places scooters where there’s a need, whether that’s around transit areas or other popular areas in Alexandria,” a Bird spokesperson said in an email. “Bird is actively working with the city to ensure we’re meeting the needs of residents in all areas of Alexandria.”

Seifeldein said in his statement that there is a difference between the “need” as defined by companies and the “need” of low income or geographically isolated Alexandrians.

“It is unclear how the companies intend to determine whether scooters would work in the West End if there has not been a fair amount of distribution during the pilot program,” Seifeldein said in a statement.

In other neighborhoods with similar usage rates to West Alexandria, if not similar income brackets, like

North Ridge and Seminary Hill, scooters are also relatively scarce, residents said.

Although e-scooters would be an affordable, convenient form of transportation for Alexandria’s low-income or geographically isolated residents, residents in these neighborhoods admitted that scooters don’t make sense in some areas of Alexandria.

“I think out here the reason for that is it’s kind of a combination of topography and destinations,” Carter Flemming, president of the Seminary Hill Association, said. “I think the scooter program, as we understand it, is supposed to fill that last one mile. ... The question is, ‘What destination would scooters be trying to get to within that last mile?’”

Between Seminary Hill’s distance from major transit stops and the neighborhood’s primarily residential streets, residents aren’t in need of scooters, Flemming said. Residents in West Alexandria and North Ridge expressed similar sentiments.

There is one demographic that’s found a use for scooters in these neighborhoods: young students. According to Flemming, the demographic that uses scooters the most are students under the age of 14, who, under the city’s Memorandum of Understanding, are prohibited from using them.

“As I understand, there are a considerable amount of students who actually use them now to ride home from over at [George Washington Middle School],” Kay Stimson, president of the North Ridge Civic Association, said.

Underage riding has consistently been an issue for police and residents, but these new devices are clearly filling a need for the very Alexandrians who should not be riding them.

A Bird spokesperson

SCOOTERS FROM | 6

claimed the company has programs to provide access to scooters for low income residents, but the city has been encouraging companies to expand their distribution for months.

In a June 10 email to Bird, Mayeur denied the company's request for a fleet increase. Instead, she suggested the company expand its distribution.

"I would like to see more vehicles deployed to areas outside of Old Town, like in areas in and near the West End, with low income housing, or less access to transit options like in Arlandria," Mayeur said in the email.

Based on the city's usage map, Mayeur's entreaties to the city's scooter companies have not resulted in significant shifts in deployment patterns. Under the MOU, companies aren't required to deploy scooters in specific locations, but issues of equity will be a focus for T&ES during the de-

partment's data collection phase of the pilot, Mayeur said.

"Equity means a lot of different things to us — from geographic access to financial access, and more," Mayeur said. "It's something that is hugely important to Alexandria, and we're looking forward to reviewing and analyzing the data from the dockless pilot holistically and, if the pilot is extended, using a data-driven approach to making these devices available to all who are interested in using them."

The city's neighborhoods are full of people who have access to scooters but don't want them, those who want scooters but aren't permitted to ride them and those who need scooters but can't access them. As the city commences its data dive, the answer to equity questions — and Seifeldein's call to action — remain unanswered.

-cmelloklein@alextimes.com



PHOTO/MISSY SCHROTT

Bird scooters line up at the base of King Street near Waterfront Park. Sixty-five percent of the city's e-scooter ridership takes place in Old Town.

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PART 8 OF A SERIES

The future of e-scooters in Alexandria

City releases phase two pilot proposals to mixed response

BY CODY MELLO-KLEIN

Are scooters a vibrant new part of Alexandria's transportation puzzle or a dangerous eyesore? That's the question, and city residents have five more days, until Oct. 15, to weigh in on city staff's recommendations for a phase two e-scooter pilot program.

City staff presented a set of draft recommendations for the phase two scooter pilot to city council on Oct. 2, bringing the program's future to the forefront of the conversation.

