

City of Alexandria, Virginia

MEMORANDUM

DATE: DECEMBER 4, 2006

TO: THE HONORABLE MAYOR AND MEMBERS OF CITY COUNCIL

FROM: JAMES K. HARTMANN, CITY MANAGER 

SUBJECT: CONSIDERATION OF A RESOLUTION SUPPORTING AN APPLICATION TO THE VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION FOR FISCAL YEAR 2007-08 SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOL GRANTS

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**ISSUE:** Consideration of a resolution supporting an application to the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) for fiscal year 2007-08 Safe Routes to School grants (SRTS).

**RECOMMENDATION:** That City Council authorizes the City Manager to:

- (1) Submit a Safe Routes to School "Program" (non-infrastructure) grant application in the amount of \$25,000 to educate and encourage school children to walk and bike to school;
- (2) Submit a Safe Routes to School "Project" (infrastructure) grant application in the amount of \$500,000 to provide specific safety improvement projects at selected schools;
- (3) Submit a second Safe Routes to School "Project" (infrastructure) grant application in the amount of \$145,000 to provide for city-wide safety improvements; and
- (4) Authorize the City Manager to execute all necessary documents that may be required.

**BACKGROUND:** The Safe Routes to School program, created by Section 1404 of the 2005 *Safe, Accountable, Flexible Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users* (SAFETEA-LU), established a federally-funded program to provide communities with the opportunity to improve conditions for bicycling and walking to school, in grades K through 8. From 2005 through 2009, the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) is administering over \$13 million in grant funding for Virginia municipalities and jurisdictions.

This fall, the City of Alexandria established a partnership with Alexandria City Public Schools (ACPS) to participate in Walk to School Day and apply for grants through VDOT. At its November 13, 2006 meeting, the Alexandria City School Board unanimously adopted a resolution in support of the proposed Safe Routes to School grants. The partnership also includes a task force composed of representatives from Transportation & Environmental Services, Recreation, Parks, & Cultural Activities, ACPS, the Alexandria Health Department, and Alexandria Police Department. The Alexandria PTA Council, individual PTAs, and community organizations, including BikeWalk Alexandria, have also been consulted throughout this process

This partnership is building on work performed in June and July 2003 when the Alexandria Health Department and the City of Alexandria led 118 “walking audits” around Alexandria City Public Schools to assess the safety of children’s walking routes to school. This effort included input from multiple City departments, community organizations and non-profits. The resulting report found that while there are safety concerns and gaps in the pedestrian network, Alexandria offers an ideal environment to promote active living among school-aged students. With increased education programs and minor environmental changes, it could become a model urban community in a growing national effort to provide SRTS.

The Alexandria City Public Schools is in the process of gathering baseline data, but preliminary indications show that of the present enrollment of 10,057, some 5,585 students are transported to school via bus. Of the remaining 4,472 students, the overwhelming number are driven to school by their parents and less than 20% either walk or bicycle to school.

**DISCUSSION:** The VDOT Safe Routes to School grant program makes funds available in two areas: Program (non-infrastructure) grants of up to \$25,000; and Project (infrastructure) grants of up to \$500,000 for each application. Applicants may submit more than one Project grant.

VDOT is encouraging applicants to submit both Project and Program applications simultaneously and the Alexandria Safe Routes to School task force plans to submit three grant applications:

- A Program (non-infrastructure) grant application for \$25,000 will be used to partner with the ACPS and individual school PTAs to educate and encourage children to walk or bike to school, where feasible. The City of Alexandria may serve as a pass-through agent to allow this money to go directly to individual schools.
- A Project (infrastructure) grant application for \$500,000 will allow the City of Alexandria to make physical safety improvements at specific schools including median refuges, new sidewalks, curb extensions and other enhanced pedestrian facilities.

- A second Project (infrastructure) grant application for \$145,000 will allow the City of Alexandria and ACPS to install new bicycle racks and pedestrian countdown timers at locations adjacent to schools citywide.

Applicants that receive both Program and Project awards will be required to complete the Program grant within 6-12 months. Satisfactory completion and review of the grant deliverables would then allow Alexandria to proceed with implementing the Project grant award to make infrastructure improvements.

