

City of Rockville Transportation and Mobility Commission 2024 Report to the Mayor and Council

August 5, 2024

Introduction

In March 2023 the Traffic and Transportation Commission was transformed with a new name and mission. It became the Transportation and Mobility Commission (TMC) with newly refined responsibilities with a new focus on all modes of transportation including walking, rolling, bicycling, transit, and driving. The Commission primarily serves to provide guidance to the Mayor and Council and Planning Commission as it relates to multimodal transportation issues in the city. The TMC recognizes the vital link that an effective transportation network contributes to economic development, sustainable communities, social activity, equity, and resiliency in Rockville.

Advice Given to the City

The TMC has submitted comments and recommendations to the Mayor and Council regarding a variety of topics including:

- budget priorities for FY 24 and FY 25 that advance safe multimodal infrastructure projects and increased accessibility;
- improving intersection safety by requesting studies and increased use of No Right Turns on Red, Leading Pedestrian Intervals, and better signage;
- updating the Comprehensive Transportation Review to better account for people walking, rolling, and bicycling in the development community; and
- transportation comments for the Pedestrian Master Plan and the Town Center Master Plan to ensure plan policy and infrastructure recommendations advance equitable multimodal transportation.

The TMC has also submitted comments to the Planning Commission related to larger development projects to not only account for traffic impacts but also provide accessible facilities.

The letters from the TMC are attached in this report.

How the TMC can serve the City of Rockville

The TMC is a dedicated, informed, resident-led commission that can provide the Mayor and Council with additional comments and recommendations from the community regarding a variety of transportation projects. The TMC regularly hears from transportation, enforcement, and policy experts, has conducted research on, is educated in current topics, and actively participates in the city's transportation and Vision Zero projects. The TMC also frequently collaborates with the Rockville Bicycle Advisory Committee and the Rockville Pedestrian Advocacy Committee, bringing forward consistent advice among the committees. The TMC welcomes the opportunity to respond to requests from the Mayor and Council and explore issues in depth to provide key insight and opportunities for Rockville.

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The TMC also participates in the City's artist selection committee for the Beall Avenue asphalt art project, has a representative on the Community Advisory Committee for the MD 355 BRT, and invites Planning Department staff to meetings to provide comments for master plans.

Guiding Principles

The TMC seeks to support the city's efforts to achieve Vision Zero, increase accessibility for people of all abilities, and expand multimodal facilities for walking, rolling, bicycling, transit use, and driving. There are several guiding principles in which help direct the TMC towards meeting these goals.

Equity – The TMC recognizes transportation equity as a built environment can support all people's travel needs, regardless of their mode of travel, ensuring that they are able to safely, conveniently, and directly to meet their daily transportation needs. The TMC supports a network that provides equal opportunity and equal outcome for all modes. Investing in transportation equity will grant residents more freedom of choice regarding their transportation options and allow greater access across the city, especially in communities that have been historically neglected or are not as motor vehicle oriented.

Safety and Vulnerable Roadway Users – A safe transportation network reduces and ultimately eliminates crashes resulting in serious injuries and fatalities and increases the perceived safety for everyone. The TMC explores transportation hazards for all modes and works to identify priorities and budget investments for city improvements to increase safety. Further understanding that people who walk, roll, and bicycle are more vulnerable in the roadway network, additional safety enhancements the specifically serve these roadway users are often necessary.

Accessibility – A comprehensive transportation network must provide access for roadway users of all abilities, this includes residents and visitors that use mobility devices and strollers, are older adults, and/or have disabilities. Moreover, the transportation infrastructure itself must not obstruct the ability of people to reach their destinations. The TMC encourages the city to invest significant resources to accessibility improvements that will enhance equity for all city residents and achieve goals sought by the Americans with Disabilities Act.

Transportation infrastructure for Community – While transportation infrastructure provides mobility for residents and visitors, it has also created barriers for communities, obstructing them from opportunities within the city. The TMC supports transportation infrastructure that not only helps facilitate economic and social activity, but also bridges communities together. This includes improving the existing Unity Bridge and building a Twinbrook Pedestrian and Bicycle bridge.

Future Topics

The TMC seeks direction from the current Rockville Mayor and Council. The TMC is ready, educated. You have our commitment to help Rockville build an inclusive, equitable, and accessible transportation system for all users.

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The following discussion includes additional information regarding the Transportation and Mobility Commission.