As the city's controversial, yet highly used, scooter pilot program nears the end

of its initial ride, city staff, council and the community have begun to ask, "What is the future of scooters in Alexandria?" Staff's recommended changes for a phase two pilot, and the window for resident input, come ahead of city council's scheduled vote on the program in November and the end of the original pilot on Dec. 31, 2019.

For the past nine months, Alexandria's city staff and city council – like others around the country – have wrestled with how to regulate fleets of dockless scooters. The city initiated a pilot program in January 2019, with the first permitted scooter company, Lime, deploying its fleet that month.

SEE SCOOTERS

| 16



PHOTO/MISSY SCHROTT

With council scheduled to vote on the e-scooter pilot program in November, city staff released a set of proposed draft recommendations for a phase two pilot to the public on Oct. 1.

'Ramblin' Boy'

Tom Paxton reflects on the '60s, songwriting and a decades-spanning career

BY CODY MELLO-KLEIN

When he was 15 years old, Grammy-nominated folk singer-songwriter Tom Paxton pulled a guitar out of his aunt's closet in her Chicago home. It was dusty and beat-up, with signs of a life that be-

gan before Paxton, but it still had stories to tell.

Pulling that hand-me-down six string out of the closet, Paxton had no idea the places those stories would take him.

Paxton, 81, has taken his songs across the world, from the Gaslight in Greenwich Village and Newport, Rhode

SEE PAXTON

| 8



PHOTO/CODY MELLO-KLEIN

Tom Paxton grew up with folk music in his head, fondly recalling listening to a rancher perform "cowboy songs" at the dude ranch in Arizona that his family lived at for three months.

INSIDE

Business

A former CIA analyst starts her own genealogy business
Page 6

Obituary

Robert Odle, lawyer and public official, dies at 75
Page 14

Foodie

Impress at your next tailgate with the perfect buffalo chicken dip recipe
Page 25



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PHOTO/MISSY SCHROTT

City staff has worked with the seven permitted scooter companies to implement geofencing, a GPS technology that prohibits scooters from starting or ending a ride in specific locations, such as Waterfront Park, Market Square and in certain private living communities.

SCOOTERS

FROM | 1

To enter the program and deploy scooters in Alexandria, each of the city’s seven permitted scooter companies had to pay a \$5,000 fee and sign a memorandum of understanding, agreeing to certain city rules and regulations.

A rocky start

The scooter program has been fiercely contested by some community members since its inception. Those who oppose the program have expressed concern about pedestrian safety due to scooters riding and parking on sidewalks, the seeming lack of enforcement by police and city staff and the failure of scooter companies to timely respond to reports of improperly parked scooters.

At the same time, many Alexandrians and visitors have found the scooters useful for last mile connections to public transit and joyrides. Between January and August there were 201,340 scooter trips, according to data presented to council during the Oct. 2 legislative meeting by Department of Transportation and Environmental Services staff. In that same time frame, 114,510 total active users have travelled 195,017 miles.

T&ES made mid-pilot adjustments in order to address certain concerns. Staff implemented scooter corals and geofencing to keep

scooters off sidewalks and from starting and stopping rides in certain areas. The city also gave scooter companies hang tags with educational safety messages and contact information to place on their devices.

For some, the mid-pilot changes failed to address equity, safety and enforcement issues. City Councilor Mo Seifeldein went so far as to call for the suspension of the program in June based on these concerns.

Phase two pilot

The draft recommendations proposed by T&ES aim to lay out a road map for a potential permanent scooter program. The proposed changes would be implemented in a phase two pilot, which, if approved by council in November, would last for the entirety of 2020.

In the draft recommendations, staff proposed reducing the speed limit on streets from 20 to 15 miles per hour, requiring anyone under the age of 14 to wear a helmet, establishing an ad hoc scooter task force and crafting a stricter MOU with potentially higher permit fees to cover the cost of the program.

