

City of Alexandria, Virginia

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MEMORANDUM

DATE: MARCH 3, 2011
TO: THE HONORABLE MAYOR AND MEMBERS OF CITY COUNCIL
FROM: JAMES K. HARTMANN, CITY MANAGER
SUBJECT: FEDERAL ISSUES FOR DISCUSSION WITH CONGRESSMAN JAMES P. MORAN

ISSUE: Federal issues for discussion with Congressman James P. Moran.

RECOMMENDATION: That City Council receive this report.

DISCUSSION: Each year, Council meets with Congressman James P. Moran, and presents him and the other members of our federal delegation with a list of federal issues of concern to the City. Many of these in the past have been specific items for which the City sought federal funding, although the City has always included non-earmark federal legislative requests.

One of the City's highest priorities is to improve transportation in the Mark Center area, where the Washington Headquarters Service and other Department of Defense (DoD) offices will be relocated (BRAC-133). We ask the Congressman, who has fought hard for the City for such improvements, to continue his efforts. Specifically, we continue to seek the following at this time:

- Federal money, potentially through the Defense Access Roads Program, for the short and mid-term traffic improvements that still lack funding;
- Federal funding for the ramp that VDOT has agreed to construct from the I-395 HOV lanes to Seminary Road;
- Final federal approval for: 1) the facility's Transportation Management Plan (TMP); 2) The DoD agreement for DASH to transport DoD workers to the site, and a Defense Department agreement with WMATA regarding transit between the site and the Pentagon; and
- Federal funding to pay for off-duty police to direct traffic and reduce potential congestion at crucial intersections near the facility.

None of the City's earmark requests from last year were funded, since Congress provided no earmarks for FY 2011 (the current fiscal year). It also appears that earmarks will not be included in appropriations legislation for FY 2012. Nevertheless, we have been asked by Congressman Moran to advise him of our needs, so needs that were identified by staff for this year (prior to the decision by Congress not to fund earmarks) are described below. In addition, outstanding funding requests from last year (with updates where appropriate) are listed in Appendix 1.

This year, the City also faces the possibility of significant reductions to programs that are funded, at least in part, by the federal government. Later in this memorandum is a preliminary analysis of the effect on the City of House Resolution (HR) 1 (the funding legislation proposed by the House majority for the remainder of this federal fiscal year).

I. New Requests for Federal Appropriations. Prior to the time when federal earmarks were ruled out for FY 2012, staff began developing a list of additional projects to be considered for federal assistance. The FY 2012 list included the following:

A. ITS Integration for the I-395/Seminary/Beauregard area (\$1 million). This project will modify traffic signal technology in the area surrounding the Seminary/Beauregard and I-395/Seminary intersections to improve traffic flow and allow more rapid passage of emergency vehicles. The modifications will enable signal cycles to be extended to accommodate transit, emergency, and other priority vehicles that are equipped with the technology needed to communicate with the traffic signals.

B. Redesign Van Dorn Metro Kiss and Ride (\$200,000). The Van Dorn Metro Station's Kiss and Ride lot is used by a large number of buses (WMATA and DASH), vans providing rides to neighborhood high rises and condominiums, and other vehicles meeting riders at the station. The current design of the station does not utilize the space to its highest capacity. A redesign of the lot would allow more transit-oriented and other vehicles to use the drop-off area and reduce potential safety issues that arise from the over-crowding of the station. If earmarks were available, the City would request \$200,000 for this project.

II. Other Requests of the City's Federal Delegation

A. Windmill Hill Park Bulkhead. For several years, the City has requested funding through the Army Corps of Engineers for replacement of the deteriorating bulkhead at Windmill Hill Park. In 2010, the Corps contacted City staff and invited the City to apply for Army Corps "510" funding for this project. Unfortunately, after several meetings, the Corps informed City staff that it does not believe that the project meets the "510" requirements, since it did not find that the project would enhance the Chesapeake Bay estuary or correct harmful impacts from the existing bulkhead. The Corps also characterized the bulkhead replacement as "routine maintenance action" that is the responsibility of the City.

The City does not consider replacement of the bulkhead to be routine maintenance, and believes that the current structure is unsafe for users of the Potomac River, many of whom are not Alexandrians. We also believe the current condition of the bulkhead is harmful to the environment. The City requests the Congressman's assistance in having the Corps reconsider its decision.

