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3-12-11

STATEMENT BEFORE COUNCIL ON THE CAPITOL BIKE SHARE PROGRAM

Mr. Mayor, Members of Council,

I am here this morning to urge you to use caution in expending city funds on a new program called "Capitol Bike Share."

This would be a city run program to provide -- at a fee to riders -- bicycles at stations around Alexandria. It is part of a COG program that would be funded initially largely by a TIGER Grant from the U.S. Department of Transportation.

The grant would commit Alexandria to purchasing 146 shared bikes and creating 17 stations throughout the city at a cost of \$870,000 -- of which the city would contribute \$180,000.

While the idea of increasing bike riding in Alexandria and reducing traffic is a worthy one, I seriously question the idea of the City embarking on such a project at a time of great budget stringency.

The grant would be a one-time benefit but the City would be committed to a 20% match and to picking up the

recurring costs -- which will be substantial -- into the indefinite future.

In my discussion with the City's Bicycle Coordinator, Ms. Sanders, I understand that the city is considering a limited start-up of 4 to 6 stations --not 17 -- and as few as 60 bikes.

The experts on these systems clearly warn that bike sharing only works, however, when there are plenty of stations and plenty of bikes

The estimated annual ^{O&M cost} ~~M&E~~ even for this limited program in Alexandria would be \$180,000 annually. If the City went to the full program the O&M cost would be more than \$300,000 annually.

It appears that the COG proposal is insanely optimistic about the bike usage in Alexandria and the region -- each bike is estimated to be used 34 times a day -- way above usage numbers in other cities.

My training is in political science, not economics, but Poul Hertel who will follow this morning is an economist and he has some cost-benefit figures to show you.

My concern is that the COG estimates on ridership and economic sustainability are considerably overblown and need a serious look before we get too far down the road.

We may be setting ourselves up for an expensive failure.

The program has begun in Arlington. My friends there tell me that the bikes are seldom used. I suggest we wait a while until we see what ridership is achieved there and in the District before launching anything.

In the interim, we should be looking for ways to make the potential routes for all bikes less of a hassle. On the scale of bike-friendly communities we get only a bronze rating. Arlington and DC merit silver.

In sum, I urge that consideration of participation in Capitol Bike Share be eliminated from the budget for Fiscal 2012 while serious attention is paid to the prospects for success.

I will be happy to answer questions.

SPEAKER'S FORM

DOCKET ITEM NO. 2

spoke

**PLEASE COMPLETE THIS FORM AND GIVE IT TO THE CITY CLERK
BEFORE YOU SPEAK ON A DOCKET ITEM**

PLEASE ANNOUNCE THE INFORMATION SPECIFIED BELOW PRIOR TO SPEAKING.

1. NAME: Jack Sullivan (Bike Share)

2. ADDRESS: _____

TELEPHONE NO. _____ E-MAIL ADDRESS: _____

3. WHOM DO YOU REPRESENT, IF OTHER THAN YOURSELF?

4. WHAT IS YOUR POSITION ON THE ITEM?
FOR: _____ AGAINST: _____ OTHER:

5. NATURE OF YOUR INTEREST IN ITEM (PROPERTY OWNER, ATTORNEY, LOBBYIST, CIVIC INTEREST, ETC.):

6. ARE YOU RECEIVING COMPENSATION FOR THIS APPEARANCE BEFORE COUNCIL?
YES _____ NO

This form shall be kept as a part of the permanent record in those instances where financial interest or compensation is indicated by the speaker.

A maximum of three minutes will be allowed for your presentation, except that one officer or other designated member speaking on behalf of each *bona fide* neighborhood civic association or unit owners' association desiring to be heard on a docket item shall be allowed five minutes. In order to obtain five minutes, you must identify yourself as a designated speaker, and identify the neighborhood civic association or unit owners' association you represent, at the start of your presentation. If you have a prepared statement, please leave a copy with the Clerk.

Additional time not to exceed 15 minutes may be obtained with the consent of the majority of the council present; provided notice requesting additional time with reasons stated is filed with the City Clerk in writing before 5:00 p.m. of the day preceding the meeting.

The public normally may speak on docket items only at public hearing meetings, and not at regular legislative meetings. Public hearing meetings are usually held on the Saturday following the second Tuesday in each month; regular legislative meetings on the second and fourth Tuesdays in each month. The rule with respect to when a person may speak to a docket item at a legislative meeting can be waived by a majority vote of council members present but such a waiver is not normal practice. When a speaker is recognized, the rules of procedures for speakers at public hearing meetings shall apply. If an item is docketed *for public hearing* at a regular legislative meeting, the public may speak to that item, and the rules of procedures for speakers at public hearing meetings shall apply.

In addition, the public may speak on matters which are not on the docket during the Public Discussion Period at public hearing meetings. The mayor may grant permission to a person, who is unable to participate in public discussion at a public hearing meeting for medical, religious, family emergency or other similarly substantial reasons, to speak at a regular legislative meeting. When such permission is granted, the rules of procedures for public discussion at public hearing meetings shall apply.

Guidelines for the Public Discussion Period

(a) All speaker request forms for the public discussion period must be submitted by the time the item is called by the city clerk.

(b) No speaker will be allowed more than three minutes; except that one officer or other designated member speaking on behalf of each *bona fide* neighborhood civic association or unit owners' association desiring to be heard during the public discussion period shall be allowed five minutes. In order to obtain five minutes, you must identify yourself as a designated speaker, and identify the neighborhood civic association or unit owners' association you represent, at the start of your presentation.

(c) If more speakers are signed up than would be allotted for in 30 minutes, the mayor will organize speaker requests by subject or position, and allocated appropriate times, trying to ensure that speakers on unrelated subjects will also be allowed to speak during the 30 minute public discussion period.

(d) If speakers seeking to address council on the same subject cannot agree on a particular order or method that they would like the speakers to be called on, the speakers shall be called in the chronological order of their request forms' submission.

(e) Any speakers not called during the public discussion period will have the option to speak at the conclusion of the meeting, after all docketed items have been heard.