The proposed change garnering the most attention from the community would allow scooters, like bicycles, to ride on sidewalks unless they’re explicitly banned from doing so. Bikes are per-

mitted to ride on sidewalks except on King Street and two blocks on Union Street, Hillary Orr, deputy director of T&ES, said.

Despite the changes proposed for a phase two pilot, some city councilors and community members remain skeptical about the program’s future.

“I’m not particularly sold on scooters quite yet,” Vice Mayor Elizabeth Bennett-Parker said at the Oct. 2 legislative meeting. “While I appreciate the opportunity to address the [last] mile problem with public transportation, I do share many of the concerns that we’ve heard from the community.”

“You are brewing a [recipe] for pedestrians’, bicyclists’ [and] scooterists’ road rage,” Danko Kramar, an Old Town resident, said. “... Why have tax dollars gone into making bicycle lanes on the street?”

In the draft recommendations, staff proposed a speed limit of 6 to 8 miles per hour on sidewalks, but Orr said the department is still working with the police department to determine what’s best.

“The speed limit on the sidewalk, we’re still working with police to figure out if that’s even feasible,” Orr said. “So, that might change by the time we have a final recommendation. We just want to get some feedback on

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SCOOTERS

FROM | 16

the community about that.”

In August, staff published a community feedback form, which garnered 2,914 responses, according to the staff presentation. Thirty-eight percent of respondents, around 1,100, had ridden a scooter. Of those riders, 26 percent said they mostly ride in bike lanes, while 53 percent said they would prefer to ride in a bike lane if possible.

The enforcement question

Staff's proposed changes include a requirement by companies to place scooters in parking corrals when possible. And while some members of council, including Amy Jackson, said the corrals have made a difference, councilors and community members alike remain concerned about police officers' ability to enforce rider behavior in general.

“I think we need to be serious about enforcement with all forms of transportation,” Councilor John Chapman said. “Adding additional modes of transportation, I would think that would add additional eyes, additional enforcement, but it doesn't seem that it's necessarily done that.”

“The city should have been doing something to make it more clear that they want to have law enforcement of this, not just civil enforcement of this,” Yvonne Callahan, vice president of the Old Town Civic Association, said.

One tool the city has been using to help control rider behavior is geofencing, a GPS-based technology that allows the scooter companies to mark certain areas off limits for parking scooters. Market Square, Waterfront Park and certain Metro stations during the summer shutdown were geofenced.

While geofencing can prevent rides from starting and stopping in a particular area, it doesn't currently disable

scooters that are brought into these areas from other locations from operating.

Staff is exploring potential no-ride zones as well, Orr said.

“What we're trying to get the technology to do is drop down to about three miles per hour when you enter a zone,” Orr said. “And again, the GPS is not that accurate, so we couldn't do a sidewalk. It would have to be a park or a bigger area. But it would drop down to a speed limit where effectively you can't balance, so you would have to walk it.”

Geofencing has been an underused resource, Chapman said.

“I think there's a lot of opportunity there that has not been realized,” Chapman said. “We have a technical opportunity to put boundaries around where people can place scooters, and we haven't done that. I think we leave a lot open to folks in terms of where they can place things.”

Equitable access

The most pressing issue for many on the dais remains the ongoing lack of equitable distribution of scooters throughout the city. For Seifeldein, equity is a make or break issue, one that he feels hasn't been addressed at all in the current pilot.

“The city is on the verge of implementing a policy that widens the equity gap,” Seifeldein said in an emailed statement. “As a general matter, City polices must be set to serve the best interest of all residents.”

Orr clarified that staff doesn't have a full data set that details where scooters are being deployed and ridden, which would help in determining where the equity gaps are. A July 23 staff memo identified that a significant majority of scooter usage – 65 percent – occurred in Old Town.

“I don't think that's something that we should allow because our job is not to ensure

that this business meets its bottom-line quota and returns of income,” Chapman said. “It's to ensure that all our residents have an opportunity at all of the options for transit.”

