Alexandria Transit Vision Plan – Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ's)
April 8, 2019

1. **What is the Alexandria Transit Vision Plan?**

   The Alexandria Transit Vision (ATV) Plan is a joint effort by DASH and the City of Alexandria to redesign the Alexandria bus network from scratch based on current/future transit demand and community priorities. The scope of the project includes all public bus routes in the City of Alexandria, but it does not include any analysis of rail service. The final ATV Plan will represent a collaborative vision for how the bus network should look in 2030 to best reflect the evolving mobility needs and priorities of the Alexandria community. Although the final network plan will be developed for implementation by 2030, a number of short-term components could be implemented as early as July 2020.

2. **Why are the City & DASH doing this project?**

   The initial decision to begin this project was based on a number of factors, including but not limited to declining transit ridership, increasing traffic congestion, major changes in land use patterns, new developments, evolving travel demand patterns, continued population growth, continued employment growth, and changes in technology that have provided additional mobility options. Based on these trends, DASH and city staff made the joint decision to take on a complete re-imagination of the Alexandria bus network to improve the overall mobility of Alexandria residents, employees and visitors. Similar consultant-led "vision" plans have achieved overwhelmingly positive results in cities such as Houston, Texas, San Jose, California, Richmond, Virginia, and Columbus, Ohio.

3. **What are the main goals of the ATV Plan?**

   The main purpose of the ATV Plan is to develop a future bus network that will improve the overall mobility of Alexandria residents, employees and visitors. The project seeks to facilitate a discussion about the fundamental role of buses in Alexandria and to identify community priorities for how the bus network should be designed. Based on this outreach and intensive data collection, the project team is seeking to develop a future bus network design for Alexandria that will improve overall mobility, accessibility, ridership and cost efficiency.

4. **What do the terms "Ridership" and "Coverage" mean?**

   There are several key trade-offs or priorities that will determine how a transit network should be designed. The most important of these trade-offs is "Ridership" vs. "Coverage". A bus network designed based on the "Ridership" model seeks to maximize ridership and fare revenues by increasing the amount of bus service in places where people are more likely to find it useful. This typically leads to high-frequency bus service in high-density corridors connecting major trip generators, which makes transit more useful and increases overall system ridership. By comparison, the "Coverage" model of network design seeks to spread more bus routes across a wider geographic area so that more people and places have access to service. This

strategy ensures that more people have access to "lifeline" bus service, but often means that the service is more complex, less frequent, less useful, less competitive with other modes of travel, and less productive. Although most transit agencies incorporate both "Ridership" and "Coverage" elements into their bus networks, very few stop and make a conscious decision about the fundamental purpose of buses in their community, and where they want their bus networks to fall on the "Ridership" vs. "Coverage" spectrum.

5. What did the project team hear from the community in the first round of outreach?

The first round of ATV outreach posed a series of difficult questions to the public and key community leaders about basic transit tradeoffs, including "Ridership" vs. "Coverage". The questions were presented as abstract concepts, and did not include any specific maps of Alexandria to indicate what the true impact of selecting one trade-off over another. Based on this outreach, the community identified the "Ridership" model as the overwhelming preference for the future bus network design. Although the public preference was towards the "Ridership" model, many community members also wanted to ensure that the project included considerations for individuals with limited mobility such as senior citizens and persons with disabilities.

6. What are these two bus network concepts?

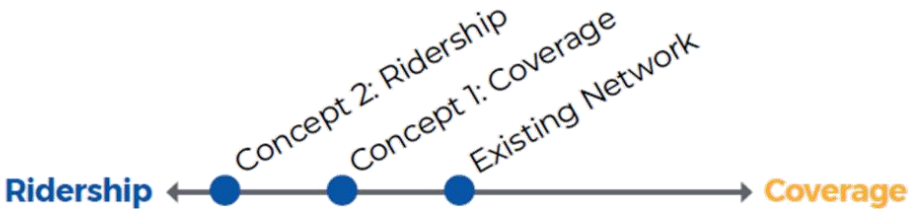
To demonstrate some of the different possibilities for the future of the Alexandria bus network, the project team has developed two draft bus network concepts. Based on the results of the initial outreach, the project team developed a "Ridership" network concept and a "Coverage" network concept. The "Coverage" concept was designed to represent a slightly more "Ridership"-centric model than the existing bus network, while the "Ridership" concept reflects a more extreme "Ridership"-based approach. Both networks include the same baseline assumptions for horizon year (2030), total annual operating cost, and future transit infrastructure and major developments. Both network maps reflect bus service that is available on weekdays during the middle of the day, and are color-coded based on service frequencies with warmer colors (red, purple) indicating routes that run every 15-20 minutes or better, seven days per week. Additional "peak-only" routes are not shown on the concept maps to make the maps easier to read, however, these routes still are assumed to exist and are included on the separate "Peak-Only Service Map"

