



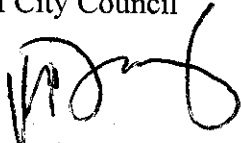
Kerry J. Donley
Mayor

City of Alexandria, Virginia
301 King Street, Suite 2300
Alexandria, Virginia 22314

19
6-15-02



(703) 838-4500
Fax (703) 838-6433

Date: June 11, 2002
To: The Honorable Members of City Council
From: Mayor Kerry J. Donley 
Re: Endorsement of the Transportation Referendum

At our meeting on Saturday, we will be discussing a report from the Budget and Fiscal Affairs Advisory Committee concerning the proposed referendum on the sales tax increase for transportation in Northern Virginia. At this same meeting, the Council will be asked to endorse this initiative. Today, I am writing to urge you to enthusiastically support this proposal. I think the reasons to support the transportation referendum are numerous, and to the benefit of Alexandria and the entire Northern Virginia region.

I am convinced that if we are to have any success in implementing our transportation policies and reduce traffic congestion, we must bring meaningful resources to the table. The sales tax increase would bring an estimated \$4.4 billion to Northern Virginia over the next twenty years, and, coupled with bonding authority, we can bring on projects sooner rather than later. Most important, the funds which are raised by the sales tax increase will stay here in Northern Virginia and not be sent to Richmond. In many respects, we are presently a donor region with much of our state tax revenue funding other programs in the Commonwealth. The new sales tax dollars will stay here, allowing us to control our own destiny instead of going to VDOT and having to fight for our fair share.

Moreover, the transportation referendum represents an historic opportunity to promote transit throughout the region and here in Alexandria. Historically, transportation funds have inordinately gone to road projects both in the region and in other parts of the state. By law, much of the revenue under the sales tax referendum will be directed to transit enhancements. This represents a landmark opportunity for our region to make substantial enhancements to mass transit, while at the same time improving the maintenance of existing transit in Northern Virginia. Our own transportation policies call for the promotion of mass transit in the city and the region, and the sales tax increase allows us to be consistent with our own policies, with the added benefit of bringing resources to address our pressing transportation needs.

"Home Town of George Washington and Robert E. Lee"

I am sure that you need no reminder of the fiscal mess the Commonwealth currently faces. For us to expect more transportation funds to come to the region in the near future is not realistic. If additional funds are forthcoming, they will be in small increments which will not have demonstrable impacts. I fully expect that no new meaningful mass transit projects or expansions will come to the region over the next twenty years if the referendum is not approved. This possibility puts us right back to the current situation, where smaller amounts of funds are directed to the region, and, in keeping with past history, those funds will predominantly go to roads.

Also imperative with this emphasis on mass transit projects is the need for the region to improve its air quality. We are in a non-attainment area for air quality conformity, and we face the prospect of losing federal funds if we do not make air quality improvements. Those improvements come with mass transit, and additional mass transit comes to the region only if resources are available through the increase in the sales tax. Thus, in my opinion, the sales tax increase will ultimately prove to be essential to our environmental quality of life.

I know there are concerns about the regressive nature of the sales tax increase, but there are some aspects which I think should be brought to your attention. First, the increase in the sales tax will not be assessed on food purchased in grocery stores, which addresses a frequent objection to sales taxes. Additionally, the sales tax will be paid by residents and visitors alike, meaning the burden will be shared by all of those who benefit from the transportation improvements. Finally, the Virginia Department of Taxation estimates that, on average, a family of four will pay \$90 per year or 25 cents a day in increased sales taxes.

From a local perspective, Alexandria stands to receive direct benefits from the projects identified in the legislation. The city will receive increased funding for our Metro capital contributions, an area of our budget which has been one of the fastest growing and will continue to grow in terms of our local obligation. The city also will receive \$25 million for the construction of a new DASH facility, as well as additional DASH buses. Funding is identified and to be shared with Arlington for transit improvements in the Crystal City/Potomac Yard area, which could help pay for a Metro station at Potomac Yard. Funds are also earmarked for improvements in the Eisenhower corridor. These could be used for improvements to the Metro station there, or for a connector to Duke Street or other improvements which are currently being studied by our Task Force. Finally, approximately \$50 to \$60 million would be available for other road or transit improvements which would be determined later.

