

City of Alexandria, Virginia

MEMORANDUM

DATE: FEBRUARY 16, 2011

TO: THE HONORABLE MAYOR AND MEMBERS OF CITY COUNCIL

FROM: JAMES K. HARTMANN, CITY MANAGER *JKH*

SUBJECT: CONSIDERATION OF THE CITY'S CONGESTION MITIGATION AND AIR QUALITY IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM (CMAQ) AND REGIONAL SURFACE TRANSPORTATION PROGRAM (RSTP) PROJECT FUNDING REQUESTS FOR FY 2013 TO FY 2017

ISSUE: Consideration of the City's FY 2013 to FY 2017 Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement Program (CMAQ) and Regional Surface Transportation Program (RSTP) project funding requests.

RECOMMENDATION: That City Council:

1. Approve the transportation projects proposed below as those projects for which the City of Alexandria would be requesting CMAQ and RSTP grant funding totaling \$19.7 million for FY 2013 to FY 2017; and
2. Transmit this plan to the Northern Virginia Transportation Authority for their consideration for eventual submission to the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT).

DISCUSSION: Annually, the City of Alexandria requests federal CMAQ and RSTP funds from the Commonwealth of Virginia through the Northern Virginia Transportation Authority (NVTA).

Through this VDOT-established process, the City receives about \$2.5 million to \$3.0 million annually. For the current fiscal year the City received \$2.5 million, and for FY 2012 the City will receive \$3.0 million. The purpose of the CMAQ and RSTP programs is to provide funding which will reduce or encourage the reduction of single occupancy vehicle usage and which will help the region in addressing traffic congestion and improvement in its air quality. Hence, the focus of the program is on transit and non-single occupancy vehicle strategies, programs and investments such as mass transit.

As part of VDOT's reviewing and improving its management of federal and State grants, VDOT requested on January 31 of this year that Virginia's regional metropolitan planning organizations (MPOs) such as the NVTA prepare a five-year (FY2013 to FY 2017) plan for CMAQ and RSTP requests and submit those to VDOT by March 15. In order for NVTA to prepare a regional plan,

localities were requested to submit their proposals to NVTa by February 15. The City's proposal was submitted with the caveat that it was subject to Council consideration and approval. No FY 2012 plan request is needed as that was submitted last fall. The State approved for FY 2012 the following projects and funding levels for the City. This \$3.0 million in CMAQ and RSTP approvals were consistent with the City's highest six priority requests. These funded projects are:

FY 2012 RSTP/CMAQ Approved Funding

Project	Amount
1. Preliminary Engineering of Exclusive Transitway Improvements	\$240,000
2. DASH Bus Acquisition	\$1,300,000
3. Transportation Demand Management Analysis and Initiatives/Transit Store	\$400,000
4. Bike Racks on DASH Buses	\$180,000
5. Bicycle Parking at Major Transit Stops	\$380,000
6. Holmes Run Pedestrian/Bicycle Tunnel Construction, Phase II	\$500,000
TOTAL FUNDS APPROVED	\$3,000,000

City requests which were not funded for FY 2012 include the Bicycle Sharing initiative (\$500,000), Eisenhower Platform Extension (\$500,000) and the Braddock Road Metro Multimodal Connections study funds (\$250,000).

Transportation and Environmental Services staff developed the five-year \$19.7 million request list that is displayed below. The VDOT set-deadlines, which were not reasonable in allowing sufficient time for project consideration at the jurisdictional and MPO levels, did not allow a full review and formal approval by the City's Transportation Commission. However, the proposals were provided to the Transportation Commission whose members provided individual input to T&ES staff. The projects and priorities below are consistent with that input. It is important to note that once submitted and approved at the State level, project lists can be revised by a locality through a reallocation request, or through an updated request process. Also it appears that (similar to the City's annual multi-year CIP process), there will be an opportunity to revise the multi-year project list annually. The proposed projects are consistent with and complementary to the projects proposed in the City's FY 2012 to FY 2021 Capital Improvement Program, as well as the projects proposed as part of the commercial add-on tax for transportation initiative.

Project	FY 2013	FY 2014	FY 2015	FY 2016	FY 2017
1. DASH Bus Replacement	\$1,950,000	\$2,500,000	\$2,050,000	\$2,100,000	\$2,870,000
2. Bicycle Sharing Initiative	\$400,000	-	-	-	-
3. Bicycle Parking at Major Metro Stops	-	-	-	\$250,000	-
4. Rebuilding the Mt. Vernon Multi-use Trail Parallel to E. Abingdon Drive	\$500,000	-	-	-	-
5. Transit Store	-	\$500,000	-	\$500,000	-
6. Transit Analysis Study	-	-	\$500,000	-	-
7. Transportation Demand Management	\$700,000	\$500,000	\$500,000	\$500,000	\$700,000
8. Braddock Road Metro Multimodal Connections	-	\$250,000	\$1,000,000	-	-
9. Parking Technologies	\$400,000	\$250,000	\$250,000	\$250,000	\$250,000
TOTALS	\$3,950,000	\$4,000,000	\$4,300,000	\$3,600,000	\$3,820,000

All of the projects, except the last two (#8 and #9), have been endorsed by Council and proposed by the City for CMAQ or RSTP funding in the past. Explanations for the requested nine projects are provided of the new projects as provided in Attachment 1.