It is important to note that the two network "concepts" are concepts intended to facilitate a policy discussion and are not formal proposals at this point. They are designed to present different conceptualizations of what the Alexandria bus network could look like in 2030, for purposes of facilitating in-depth discussions about the pros and cons of each approach. The two draft network concepts have not been refined to the point that they would be ready for implementation, especially for weekday peak service. These details will be formulated during the final network design process and will be release for public input during the final round of public outreach.

To view maps and detailed descriptions of the two network concepts and their outcomes, please review the Alexandria Transit Vision "Concepts Reports", which is available for download on the ATV project website (www.dashbus.com/transitvision).

7. What are the main differences in terms of what these two bus networks mean for the City of Alexandria?

The two draft network concepts provide two different approaches to the design of the future bus network. Based on the evaluation of the existing network design, the project team has determined that the current DASH network is designed with about 50 percent of it service oriented towards the "Ridership" approach. By comparison, the "Coverage" concept reflects a network that is 70 percent "Ridership" and 30 percent "Coverage", and the "Ridership" concept moves the balance up to 90 percent "Ridership" and 10 percent "Coverage".



In terms of outcomes for Alexandria, the "Ridership" concept would provide higher bus ridership, reduced traffic congestion and better environmental and economic benefits. It would provide access to high-frequency bus lines to a much larger segment of city residents, particularly residents of color, or those living in poverty; however, it would also create several gaps in Central Alexandria where existing bus service would no longer run, especially during off-peak periods. Alternately, the "Coverage" concept would generally preserve bus service for existing riders, and would provide lower frequency service to more areas across Alexandria. It would, however, be less likely to generate any major ridership increases. Based on geospatial analyses, the Project Team estimates that roughly 1.6 percent of existing DASH boardings would no longer have access to bus service in the "Ridership" concept. In the "Coverage" concept, only 0.2 percent of existing riders would lose access to service.

For additional maps, graphs and other information about the two network concepts and their outcomes, please review the Alexandria Transit Vision "Concepts Reports", which is available for download on the ATV project website (www.dashbus.com/transitvision).

8. Why is my current bus route not shown in the draft network concept maps?

Both Concepts show networks with mostly new route numbers because many details of the routes are different. Yet, the changes may not be as dramatic as they first appear. The existing route numbers (AT-1, AT-2, etc) have all been changed to help differentiate between existing and future service, but a new route may provide the same trip that you take today, just the route number might be different.

Second, the primary network maps for the "Ridership" and "Coverage" scenarios only show bus routes that run all day, seven days per week. Additional "peak-only" routes are still included in each concept, but are only shown on the separate "Peak-Only Service Map". So most rush hour commute trips that people make today would still be possible. And many trips may be easier and faster in these concepts because the frequency of service for many routes is better at most times of the day.

Some trips may not be easier or faster, however. Some trips you make today may require a transfer in one or both concepts. Or a trip you make today may be less direct in one or both of the concepts. Or a trip you make today may seem impossible in one or both of the concepts because the walking distance to the route you would take is too far for you. To provide feedback on how one or both of the draft network concepts would impact your mobility options, please visit the project website (www.dashbus.com/transitvision)

9. Why are the "Weekday Peak" bus routes shown on a different map?

A major focus of the ATV process is developing vision where transit is a reliable for all kinds of trips and therefore people are more likely to use transit for more trips. Alexandria is adding people and jobs, but not road space. The City will need more people to use transit and other space efficient options (like biking and walking) to keep growing without making automobile congestion worse than it already is.

To make the usefulness of the concepts for all kinds of trips clear, the primary network maps for the "Ridership" and "Coverage" concepts show the frequency at midday on a weekday, which is the minimum level of frequency available from morning through the evening. While travel peaks at rush hours, many different kinds of people need to travel at midday and evening. The retail and restaurant industries tend to start or change shifts at midday or evening. Office workers need to travel for personal appointments or meetings. And any parent values being able to get home to pick up a sick kid from school in the midday. Routes that only operate during weekday peak periods are generally more complex and have higher costs compared to all-day routes. As a result, the two primary concept maps are designed to show routes that are available seven days per week, and are therefore reliable services that people can build their lives around. "Peak-only" routes are still assumed to be included in both network concepts, but are shown on the separate map.