B. FEMA Snow Storm Reimbursements. In November 2009, changes were made to the Federal Emergency Management Agency's (FEMA) policy for its Public Assistance Program as it relates to winter storm events. These changes resulted in far less funding being made available to Alexandria and other communities to deal with severe snowfalls. The new policy limits federal reimbursement for snow removal activities to 48 hours after the event. It also limits reimbursement to winter snowfalls that exceed or are within ten percent of the previous record

snowfall. Alexandria's response and cleanup for the February 2010 snowfall, which closed the federal government for five days, lasted much longer than 48 hours, and cost nearly \$8,200,000. At this time, it appears that the City will be reimbursed by FEMA for only a quarter of these costs. If we had experienced a disaster such as a hurricane, with similar damage, our recovery would have been closer to half of our expenses. The City understands that the cost of snow removal under normal circumstances should be the responsibility of the local and state governments. The December 2009 and February 2010 snowstorms, however, were clearly disasters similar to hurricanes and tornados and should be treated as such. We ask that legislation be enacted to require FEMA to treat major winter snow storms the same as other weather disasters, such as hurricanes and tornados.

III. Potential Impacts of Budget Reductions from HR 1 (FY 2011)

Although staff is unable to project the effects of HR 1 on all City programs, it has identified a number of programs which it believes will be affected.

- Funding for long-needed WMATA improvements--\$150 million annually for the region
- Community Development Block Grants
- Community Services Block Grants
- Low Income Heating and Cooling Programs
- Workforce Investment (Jobs) Programs
- FEMA programs
- UASI (Homeland Security) grants
- Save America's Treasures grants
- Funding for Community Health Centers, including Alexandria Neighborhood Health Services, Inc. (ANSHI), which provides health care for over 16,000 patients in the City
- Head Start
- Teen Pregnancy Prevention
- Title 1 and Other Education Programs
- Health Department and ANSHI Family Planning Services
- Maternity Care for over 25 percent of the women who give birth in the City
- Other Maternal and Child Health Programs, including the car seat program, home visitations, and access to Medicaid
- Funding from the Centers for Disease Control for programs such as TB control, lead poisoning prevention, immunization programs, and programs to limit the spread of sexually transmitted diseases

Staff has tried to assess the effects of the cuts on several programs for which the City has more detailed information. A summary of these is found below.

Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) and related funding. HR 1 would significantly reduce CDBG funding for FY 2011 by providing only \$1.5 billion nationwide – a cut of approximately 62 percent compared to FY 2010. The City’s 2010 CDBG allocation is \$1.36 million. Under HR 1, it would be reduced to slightly more than \$500,000. CDBG funds are used by the City to fully fund the Home Rehabilitation Loan, RAMP (the Rental Accessibility Modification Program, which helps low- and moderate income renters who have physical disabilities make modifications to their residences to make them more accessible) and Fair Housing Testing, and Winter Shelter for the Homeless programs. They partially fund the Homeownership Assistance Program, Eviction Assistance and Furniture Storage, Transitional Assistance, and Office of Housing Program Administration.

Federal Home Investment Partnership funds (HOME), which are administered by HUD (as is CDBG) pay for the Homeownership Assistance Program, the Housing Opportunities Fund and Office of Housing Program Administration. Reductions to HOME funding are also proposed in HR 1.

Staff notes that CDBG and related programs are likely to be reduced for FY 2012, since the President’s proposed budget includes such reductions. The proposed FY 2012 reductions are less drastic than those included in HR 1. Staff also notes that the City’s proposed FY 2012 budget is based on what the City believed to be the federal FY 2011 allocation; any reductions to the FY 2011 allocation, such as those proposed in HR 1, would force the City to recalculate its proposals for CDBG and HOME-funded programs for the upcoming City fiscal year. The City believes that CDBG, HOME, and related programs are important to providing adequate housing to many people who would otherwise be unable to afford it, and asks its Congressional delegation to protect these programs to the greatest extent possible.

Workforce Investment Act--Assistance for the Jobless. Alexandria’s JobLink provides a full range of employment services to independent self-directed job seekers, disadvantaged adults, dislocated workers and disadvantaged youth (in-school and out-of-school). These services include access to an employment Resource Center, career counseling, career planning, job search, job placement, job preparation, skill training and follow-up services. The population served by JobLink is primarily those who are unemployed and under-employed job seekers, the disadvantaged, and dislocated workers. JobLink’s federal funding comes from Workforce Investment Act grants, which staff understands are proposed for elimination in HR 1. Each year hundreds of residents visit JobLink thousands of times seeking resources, support and assistance in finding employment or improving their employment. The vast majority of these clients spend hours in the JobLink employment Resource Center (RC) where they can independently complete their self-directed job search. The RC provides free access to computers, telephones, fax and other job search resources that are not otherwise available to them. These clients accounted for 23,467 visits to the Resource Center in FY 2010. Other clients, disadvantaged youth and adults as well as dislocated workers, would no longer have access to the comprehensive services and job training opportunities currently available to them. HR 1’s proposed rescission of 100 percent of the Workforce Investment Act appropriation would eliminate funding for these employment services to all of JobLink’s WIA clients. The negative fiscal impact of HR 1 on JobLink programs is estimated to be nearly \$370,000 (and these programs have already suffered a reduction of nearly \$90,000 from the last federal fiscal year’s appropriation).