One of staff's proposed changes would require companies to deploy or rebalance their fleets in different neighborhoods and participate in income-based discount programs, according to the staff presentation.

Both Seifeldein and Chapman remained unconvinced and questioned whether staff has implemented changes quickly enough in the past.

On board

Meanwhile, some community members, especially riders, are optimistic about the changes.

“I feel the new revisions are a perfect example of the city learning and listening from the original pilot program,” Ethan McAfee, an Old Town resident and scooter rider, said. “It is clear by the over 200,000 rides that there is a clear demand for the service and that [the city] is doing its part to increase public transportation options and lower parking and traffic issues.”

Even opponents of the program expressed hesitant praise for some of staff's proposed changes, particularly the ad hoc scooter task force, which was originally proposed by local civic associations.

“The ad hoc scooter task force, I'm very glad for that. I wish it'd been done sooner,” Callahan said. “... Depending on who the city manager puts on there, it could be quite good.”

“We would try to get an equitable composition to represent as many groups as possible,” Orr said.

The path forward

Staff's proposed changes have not entirely addressed the concerns expressed by

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- River Farm, Alexandria, Virginia

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SCOOTERS FROM | 18

community or city council members. With a vote that will determine the program's future or elimination next month, staff and council members are looking at potential paths forward.

Bennett-Parker suggested creating a competitive points-based process for determining which companies can participate in the program. Staff is also looking into the potential of establishing a fee-per-scooter in order to create more strict measures for companies and possibly reduce the number of companies participating in the program, Orr said.

"I know staff is working on changes that would create higher bars for scooter companies, including higher fees that would cover our costs and that would serve to reduce the number of

companies operating," Bennett-Parker said in an email.

But the path forward is uncertain for many cities struggling to adapt to the rapidly evolving micro-mobility industry.

New companies, such as Charge, a company focused on providing infrastructure for scooters like parking space-sized charging stations, have sprung up around the industry. Charge aims to save companies money – and communities the headache – by confining e-scooters to defined city infrastructure.

"Our thesis is by corraling them in a series of smart city type approaches with our virtual docks, our physical docks ... you're able to actually keep your city streets and sidewalks compliant with everything from [the Americans with Disabilities Act] to normal common-sense quality of life,"

Charge Chief Executive Officer Andrew Fox said.

With all this change, staff and council members and the community continue to question whether the micro-mobility revolution can be a vital, feasible part of the city.

"I think [scooters] have the ability to be meaningful," Chapman said. "I just think we have to regulate them properly."

The Transportation Commission will hold a public hearing on the proposed changes at its Oct. 16 meeting, according to the city's website. City council will vote on the pilot program's future later this fall.

The public can provide feedback on the recommended changes through an online feedback form through Oct. 15: www.research.net/r/AlexandriaVa-ScooterPilot-DraftRecs.

-*cmelloklein@alextimes.com*

PAXTON FROM | 11

D.C. region in 1977.

Paxton moved from record company to record company before opening his own record label, Pax Records, in 1987.

Through it all, Paxton has maintained a strong core audience, one that has connected to Paxton's words in truly moving ways, Fleming said.

"I had someone write me recently from England and [say] that they just wanted to let Tom know something," Fleming said. "In this email, they told me what it was and it was that their mother, who had just recently passed away, when she was literally on her death bed she asked them if they could please bring a couple of ... Tom's songs for her. It gave her great comfort."

Paxton has seen a level of success that most musicians can only dream of achieving. He's performed at some of the biggest music festivals in the world, been nominated for

four Grammy awards, received a Grammy Lifetime Achievement Award and hung out with legendary musicians.

He recalled how, upon getting the call informing him that he would receive a Grammy Lifetime Achievement Award in 2009, he "immediately teared up." Thinking back on the surreal experience of attending the Grammy nominees party, Paxton couldn't help but smile and laugh in disbelief.

In 2018, Paxton finally achieved his lifetime goal of playing in a trio. He's been touring with the Don Juans, an acoustic duo, and plans to end his career not as a solo act but as a member of a group. Playing alongside Vezner and Henry, Paxton said he's learning new lessons every time he goes on stage.