The sales tax revenues will also pay for other projects outside of Alexandria that would benefit the city. Projects such as improvements to the Glebe Road interchange at I-395 or improvements to the interchange at Van Dorn Street and the Beltway will benefit Alexandria and our citizens. In fact, these projects are part of the Northern Virginia 2020 Plan, which was formulated by localities and adopted by the City Council. As a regional partner, Alexandria will benefit from improved mobility throughout the entire Northern Virginia region.

Finally, I need to point out that funds which flow to the city as part of the sales tax initiative will reduce the pressure we will experience on our Capital Improvement Program. We presently face a variety of capital needs, be they transportation, education, or basic infrastructure. For example, having new money available to pay for transportation needs will free up City money to pay for other capital improvements such as renovation to our schools, particularly T. C. Williams or the Minnie Howard Ninth Grade Center.

The November elections and the transportation referendum are particularly important to us, and I believe it is incumbent upon the City Council to address these issues directly through our endorsement of the referendum. The proposed sales tax increase will be widely debated over the coming months and I believe compelling arguments exist for our endorsement of the sales tax increase. Thus, I ask for your favorable consideration and support of this bipartisan plan which keeps our region moving forward as we confront the transportation needs of both our city and our region.

Cc: P. Sunderland, City Manager
R. Baier, Director, Transportation and Environmental Services
B. Caton, Legislative Director



City of Alexandria, Virginia

*301 King Street, Suite 2300
Alexandria, Virginia 22314*



Kerry J. Donley
Mayor

June 20, 2002

(703) 838-4500
Fax (703) 838-6433

The Honorable Mark R. Warner
State Capitol, 3rd Floor
Richmond, Virginia 23219

Dear Governor Warner: *Mark*

I am pleased to tell you that the Alexandria City Council endorsed the proposed 0.5 cent Regional Transportation Sales Tax at its meeting on June 15, and agreed to work on behalf of its passage in November.

I am convinced that if we are to have any success in implementing our transportation policies and reduce traffic congestion, we must bring meaningful resources to the table. In addition, the sales tax increase represents an historic opportunity to promote transit throughout the region.

I pledge my support for passage of this measure at the November 5 referendum, and I appreciate all you have done to make the referendum a possibility.

Sincerely yours,

Kerry
Kerry Donley
Mayor

cc: The Honorable Whittington W. Clement, Secretary of Transportation
Mr. Pierce Homer, Deputy Secretary of Transportation
Mr. Philip Sunderland, City Manager
Mr. Bernard Caton, Legislative Director

"Home Town of George Washington and Robert E. Lee"



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COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA

Office of the Governor

Whittington W. Clement
Secretary of Transportation

P.O. Box 1475
Richmond, Virginia 23218

(804) 786-8032
Fax: (804) 786-6683
TTY: (804) 786-7765

June 27, 2002

The Honorable Kerry J. Donley, Mayor
City of Alexandria
301 King Street, Suite 2300
Alexandria, Virginia 22314

Dear Kerry:

The Governor has asked me to thank you for and respond to your letter of June 20, 2002.

Needless to say, we are delighted that the Alexandria City Council has endorsed the transportation referendum and has agreed to work for its passage in November. This is a significant step forward.

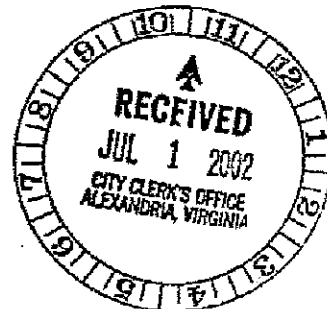
We are very appreciative of your continued leadership.

Thanks again.

Sincerely yours,

Whittington W. Clement

WWC/kt





#19,615/02

COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA

Office of the Governor

Mark R. Warner
Governor

July 8, 2002

The Honorable Kerry Donley
Mayor, City of Alexandria
301 King Street, Suite 2300
Alexandria, Virginia 22314

Dear Mayor Donley: *Kerry*

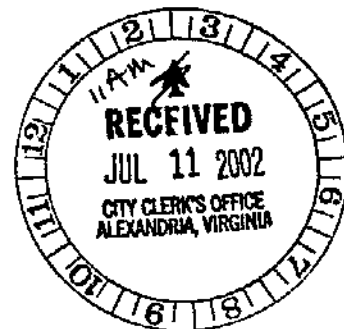
Thank you for writing to let me know about the Alexandria City Council's vote to endorse the Northern Virginia Transportation Referendum. Support of local officials is critical to this referendum's passage. I would like to thank you for the leadership that you have shown on this issue. I look forward to working with you to help secure passage of the referendum.