Community Service Block Grants (CSBG) - For over 40 years, CSBG funds have been used to fund activities designed to meet immediate and urgent needs of low-income families and individuals. They also partially fund the salaries of caseworkers in the City's Department of Community and Human Services who administer these programs. During FY 2010, CSBG funds assisted 3,363 individuals. When providing case management services, staff also works with at least 47 community partners to provide additional assistance to low-income individuals and families; this linkage would disappear if insufficient caseworkers were available to those in need.

CSBG funds are also used to provide rent and utility assistance to low-income City residents (approximately 100 per year). Without the CSBG funds, these people could become homeless. Staff estimates that the City would lose over \$94,000 in CSBG funds if HR 1 were enacted.

Low Income Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP). LIHEAP funds, also slated for a significant reduction under HR 1, provide heating and cooling assistance for low-income households. Reduced funding for this program will lead to more frequent utility disconnections. During the coldest and hottest times of the year, a disconnection of utilities increases the level of health risks for residents, especially young children, disabled individuals, and seniors. Staff estimates that HR 1 would result in the loss of over \$161,000 in LIHEAP funds, impacting 1,048 City residents.

Alexandria Neighborhood Health Services, Inc. (ANHSI). ANHSI, formerly known as the Arlandria Clinic, provides health services to over 16,000 patients annually—and the number is growing. These include basic health services, maternal and child care, family planning, and other primary care medical services for low-income, under- or uninsured patients. Since the City is transitioning its primary care and HIV patients to ANHSI, it is critical that ANHSI retain its community health center monies.

HR 1 includes reductions of \$1.3 billion in funding for community health centers nationwide—and we anticipate that ANHSI would suffer reductions to its budget should HR 1 or similar legislation be enacted. In FY 2009 ANHSI received 30% of its funding (\$1.3 million) from federal sources including HUD and the federal Community Health Center Program. Such reductions would have a significant effect on health care for some of Alexandria's most vulnerable residents.

Alexandria Health Department (AHD). A number of programs offered by the Alexandria Health Department could be reduced or eliminated under HR 1 as proposed. These include:

- Maternal and Child Health services (AHD and ANSHI provides maternity care to 25 percent of the women who give birth in the City).
- Family planning (4,400 patients receive these services annually through AHD or ANHSI).
- The Car Seat program provides car seats to new parents who otherwise could not afford them.
- The Centers for Disease Control provide AHD with funding for key public health programs, including TB disease control and elimination, lead poisoning prevention, immunization programs, and sexually transmitted infection control efforts. Reduced funding for any of these programs would result in increased risks to the public's health.

ATTACHMENTS:

Attachment 1: Appendix 1- 2010 City Requests for New Federal Appropriations

STAFF:

Bernard Caton, Legislative Director

APPENDIX 1

2010 CITY REQUESTS FOR NEW FEDERAL APPROPRIATIONS

When Council met with Congressman Moran in 2010, it requested assistance with the following projects for which the City still needs funding.

A. Funding for Projects Related to the Relocation of the Washington Headquarters Service

1. **Access from I-395**. The City noted the need last year for improvements (which could not be specified at the time) that would provide better access to BRAC-133 from I-395 and reduce congestion in the surrounding neighborhoods.

2011 Update: The Commonwealth of Virginia has agreed to construct a ramp from the HOV lanes on I-395 to Seminary Road; although the Commonwealth has committed to providing the funding needed for this project, we anticipate that it will ask for federal funds for part or all of the project.

The City has identified short and mid-term improvements (turn lanes, through lane improvements in the area around Mark Center) that would help traffic flow in the BRAC-133 area, but has not yet received a commitment for federal funds to pay for these improvements.

2. **Fire, Rescue, and Related Emergency Response Needs (\$750,000 one-time; \$2.2 million annually)**. The requested funds last year for dedicated fire suppression company staffing, and a peak-time paramedic transport unit.

2011 Update: The City continues to discuss emergency response needs with Department of Defense/Fort Belvoir officials, but has not yet received a commitment for federal funds.

B. Funding for Transit and Other Transportation Projects

1. **Eisenhower Avenue Metro Platform Extension (\$1,000,000)**. The City requested funding for direct access to the Eisenhower Avenue Metro Station from the north side of Eisenhower.