"It's much more interesting because I'm hearing sounds that they're producing, harmonies they're singing, instrumental riffs that they're

playing that are fun to have," Paxton said. "It's a more interesting experience for me than my own damn voice. I've had many years of that."

Now, Paxton is content to end his career doing what he loves: singing his songs and telling his stories. Folk will never die, he said. The next generation will find folk music in the back of an aunt's closet, just like he did.

"The great thing about folk music is that it's timeless, which allows old farts like me to still perform," Paxton said. "And the best thing about it is in fact that it is folk music. Folks make it. ... It's easy music to get into. Three chords and a capo. As long as people pick up a guitar and sing 'You Are My Sunshine,' we'll have folk music."

Tom Paxton will perform at The Birchmere, 3701 Mount Vernon Ave., on Oct. 11 at 7:30 p.m. Tickets are available at www.birchmere.com.

-*cmelloklein@alextimes.com*

SPORTS

ALEXANDRIA SPORTS ROUNDUP

The Alexandria Times sports roundup includes records and game results for the prior week in two sports per season for Alexandria's four local high schools: Bishop Ireton, Episcopal, St. Stephen's and St. Agnes and T.C. Williams. Records will be presented alphabetically, while results will be listed by date.

This fall, the sports included are boys' football and girls' volleyball. We will also be running photos with captions from games and encourage readers to send timely photos for submission to mschrott@alextimes.com. We will also continue covering games from various sports, as well as running sports features about Alexandria athletes.

BOYS' FOOTBALL

School	Record
Bishop Ireton	3-2
Episcopal	3-1
SSSAS	3-3
T.C. Williams	4-2

Scores this week:

Oct. 4

T.C. Williams W 35-14 vs. Fairfax

Oct. 5

B.I. W 45-7 vs. John Paul the Great
Episcopal W 24-14 @ SSSAS

GIRLS' VOLLEYBALL

School	Record
Bishop Ireton	14-6
Episcopal	9-7
SSSAS	4-10-1
T.C. Williams	8-11

Scores this week:

Oct. 1

B.I. W 3-0 vs. Bishop Mc-Namara
Episcopal L 3-2 @ Madeira School
SSSAS W 3-1 vs. Connelly School of the Holy Child

Oct. 2

T.C. Williams

L 4-1 @ West Potomac

Oct. 3

T.C. Williams W 1-0 @ Mount Vernon

Oct. 4

B.I. L 3-0 @ Bishop Denis J. O'Connell

Episcopal W 3-2 vs. SSSAS

Oct. 7

B.I. W 3-0 vs. Archbishop Carroll
SSSAS L 3-0 @ Holton-Arms
T.C. Williams W 3-0 vs. Annandale

Oct. 8

Episcopal W 3-0 vs. Stone Ridge



ALIVE! and well

Nonprofit celebrates 50 years of helping those in need

BY LUKE ANDERSON

There were few resources for Alexandrians living in poverty in the 1960s. At the time, there were no local institutions united in helping those who were less fortunate.

In 1968, poor people from across the country protested their living conditions by setting up camp on the National Mall as part of the Poor People's Campaign, organized by Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. before his assassination.

The next year, in May 1969, a group of concerned Alexandrians from several churches met to discuss how they could "re-emphasize the role, and renew the efforts, of the local churches in providing assistance to people in need." The group formed a nonprofit organi-

SEE **ALIVE!**

| 8

INSIDE

Small Business Spotlight

Smallcakes cupcake shop opens on Mount Vernon Avenue.

Page 16

City Creatives

Rosemary Covey explores death and life through wood carving.

Page 27

Council approves phase two scooter pilot

Program to extend through 2020, contain sidewalk riding ban

BY CODY MELLO-KLEIN

Council voted unanimously to approve a phase II dockless e-scooter pilot program at its public hearing on Saturday.