FISCAL IMPACT: The proposed \$19.7 million in projects do not require local matching funds from the City. The match will be provided by the Commonwealth.

STAFF:

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CITY OF ALEXANDRIA
CMAQ/RSTP PROJECT DESCRIPTIONS

Nine projects are proposed for CMAQ or RSTP funding in FY 2013-FY2017. These are briefly described below, in priority order:

1. DASH Bus Replacement

For DASH to maintain its existing fleet, buses should be replaced after they reach their useful life (about 12 years). Hybrid buses at a \$650,000 acquisition cost (in 2011 dollars) are assumed. With the CMAQ/RSTP funds available, the City should be able to buy three to four buses each year. This is in addition to the DASH replacement buses planned in the City's CIP and should keep DASH close to its replacement needs.

2. Bicycle Sharing Initiative

Bicycling is a practical, cost-effective and efficient way to move through Old Town and Carlyle/East Eisenhower areas of Alexandria which are both compact, dense areas of mixed use development with many low-speed streets and existing on- and off-street bicycle facilities and parking. While the City is making improvements on many fronts to encourage more sustainable transportation choices, one major goal in the City's Transportation Master Plan is to join the region's new capital bicycle sharing program. Public bicycle rental programs (also known as "bike sharing") aim to provide short-term bicycle rental available at unattended urban locations.

After reviewing the results of the new Arlington and D.C. Bike Sharing Program, a specific pilot program for the City would be designed. It is currently contemplated that this Bicycle Sharing Initiative would likely start with up to 10 bike sharing stations in Old Town, Carlyle, and Del Ray. The pilot initiative would provide feasibility information that will help assess future expansion of the program. While the proposed five-year plan does not assume expansion Citywide, if such expansion appears in part or whole to be warranted, the City could at some time in the next few years revise its out year CMAQ/RSTP funding request. This project was on the Council approved CMAQ/RSTP grant request listing for FY 2012, but fell just below the funding cutoff.

3. Bicycle Parking at Major Transit Stops

Bicycle commuting has risen dramatically in Alexandria since 2005, in part due to improved on- and off-street connections to the City's bikeway network. However, the City still lags behind other local jurisdictions in providing safe, secure bicycle parking at its major transit stops. To address high demand and current use levels that meet or exceed capacity, the City is seeking funds for modular, enclosed, unattended bicycle parking "stations" at Metro stops. These shelters range in size from 10'x20' to 10'x40' and are designed to provide a low-cost, high-capacity solution that will also encourage short bicycle trips to complement public transit usage.

4. Rebuilding the Mount Vernon Multi-use Trail Parallel to East Abingdon Drive

Currently, the Mount Vernon multi-use trail is badly constricted in the section parallel to East Abingdon Drive, south of Slater's Lane. Methods for widening this portion of the trail will be studied, a method chosen, and the path widened. This action will make this important link in the region's pedestrian-bicycle network safer and better able to handle the amount of traffic on it.

5. Transit Store

Funding the operations of the City's transit store is a continuing priority of CMAQ and RSTP funds. This has occurred through the use of RSTP funds since the store opened in 2002. The store provides transit information, sells fare media with a value of over \$750,000 per year and has 4,200 annual visitors. It would continue with CMAQ funds when the FY 2012 allocation is used. These grants will keep the store in operation providing transit assistance and transit media.

6. Transit Analysis Study

It is necessary to periodically examine all transit services in the City. The City was able to do so in the community-wide Transit Analysis, which was completed at the end of 2010. By 2015, it will be necessary to do a similar study to determine the performance and needs at that time.

7. Transportation Demand Management Advancement

The City of Alexandria's Transportation Demand Management (TDM) Program, otherwise known as Local Motion, implements TDM strategies that focus on change in travel behaviors (how, when and where people travel) in order to increase the efficiency of the City's transportation system, decrease traffic congestion, and achieve the City Council's 2010 Strategic Plan Goal 3: *A multimodal transportation network that supports sustainable land use and provides internal mobility and regional connectivity for Alexandrians* and goals outlined in the 2008 Transportation Master Plan. Through the use of incentives, education, and the implementation of competitive travel options, TDM encourages and supports shift of travel demand away from Single Occupant Vehicles (SOV) to trips by carpools or other modes of transportation, to trips that occur at a more efficient time, route, or place, and through the elimination of trips by telecommuting and compressed work schedules. The program is entirely grant funded (except for a local match of one grant) and supports the continued programming including implementation of an extensive set of techniques to encourage City residents and City employees to use such modes.

8. Braddock Road Metro Multimodal Connections

The Braddock Metro Neighborhood Plan recommends studying the feasibility of building a tunnel connection under the railroad tracks from the Braddock Road station itself. Such a tunnel would "provide a grand new station entry from the west, saving pedestrians walking time by eliminating the existing need to walk south to the Braddock Road underpass to reach

the station” according to the Plan. In addition, the plan recommends studying a potential future pedestrian-bike connection and a potential walking route connection to the northern gateway.

This project would perform preliminary engineering to improve multimodal access and improve mobility options to the station.

9. Parking Technologies

This study will fund the assessment of various techniques for improved parking management, and will fund the installation of such measures as multispace meters, real-time parking management, performance parking implementation, and/or pay-by-phone parking as a means of cutting emissions by eliminating excessive driving to find parking.

February 16, 2011