**FISCAL IMPACT:** The SRTS grants provide 100% funding with no local match required. Virginia's SRTS Program is a reimbursable grant program and all costs submitted are subject to eligibility requirements. The Program application will be for a maximum of \$25,000. The Project grant application will be for a total amount of \$645,000, if awarded. The grant requires staff time from members of the Transportation & Environmental Services, Finance, Recreation, Parks & Cultural Activities and Office of Management & Budget. The grant applications are due on December 31, 2006.

**ATTACHMENT:** Resolution for Safe Routes to School grant

**STAFF:**

Mark Jinks, Deputy City Manager  
Michele Evans, Deputy City Manager  
Bruce Johnson, Director, Office of Management and Budget  
Richard J. Baier, P.E., Director, T&ES  
Kirk Kincannon, Director, RP&CA  
Tom Culpepper, Deputy Director/Operations, T&ES  
Rebecca Perry, Superintendent, Alexandria City Public Schools  
Charles Konigsberg, Alexandria Health Department  
Yon Lambert, Pedestrian and Bicycle Coordinator, T&ES

RESOLUTION NO.

WHEREAS, in accordance with the Safe Routes to School Program of the Virginia Department of Transportation allocation procedures, it is necessary that a request by City Council resolution be made in order that the Virginia Department of Transportation fund Safe Routes to School applications for:

- ✓ A Program grant of \$25,000 to partner with the ACPS and individual school PTAs to educate and encourage children to walk or bike to school.
- ✓ A Project grant of \$500,000 to make safety improvements including median refuges, sidewalks, curb extensions and other enhanced pedestrian facilities.
- ✓ A Project grant of \$145,000 to install new bicycle racks and pedestrian countdown timers at locations citywide.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the City Council that the City Manager is authorized, for and on behalf of the City of Alexandria, hereafter referred to as the PUBLIC BODY, to execute and file an application to the Department of Transportation, Commonwealth of Virginia, hereafter referred to as the DEPARTMENT, for financial assistance in the amount of \$670,000 to defray the costs borne by the PUBLIC BODY for Safe Routes to School programs; and to accept from the DEPARTMENT reimbursements in such amounts as expenses are submitted, and to authorize the City Manager to furnish the DEPARTMENT grants in such amounts as may be awarded, and to authorize the City Manager to furnish to the DEPARTMENT such documents and other information as may be required for processing the application. The City Council certifies that the funds shall be used in accordance with the requirements of Section 58.1-638.A of the Code of Virginia.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the PUBLIC BODY is not required to provide local matching funds and that the records of receipts of expenditures of funds granted the PUBLIC BODY may be subject to audit by the DEPARTMENT and by the State Auditor of Public Accounts, and that funds granted to the PUBLIC BODY for defraying the expenses of the PUBLIC BODY shall be used only for such purposes as authorized in the Code of Virginia. The undersigned duly qualified and acting as City Clerk of the PUBLIC BODY certifies that the foregoing is a true and correct copy of a Resolution, adopted at a legally convened meeting of the City Council held on the 12<sup>th</sup> day of December 2006.

ADOPTED: \_\_\_\_\_  
Date

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WILLIAM D. EUILLE      MAYOR

ATTEST:  
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JACQUELINE M. HENDERSON      CITY CLERK

**RESOLUTION NO. 2214**

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- ✓ A Program grant of \$25,000 to partner with the ACPS and individual school PTAs to educate and encourage children to walk or bike to school.
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- ✓ A Project grant of \$145,000 to install new bicycle racks and pedestrian countdown timers at locations citywide.

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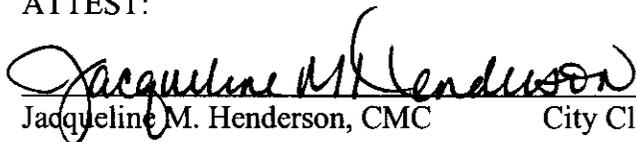
ADOPTED: December 12, 2006



WILLIAM D. EULLE

MAYOR

ATTEST:



Jacqueline M. Henderson, CMC

City Clerk