2024 Focus Areas

In addition to carrying out its stated functions, the TMC has chosen three items to focus additional efforts to help advance equitable and multimodal transportation in Rockville. The TMC has formed a subcommittee to discuss the city's ongoing zoning ordinance rewrite project. This subcommittee will develop recommendations for the TMC to review and submit to the Planning Commission and the Mayor and Council. Specifically, the TMC will seek to provide comments to help ensure that zoning changes will better support accessibility, mobility for all, and connectivity.

The second focus area is to provide suggestions and recommendations for improving intersections throughout the city. A subcommittee will provide suggestions to city staff and the Mayor and Council seeking to improve intersection usability and safety as well as provide guidance for the city to identify and prioritize intersections to be improved per the Pedestrian Master Plan.

The third focus area is to increase effective communication with the public and to provide recommendations for city staff regarding effective messaging. Transportation projects enacted by the city improve safety, increase walk-and-rollability, and enhance a sense of place for residents and visitors to enjoy. However, not all residents are aware of the benefits from such projects. The TMC will provide insight and suggestions to the city to help relay these benefits and provide an opportunity for residents to raise transportation related questions with the city.

Guidance and Support for City Projects

The TMC has regularly reviews city master plan drafts, large development applications, and city projects. Additionally, the TMC will raise transportation related concerns to the Mayor and Council. Since the fall of 2021, and under the leadership of the current chair, the TMC has provided guidance for the following projects.

Year	Project Type	Project	Recipient
April 2022	Commission Function	Transportation and Mobility Commission Ordinance and Roles	Mayor and Council
May 2022	Development Application	15931 Frederick Road	Planning Commission
July 2022	Development Application	1818 Chapman Avenue	Mayor and Council, Planning Commission
January 2023	Transportation Concern	No Right Turn on Red, Leading Pedestrian Intervals	Mayor and Council
April 2023	Annual Budget	FY 24 Budget Comments	Mayor and Council
September 2023	Master Plan	Pedestrian Master Plan	Planning Commission

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November 2023	Comprehensive Transportation Review	Comprehensive Transportation Review Update	Mayor and Council
April 2024	Annual Budget	FY 25 Budget Comments	Mayor and Council
May 2024	City Transportation Project	Pedestrian Crossing Guidelines Comments	Department of Public Works
June 2024	Master Plan	Rockville Town Center Master Plan	Planning Commission

Members of the TMC are also supporting other ongoing transportation projects in Rockville. One member also participates on the county's Citizen Advisory Committee for the MD 355 Bus Rapid Transit project, and another member participated on the Beall Avenue Asphalt Art project artist selection committee. Additionally, the TMC further supports the city's work program to seek and obtain external funding for transportation projects. The TMC has provided letters of support for the following grant applications.

Grant Opportunity	Result
FY 23 Active Transportation Infrastructure Investment Program, Maryvale Park to Redgate Park Shared Use Path	TBD
FY 23 Kim Lamphier Maryland Bikeways Network Grant Program, Martins Lane Bicycle Lanes	Awarded
FY 23 Kim Lamphier Maryland Bikeways Network Grant Program, Permanent Pedestrian and Bicycle Counters	Awarded
FY 23 Reconnecting Communities/Neighborhood Access and Equity, Twinbrook Pedestrian and Bicycle Bridge	Awarded
FY 23 Safe Streets and Roads For All, Intersection Safety Audits	Awarded
FY 24 MWCOG Transportation and Land Use Connections Grant, Mannakee Street Complete Streets	Awarded
FY 24 MWCOG Regional Roadway Safety Program, Pedestrian Crossing Guidelines	Awarded
FY 24 Kim Lamphier Maryland Bikeways Network Grant Program, E. Jefferson Street and Halpine Road Bicycle Facilities	Awarded
2024 AARP Community Challenge Flagship Grant, Bicycle and Scooter Parking Corrals	Not Awarded
FY 25 Kim Lamphier Maryland Bikeways Network Grant Program, Research Boulevard Shared Use Path	TBD
FY 25 Transportation Alternatives Program, Scott-Veirs Shared use Path	Awarded

Membership

Currently, there are seven members of the TMC.

- Kathleen Kleinmann, Chair
- Jude Abanulo
- Jeffrey Ganz

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- Emily Peterman
- Marc Plante
- Paul Scott
- Mike Stein

Councilmember Marissa Valeri is the current council liaison to the TMC and Bryan Barnett-Woods, Principal Transportation Planner from the Department of Public Works is the current staff liaison.

