

EXHIBIT NO. 1

*City of Alexandria, Virginia*

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2-13-01

MEMORANDUM

DATE: FEBRUARY 7, 2001  
TO: THE HONORABLE MAYOR AND MEMBERS OF CITY COUNCIL  
FROM: PHILIP SUNDERLAND, CITY MANAGER *ps*  
SUBJECT: APPLICATION FOR FEDERAL HIGHWAY ADMINISTRATION GRANT FUNDS TO IMPROVE PEDESTRIAN AREAS AND THE APPEARANCE OF THE KING STREET AND COMMONWEALTH AVENUE RAILROAD BRIDGES

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**ISSUE:** City Council consideration of a grant application to the Federal Highway Administration to improve pedestrian areas and the appearance of the King Street and Commonwealth Avenue railroad bridges in the King Street Metro Station and Union Station areas.

**RECOMMENDATION:** That City Council approve the request for \$500,000 in grant funding from the Federal Highway Administration, under its Transportation and Community and System Preservation Pilot Program (TCSP), to improve the areas underneath and adjacent to the King Street and Commonwealth Avenue bridge structures that are located in the vicinity of the King Street Metro Station and Union Station.

**BACKGROUND:** In 1998, the King Street Task Force conducted a visual survey in the area around the King Street Metro Station and Union Station. Participating in the survey were area citizens, members of City Council, members of the Virginia House of Delegates from Alexandria and representatives of local businesses. The deteriorated condition of the King Street railroad bridge structure was cited as a detriment to the appearance of the area, as well as to pedestrians' use and transit ridership. Replacement of the King Street Underpass was a project in the State's Six Year Urban Transportation Program until May 2000, when City Council adopted a resolution requesting that the bridge replacement project be eliminated from the six year plan and that the funds be reprogrammed for other City projects. This request was based on the City's finding that the three year construction project would result in considerable disruption in the King Street Metro Station and Union Station areas without sufficient benefit to the City. The funds for this cancelled project were reallocated to high priority City transportation projects. The cancellation of the bridge replacement project did not affect the City's plans to implement other pedestrian improvements including the Metro platform extension across Commonwealth Avenue, the new north entrance to the Metrorail Station, examination of possible tunnel connection between the Amtrak/VRE Station and the Metrorail Station, improved signage and related projects to improve access and safety.

Since then, Councilman David Speck has raised concerns about the condition of the King Street railroad bridge at several Council meetings, and Council asked staff to request CSX to fix-up and paint the King Street bridge. The Mayor and I have written to CSX and TES Director Rich Baier has spoken to CSX representatives about the bridge. The City has addressed some of the aesthetic issues by power washing the sidewalks and the concrete abutments and repainting the chains and splash guards along the sidewalks. The City does not have the financial resources to paint the two bridges, and last October CSX advised the City that they were not able to paint the bridges because of their budget constraints.

As a result of the work of the King Street Task Force, traffic and pedestrian related improvements are being planned to address the area where four collector roadways and one arterial converge at the King Street transportation hub, which includes freight rail, passenger rail, Metrorail, buses, autos, bicycles and pedestrians. An important part of any improvement to the area is upgrading the appearance of both the King Street and Commonwealth Avenue railroad bridges which were built in the early part of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century. Improving the appearance of these bridges is also consistent with the goals of the City's transportation policies and practices, which emphasize a pedestrian orientation, visual aesthetics and streetscape.

**DISCUSSION:** The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) has a grant program called the Transportation and Community and System Preservation Pilot Program which provides funds to local jurisdictions to preserve and restore transportation infrastructure. The FHWA grant will permit the removal of existing paint, cleaning and preparing the surfaces for painting and then repainting the two bridge structures with new, environmentally safe paint. The paint that is currently on the bridges will have to be removed, handled and disposed of in accordance with current regulations regarding hazardous materials.

Although the bridges are the property of the CSX Corporation, CSX has advised the City that they have found that the bridges are in fair condition and, in their view, are not significantly affected structurally by the paint condition. Thus, they are not willing to assume the cost of painting the bridges. However, CSX has agreed to allow the City to undertake the painting project, and the City will contract out the work. While CSX is not providing funding for the removal of the paint, CSX has retained an expert, at its own cost, to assist the City with the grant application. In addition, CSX will undertake specific repairs to the King Street bridge structure, e.g., removing the deteriorated catwalk that now extends over King Street, and increasing the height of the bridge abutments for the King Street railroad bridge to raise the top of the abutment (which is level with the embankment) several feet above the ground to prevent the dirt from falling over the abutment and onto the sidewalk and street below.

This project is one of several projects envisioned to revitalize the Upper King Street area. Other projects contemplated in the grant application include improvement of storm water drainage from sidewalks and streets, improvement of pedestrian lighting, construction of improved crosswalks and

pedestrian access to the King Street Metrorail and Alexandria Union Stations, and the installation of an improved traffic signal system at King Street-Commonwealth Avenue-Daingerfield Road-Diagonal Road intersections. Together these projects are estimated at \$655,000, of which the cost for the paint removal and repainting is the primary cost element. In addition, at the City's initiative, the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA) is proceeding with the plans to design and then construct a new pedestrian entrance to King Street Metrorail Station, and to lengthen the platform.

Application procedures for the FHWA grant funds requires coordination with the Transportation Planning Board (TPB) of the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments (COG) to ensure that the project activities are consistent with regional planning efforts. The TPB reviews the grant application, writes an endorsement and forwards it to the Federal Highway Administration office in Richmond, where final approval is made on the grant request.

The CSX consultant, who was researching grant opportunities for the City, did not discover the availability of the FHWA grant until mid-January, and that it was due January 31. Therefore, the grant application was submitted to both the TPB and the FHWA, contingent upon City Council approval.

**FISCAL IMPACT:** The grant will provide \$500,000 for this project. Using existing funds, the City would provide the remaining \$155,000 balance as its grant match. In the event that only partial funding is available from the FHWA, the City indicated in its application that it would accept partial funding by reducing the scope of the project, e.g., repainting only one bridge. Alternatively, other sources of funding could be sought. The grant application is available for review in the Office of Management and Budget.

**STAFF:** Richard J. Baier, P.E., Director, Transportation and Environmental Services  
Arthur Cole, Deputy Director/Operations, Transportation and Environmental Services