The phase II pilot, which will last from Jan. 1 to Dec. 31, 2020, will feature a city-wide sidewalk ban for e-scooters in addition to changes in how

scooter companies deploy and distribute devices.

Council also voted to approve an ordinance that defines micromobility devices and the regulations around them in city code and a resolution that establishes an ad hoc scooter task force.

The vote on Saturday was the culmination of the city's initial year-long pilot program, one that received criticism from many residents and support from

riders. However, the public hearing brought few fireworks, as only eight public speakers showed up to offer their thoughts on the program.

Residents expressed concerns around pedestrian safety, a lack of enforcement by police and unsafe scooter rider behavior, including sidewalk riding and improper parking.

"Old Town Civic mem-

SEE **SCOOTERS**

| 6 Page 12

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Page 11

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Page 12



PHOTO/LISA FLORYANCIC

Ice & Lights

Nova Parks' Ice & Lights Winter Village has been spreading holiday cheer at Cameron Run Regional Park since opening in November. Blake, Tyler and Blair Floryancic got in the spirit by posing with some festive light-up reindeer.

More traffic for Seminary Road?

Transurban, VDOT explore conversion of I-395 HOV ramp

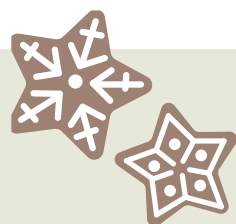
BY MISSY SCHROTT

A potential change to Interstate 395's High Occupancy Vehicle ramp onto Seminary Road could add more cars to an already congested major city roadway.

The proposed change, which is under consideration by Transurban and the Virginia Department of Transportation, would involve converting the south-facing ramp from I-395 to Seminary Road from an HOV exit to a High Occupancy

SEE **SEMINARY**

| 15



Holiday Gift Guide on page 21



SCOOTERS

FROM | 1

bers are very concerned about the proliferation of electric scooters operating throughout Old Town, the lack of enforcement and find them menacing to the walkability we love and all get to enjoy here in Old Town,” Steve Milone, president of Old Town Civic Association, said at the hearing.

At the same time, riders who use the scooters for both commuting and entertainment spoke in support of the program.

“Scooters are affordable and liberating and have been a great tool for people like me to go places,” Elena Sorokina, a Del Ray resident who uses a scooter daily, said. “Imposing further restrictions on scooters will solve none of the issues and will make the neighborhood more car-centric and less community-oriented.

The city has seven permitted scooter companies. To operate in the city, each

of the companies had to pay permit fees and surety bonds and sign a memorandum of understanding that outlined specific rules and regulations.

Of the seven companies, Bird was the only one to have a representative present on Saturday; however, the representative did not provide any comments during the public hearing.

Now that it’s approved, the phase II pilot program will provide staff with additional time to evaluate the impact of scooters as well as additional enforcement efforts, potential environmental effects and options for permanent licensing and regulation processes.

“That’s part of the reason why we want to implement a phase II pilot program, so we have time to see what’s happening with evolving technology and work with the companies and develop processes,” Hillary Orr, deputy director of the Department

of Transportation and Environmental Services, said.

During a staff presentation, Katie North, mobility division chief, warned council that as of Jan. 1 state code allows scooter companies to operate without regulations in any locality that doesn’t have a pilot, permanent program or outright ban on scooters in place.

North also said that e-scooters are a regional challenge, one Alexandria would find difficult to avoid.

“All of our neighboring jurisdictions have some form of a scooter program, whether it’s an actual permanent program or a pilot program,” North said. “These are things that will be in the region and are likely to come to Alexandria one way or another.”

City staff first brought forth its proposal for a phase II pilot at council’s Nov. 26 legislative meeting. After receiving feedback from council, staff made some adjustments to its

recommendation.

In response to council’s desire to see more equitable deployment throughout the city, the phase II pilot now requires scooter companies to deploy 15 percent of their fleets west of Quaker Lane and east of I-395, 10 percent west of I-395 and 5 percent in Arlandria.