Past members of the TMC who have participated within the past three years, under the current chair, include:

- Bill He
- Doug Lerley
- Sogand Karbalaieali
- Sarah Morgan
- Ying Wong

Councilmember David Myles was the council liaison for the TMC for 2022 and 2023.

Clarification of Roles and Responsibilities

Prior to March 2023, the TMC was known as the “Traffic and Transportation Commission,” which was established by Mayor and Council resolution in 1972. The responsibilities of this commission were subsequently updated in 1976 and 1979 (Resolution # 3-76, and 3-79).

The Commission recommended changing its name in 2023 to the “Transportation and Mobility Commission” to better reflect the multimodal nature of the city’s transportation system. While “traffic” can convey all modes, it is often primarily used to consider motor vehicle traffic. “Mobility” better indicates the movement of people and goods, regardless of a specific mode of transportation and is a more inclusive term representing people walking, rolling, bicycling, using transit, and driving. This change is consistent with the emphasis of multimodal transportation goals included in the Rockville 2040 Comprehensive Plan, the Vision Zero Action Plan, the Bikeway Master Plan, and the Pedestrian Master Plan.

In addition to changing the commission’s name, the Mayor and Council refined the TMC’s responsibilities in Ordinance No. 4-23 (attached). These responsibilities include:

- (a) Advise the Mayor and Council on opportunities to advance a multi-modal transportation and mobility network in the City of Rockville that is safe, equitable, convenient, fiscally resilient, and environmentally sustainable;
- (b) Provide written comments and recommendations to the Mayor and Council, as deemed appropriate by the Transportation and Mobility Commission or

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requested by the Mayor and Council, on existing and proposed City transportation and mobility-related programs, policies, and plans;

(c) Coordinate with and, where appropriate, advise other City boards and commissions and City staff involved in transportation and mobility issues;

(d) Advise the Mayor and Council on the annual budget regarding transportation and mobility matters;

(e) Provide written comments to the Mayor and Council and the Planning Commission on development applications as required by the Comprehensive Transportation Review;

(f) Administer the designation and revocation of permit parking areas as provided in City Code [Section 23-44](#);

(g) Advise the Mayor and Council on the naming of newly constructed or reconstructed bridges within the City of Rockville; and

(h) As directed by the Mayor and Council, engage with the public to extend transportation and mobility-related education efforts.

Meetings

The TMC meets on the fourth Tuesday of every month. Meetings are held in a conference room at City Hall at 7:00 PM. Commissioners as well as members of the public can attend in-person or virtually. The meeting agenda as well as the link for virtual attendance are posted to the city's online Agenda Center and Calendar prior to the meeting.

The TMC has also held several subcommittee meetings to specifically discuss the Comprehensive Transportation Review. These meetings occurred in November 2023, and May and July 2023. The TMC also held a special meeting in March 2022 to discuss the updated commission roles and responsibilities.

The TMC met jointly with the Environment Commission in September 2022.

Starting in February 2024, all meetings include a Community Forum agenda item. Rockville residents and stakeholders are welcome to attend and raise transportation related issues with the TMC.

Other regular agenda items include updates on active city transportation capital improvement projects, ongoing transportation maintenance projects, and the work program of the Traffic and Transportation Division. Additionally, the TMC receives presentations from other city departments and agencies, including the Community Planning and Development Services Committee and the Rockville City Police Department. Lastly, the TMC receives presentations from property development

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applicants if the subject development applications generate a certain threshold of new automobile trips, consistent with the Comprehensive Transportation Review.

City staff have presented to the TMC on several topics.

City Staff	Topic
Maj. Michael England	Red Light Cameras
Katie Gerbes	Rockville Town Center Master Plan
Audra Lew	EV Readiness Plan
Famaraz Mokhtari	Comprehensive Transportation Review
Nelson Ortiz	Development Applications
Craig Simoneau	Department of Public Works Ongoing Work Program
Manisha Tewari	Rockville Metrorail Station Visioning Plan

Coordination with other committees

The TMC coordinates closely with the Rockville Bicycle Advisory Committee and the Rockville Pedestrian Advocacy Committee. While these committees have more focused roles, they also support multimodal transportation in Rockville. The TMC will coordinate with these committees when providing comments on development applications and submitting comments and letters of support for ongoing projects. Additionally, TMC members have attending other committee meetings in the past.