10. Are you proposing to eliminate my bus route?

At this stage of the ATV project, the service changes outlined by the two draft network concepts do not represent proposals. They are concepts that illustrate two different points on the "Ridership" vs. "Coverage" spectrum that the city could decide to move towards. The specific details of each concept have not been developed to the point where they could be implemented as shown. The final ATV network, which will be released in Fall 2019 will represent a concrete proposal for intensive public review.

Although the two network concepts do not yet represent concrete proposals, they may be used as the basis for the final network design, depending on the nature of the public feedback that is received. Therefore, the project team asks that members of the community provide specific feedback on which of the two concept is better aligned for their vision of the future bus network, and what routes or elements of each plan they like and dislike.

For information on how to provide feedback on the project, or get more involved, please visit the project website (www.dashbus.com/transitvision).

11. Are there other types of mobility services besides bus routes that could be deployed in Alexandria?

Another focal point of the Alexandria Transit Vision is the consideration of alternative mobility options to fixed-route bus service, many of which have been made possible due to recent technology innovations. Some of the more common examples of these services include shared mobility services (bikeshares, scootershares, ridershares), flexible mobility on demand services, and paratransit. For more detailed information about alternative mobility solutions and current case studies, the Shared Use Mobility Center 's "Learning Center" and the SAE List of Shared Mobility definitions are both excellent resources.

Within the context of the Final ATV Plan, these alternative mobility options could be used to supplement or replace fixed-route bus service . For example, the "Coverage" concept includes an idea for a deviated fixed-route service that would provide lifeline transit access in the North Ridge area . Based on feedback from the community, key stakeholders, and DASH/City leadership, the project team may recommend similar or other alternatives as part of the Final ATV Plan to provide coverage-oriented services in lower density parts of the city.

12. What are the next steps for the development of the final ATV Plan?

Over the next two months, DASH and City staff will continue to collect input from the community, including public hearings at the April 17th meeting of the Transportation Commission, and the May 8th meeting of the ATC Board of Directors. In May/June, the project team will come back to both the Transportation Commission and ATC (DASH) Board of Directors to receive specific guidance on what the balance should be between "Ridership" and "Coverage" and which general elements and themes of the two concepts should be incorporated into the final network design.

Based on this guidance and a review of all the input that's been received, the project team will reconvene over the summer for a two-day Final ATV Network Design Workshop. The workshop will be led by the project team and will include roughly one dozen representatives from the City of Alexandria, DASH, WMATA, and Arlington County. During this workshop, the group will develop the Final Draft ATV Network for 2030, as well as a Short-Term ATV Network, which could realistically be implemented as early as July 2020. Both the Final Draft ATV Network and the Short-Term ATV Network will be presented to the public in Fall 2019 for additional feedback

and subsequent revision. The Final ATV Plan is scheduled to be adopted by the ATC Board of Directors and the Transportation Commission in late 2019 or early 2020.

13. When will the actual service changes from the ATV Plan be implemented?

The Alexandria Transit Vision Plan is a long-term vision for the future of the Alexandria bus network that is designed to be implemented in its entirety by 2030. The Short-Term ATV Network, which has not yet been developed, could be implemented as early as July 2020 as part of the FY 2021 DASH Transit Development Plan.

14. Will there be more opportunities to provide feedback on the final ATV Plan?

Yes! There are two upcoming public hearings for the current round of outreach for the ATV Plan. The first will be on Wednesday, April 17 at 7:00 PM during the regular monthly meeting of the city's Transportation Commission. The second will be held on Wednesday, May 8 at 5:30 PM during the regular monthly meeting of the ATC (DASH) Board of Directors. Both events will be held at Alexandria City Hall in the Council Workroom on the 2nd Floor.

After the Final Draft ATV Network Plan is developed, it will be released for the third round of public outreach in Fall 2019. DASH and the City will be conducting extensive outreach during this time to raise awareness about the project and to solicit feedback on the final network design, which would be revised and adopted in late 2019 or early 2020.

Public feedback outside the formal outreach channels described above is welcome at any time. Please check back regular to the project website (www.dashbus.com/transitvision) for project updates and information on how to reach out to the project team to provide input.

15. What's the best way to provide feedback for this project?

For information on specific outreach opportunities, please check the project website for updates (www.dashbus.com/transitvision).

To receive updates on the status of the project and other DASH news, please subscribe to the "In-A-DASH" e-mail list (https://www.dashbus.com/dash-news).

To contact the project team directly, please e-mail Steve Sindiong with the City of Alexandria (steve.sindiong@alexandriava.gov) or Martin Barna with DASH (martin.barna@alexandriava.gov).