Thank you again for writing to me.

Sincerely,

Mark R. Warner

MRW/cmg



Learning to Live • Loving to Learn



Alexandria City Public Schools

Received by CC
P.F. #19 6/15/02

October 7, 2002

2000 N. Beauregard Street
Alexandria, Virginia 22311

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TDD: (703) 824-6666

www.acps.k12.va.us

The Honorable Kerry J. Donley
The Honorable William C. Cleveland
The Honorable Claire M. Eberwein
The Honorable William D. Euille
The Honorable Redella S. Pepper
The Honorable David G. Speck
The Honorable Joyce Woodson
City Hall
301 King Street
Alexandria, Virginia 22314

Dear Mr. Mayor and Members of the City Council:

Superintendent of Schools
Rebecca L. Perry

On behalf of the School Board, I enclose a copy of resolutions adopted by the Board at its October 3, 2002 meeting endorsing the passage of the sales tax referendum. The Board unanimously adopted the resolutions.

School Board

Chairman
Mark R. Eaton

Vice Chairman
Susan J. Johnson

Members
Sally Ann Baynard

Linda D. Cheatham

Mary M. Danforth

V. Rodger Digilio

Stephen J. Kenealy

Gwendolyn H. Lewis

Mark O. Wilkoff

The Board is aware, as is the Council, of the financial challenges faced by the City in connection with the renovation and reconstruction of Alexandria's secondary schools, Minnie Howard School and T.C. Williams High School. These critically important capital projects, and the opportunity presented by the sales tax referendum to augment and diversify the City's revenue base to support these projects, weighed significantly in the Board's decision.

The Board looks forward to working with you on the T.C. Williams project, in particular, in the cooperative manner outlined in our joint work session last month.

Sincerely,

Mark Eaton

Mark Eaton

cc: The Honorable Mark R. Warner
Members of the School Board
Ms. Rebecca L. Perry
Mr. Philip Sunderland
Mr. Bernard Caton



RESOLUTIONS
OF THE
ALEXANDRIA CITY SCHOOL BOARD
ENDORISING PASSAGE OF THE
SALES TAX REFERENDUM

WHEREAS, the Alexandria City School Board (the "Board"), the staff of the Alexandria City Public Schools, and the citizens of the City of Alexandria (the "City") are engaged in planning, programming, and design activities for the significant expansion and renovation of Minnie Howard School and the reconstruction of T.C. Williams High School;

WHEREAS, Minnie Howard School and T.C. Williams High School are the sole facilities in the City for the education of public school students in grades 9 through 12;

WHEREAS, the aggregate estimated cost of the expansion and reconstruction of these schools is, depending on planning and design decisions, expected to exceed \$84 million;

WHEREAS, these critical school improvement projects will add significantly to the overall demand on the City's financial resources for capital expenditures and operating expenses;

WHEREAS, in its most recent legislative session the Virginia General Assembly approved a referendum concerning an increase in the sales tax to fund transportation improvements in the City of Alexandria, and certain other Northern Virginia jurisdictions, which, if enacted, would provide an additional funding source for the City and thereby reduce the City's fiscal reliance on real property tax collections; and,

WHEREAS, in the same legislative session the Virginia General Assembly declined to approve a similar ballot referendum measure for education capital projects which would have enabled the City and other localities to fund critically important capital expenditure projects such as those currently planned for Minnie Howard School and T.C. Williams High School;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT:

RESOLVED, that the Board expresses its profound disappointment in the action of the General Assembly in rejecting a ballot referendum for a locally-determined increase in the sales tax to fund education capital projects, thereby precluding the self-determination by the City and other localities in these important local matters;

RESOLVED, that the Board endorses the passage of the referendum to increase the sales tax one-half cent in the City for transportation projects only with the understanding that the City will allocate increased funding for school capital projects from the locally raised funds, previously allocated for transportation projects in the City, that are freed up as a consequence of the sales tax funds being expended on these transportation projects.

This 3rd day of October 2002

Rosemary Webb
Clerk of the School Board

Mark Eaton
Chairman