Councilor Mo Seifeldein suggested the deployment numbers in these areas should be even higher.

Staff originally recommended a sidewalk ban on specific streets in Old Town and Del Ray; however, council voted to have a city-wide sidewalk riding ban during the phase II pilot.

The issues of sidewalk riding and the enforcement of scooter traffic violations remained pressing for community and council members on Saturday.

“We are aware and recognize that city sidewalks are being used for unintended purposes, such as electric

scooters, which in our view presents a public safety hazard for the elderly,” Alan Dinsmore, a member of the Commission on Aging, said.

Councilor Canek Aguirre emphasized that rider and resident education should be expanded as staff and APD work to better police rider behavior.

“We really need to try and put together some type of education campaign because a lot of the issues we’re looking at can be avoided if people are properly aware of what the rules of the road are and how they should conduct themselves,” Aguirre said.

Staff has already organized a number of education and outreach initiatives, but there’s more work to be done with social media and in-app messaging, Orr said.

Several members of council directed staff to increase current efforts, like parking corrals and geofenced zones

SEE SCOOTERS

| 7

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SCOOTERS

FROM | 6

that prohibit scooters from starting or ending a ride in specific areas using GPS technology.

Councilor John Chapman encouraged staff to implement additional corrals in areas outside of Old Town. Staff is already exploring potential corral locations in Del Ray, Carlyle and Potomac Yard, North said.

Chapman also pushed staff to request more data, particularly demographic data on the age and zip codes of riders, from companies during the phase II pilot. While staff cannot request data the companies don't already collect, under the MOU, staff can request access to any data the companies do have, North said.

Seifeldein read a comprehensive statement during Saturday's hearing, acknowledging that the lack of diversity in Silicon Valley

companies can result in inequitable implementation of innovative technology.

"The fewer people in these companies who look like their customers, the less likely they are to seek out change on the concerns that their customers have," Seifeldein said.

Seifeldein also talked about the environmental impacts of scooters. While some claim scooters help cut back on carbon emissions by getting cars off the roads, Seifeldein cited research from North Carolina State University that suggests e-scooters may not be altering the transportation ecosystem in environmentally significant ways.

"The research that does exist shows that e-scooters may be solving urban congestion and the last mile problem, however they do not significantly reduce the negative impact of current transportation methods," Seifeldein said.

Council ultimately con-

sidered and approved all three staff recommendations in separate votes.

Councilor Del Pepper made a motion, seconded by Chapman, to authorize the 12-month long phase II pilot program. Council unanimously authorized the phase II pilot with minor changes from Vice Mayor Elizabeth Bennett-Parker, who added language directing the city to require companies to reduce the speed of scooters in geofenced zones.

Pepper also made a motion, seconded by Bennett-Parker, to approve the staff-recommended ordinance with the key change of banning sidewalk riding city-wide. Council unanimously adopted the ordinance.

Pepper finally made a motion, seconded by Chapman, to approve the resolution to create an ad hoc scooter task force, composed of community members, business owners and representatives of community groups.

“ We really need to try and put together some type of education campaign because a lot of the issues we're looking at can be avoided if people are properly aware of what the rules of the road and how they should conduct themselves.”

**– Canek Aguirre,
member, city council**

"From staff's perspective we think that some additional input from a focused group of people on this task force that represents a cross-section of interests from the city, we think there is merit in that," Yon Lambert, director of T&ES, said in an interview. "We would like to have the geographic representation, the varied interests, businesses. Those are concepts that make total sense to us."

Councilors Chapman and Amy Jackson directed staff to include a geographical-

ly diverse representation of community members, while Seifeldein expanded the task force's ability to consider implementation or discontinuation of a permanent program. Council adopted the resolution unanimously.

"We were not ready to propose, one way or the other, either an entire ban on scooters or making the program permanent. We think, over the next year, we can get a lot closer to where we want to be," Lambert said.

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