2. **Bicycle Initiative (\$2.3 million)**. The City requested funding for projects to improve integration of bicycling and transit by: (a) installing bicycle parking stations at Alexandria's four Metrorail stops; (b) establishing a bike-sharing program to enable customers to use a bicycle from a fleet at one location and return it to another; and (c) adding bicycle racks to all existing DASH transit vehicles.

3. **Bus Rapid Transit –Van Dorn/Beauregard (\$4.2 million)**. Funding was requested for Bus Rapid Transit in the Van Dorn-Beauregard corridor, which would serve the BRAC-133 site at the Mark Center.

4. **Feasibility Study to Extend the Proposed Columbia Pike Streetcar to BRAC-133 (\$500,000)**. Funding was requested to study the extension of the streetcar route, which Arlington and Fairfax Counties are planning to build on Columbia Pike, to the Mark Center.

2011 Update: The City is looking at appropriate transit improvements for several corridors throughout the City; once the appropriate mode of transit is identified, a source of funding will be needed.

5. **Potomac Yard Metro (\$25 million)**. The City requested consideration of partial funding for a new Metro Station in the reauthorization of SAFETEA-LU.

6. **Active Transportation Programs (\$750,000)**. The City also sought inclusion in the transportation reauthorization of a permanent grant mechanism to fund active transportation programs (projects involving walking and biking). The City would like to initiate one of these projects (Hooff's Run Pedestrian-Bike Bridge) soon, using federal funds to do so. This project would provide a major pedestrian-bicycle path between the Eisenhower Avenue Metro station and the Mount Vernon Trail at Washington Street, opening a new route for federal workers seeking to use active transportation to major federal employment centers such as the PTO.

C. Funding for Our Natural and Cultural Resources

1. **Redevelopment of Alexandria's Waterfront (Total, multi-year needs: \$41.7 million)**. As Alexandria begins to redevelop its waterfront, we would like federal assistance for projects related to shoreline protection (new or rebuilt bulkheads or riprap from Founder's Park to Windmill Hill Park, as well as spot replacements elsewhere) and flood mitigation (e.g., flood proofing publicly-owned historic structures; raising the height of certain streets; installing baffles in sewers to prevent stormwater from flowing back into the street).

2. **Four Mile Run Restoration Efforts (\$1 million jointly with Arlington)**. Alexandria and Arlington need funds to continue the aquatic and riparian habitat restoration efforts underway in the Four Mile Run corridor.

3. **Improvements to Allow the Lyceum to Better Serve Those Who Are Disabled (\$250,000)**. The Lyceum needs funds to replace the aging, deteriorating, and inadequately sized elevator that serves the building.

4. **Habitat Restoration along the Holmes Run Corridor (\$32,700)**. The City sought funds to reestablish a healthy native plant population along the Holmes Run Corridor.

D. Public Safety Needs

1. **Establishing a Dedicated Emergency Operations Center for the City of Alexandria (\$1 million)**. The City of Alexandria does not have a dedicated local emergency operations center (EOC) for the City. Construction of a dedicated EOC is expected to cost \$3.8 million. The City asked for federal funding for about one-quarter of the cost of such an EOC.

2. **Funding to Combat Gangs**. Northern Virginia localities have worked together to combat problems related to gangs, using federal funds made available to the region in recent years. This need continues to exist, and the City asked for continued funding for this purpose last year.

3. **Security Upgrades at the Alexandria Jail (\$270,000)**. The City of Alexandria Detention Center, which houses on average over 150 federal prisoners per day, needs additional safety and security upgrades, including a detection system around the perimeter of the property, more video surveillance and barbed wire fencing.

4. **Elevated Tactics System Platform (\$160,000)**. The Alexandria Police Special Operations Team (SOT) has a need to safely and effectively access a second story or other elevated positions with an equipment platform that can be raised from the top of a vehicle to allow SOT officers to safely approach and gain access to elevated positions.

E. Other Funding Needs

1. **Mt. Vernon Avenue Solar Lighting (\$300,000)**. A group of business owners on Mt. Vernon Avenue has been developing a proposal to install solar lighting on both sides of a 3-block stretch of the street, between Custis and Uhler Avenues. Under a demonstration project, 36 lights would be installed at a cost of approximately \$300,000.

2. **Alexandria Seaport Foundation (\$200,000)**. The City of Alexandria Juvenile Court Service Unit, in partnership with the Alexandria Seaport Foundation and the Northern Virginia Regional Gang Task Force, requested \$200,000 to continue the Green Apprenticeship program, which serves youths identified by the Courts and prepares them for careers in sustainable building trades.