

City of Alexandria, Virginia

WS  
2-24-03

MEMORANDUM

DATE: FEBRUARY 20, 2003  
TO: THE HONORABLE MAYOR AND MEMBERS OF CITY COUNCIL  
FROM: PHILIP SUNDERLAND, CITY MANAGER *PS*  
SUBJECT: ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION WITH CONGRESSMAN JAMES P. MORAN

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On February 24, 2003, at 8:00 a.m., Council will hold its annual work session with Congressman James P. Moran to discuss federal issues of concern to the City. The following is a summary of the issues that staff recommends for this discussion.

**1. Security Improvements Related to Terrorist Trials**

**A. Funding for Security Upgrades at the Alexandria Jail.** A number of the alleged terrorists who were arrested following the September 11 attacks, including Zacarias Moussaoui, are being held at the Alexandria jail. Because of the security concerns associated with these individuals, the City has undertaken an expensive security upgrade at the Alexandria Public Safety Center, which includes the jail. The projected cost of these upgrades is approximately \$4.5 million. Thus far, the City has received \$2 million in reimbursement from the United States Marshals Service (USMS). Staff has also been advised that the 2003 federal appropriation includes another \$1.54 million to cover a portion of the jail upgrade, as well as overtime for sheriff's deputies (see below).

The City budget contains no funds for the jail upgrades. Since the trials relate to major national security concerns, we believe it is appropriate that the federal government, and not Alexandria taxpayers, provide monies for the security measures. We are appreciative of the Congressman's efforts to obtain federal appropriations thus far, and we ask that he continue to assist us in getting additional reimbursements.

**B. Funding for Deputy Sheriffs (Overtime and New Deputies).** Since the Alexandria Jail began housing prisoners who have been charged with crimes relating to terrorism, security at the jail complex has increased significantly. As part of this heightened security, deputy sheriffs check the identification of all visitors to the jail complex and maintain 24-hour surveillance of the routes of access to the complex. This has necessitated the extensive use of unbudgeted overtime, as well as the hiring of new deputies.

The Alexandria Sheriff has also assigned deputy sheriffs to oversee contractors from the Woodrow Wilson Bridge project who are working on or adjacent to the jail property. This is necessary because of the security risks associated with the terrorists being held at the jail.

The City has incurred nearly \$1 million in overtime for deputy sheriffs thus far. In addition, we expect to spend over \$540,000 annually for new deputy sheriffs to provide the identification checks for visitors to the jail complex (once these are hired and fully trained, the need for overtime should decrease substantially).

As noted above, we understand that \$1.54 million of the City's costs related to the alleged terrorists are reimbursed in recent federal appropriations. We are hopeful that Congressman Moran can continue to assist us in getting additional reimbursements for past costs and, if possible, funding for the new deputy sheriffs.

**2. Mobile Computers for First-Line Responders.** The Alexandria Police Department has become a technology leader in Law Enforcement with the development of its Tactical Computer System. Under this initiative, the Department is seeking to place computer technology into the hands of officers on the street. When fully implemented, many of the traditional paper systems and data bases will be replaced with real time data collection and dissemination. Police officers will be able to complete reports electronically, query complex databases electronically, and stay in full communication with other officers and headquarters by electronic messaging. A mobile intranet instantaneously delivers intelligence data, including text and photographs.

With these technology advances, the laptop computer has become an indispensable tool for every police first-responder. As the events of September 11, 2001 demonstrated, cellular and land-line communications become clogged and unusable during crises. The Department's Tactical Computer System bypasses this problem and allows officers to continue communications.

Currently, the Alexandria Police Department has 263 Panasonic Toughbook computers. The Department needs 45 more computers to provide each sworn officer with a laptop. The City requests \$312,626 in federal funds to purchase the necessary hardware, software and accessories.

**3. Alexandria's Waterfront – Funding for Community Planning for the Waterfront at the Foot of King Street.** Since the early 1970's, the United States has claimed ownership of several parcels of land at the foot of King Street (the Old Dominion Boat Club and five additional properties along the Strand). Litigation initiated by the federal government has been pending for over 30 years, with no end in sight. Working with the property owners, the community and the National Park Service, the City would like to develop a plan for these properties, which would outline their long term uses and ensure their consistency with other uses along the waterfront.

The City requests \$250,000 in federal funds to retain consultants to assist in the development of a plan for these properties. It is expected that this plan would facilitate settlement of the outstanding litigation.

#### **4. Transportation Needs**

**A. Mill Road Slip Ramp to Eastbound Beltway.** The East Eisenhower Valley is experiencing significant commercial and residential development. The area now has access to the westbound Capital Beltway by way of a short spur road from Mill Road, onto Telegraph Road, and then to a ramp leading to the inner loop. This access point is heavily congested during the evening peak period today and will become even more so in the future.

The City would like to construct a slip ramp that allows the high volume of East Eisenhower traffic seeking to enter the inner loop to bypass the spur road, pass under Eisenhower Avenue, and merge directly onto the inner loop ramp. Mill Road now extends under the Eisenhower Avenue overpass to a cul de sac adjacent to this ramp. The slip ramp would require minor realignment and widening of the Mill Road extension and construction of an acceleration lane on the ramp. The benefits would include elimination of heavy turning movements at the Mill Road intersection with the spur road, removal of 1800 vehicles from the weaving area on Telegraph, and more direct access to the inner loop for traffic originating in the East Eisenhower Valley.

The City requests \$1.5 million in federal funding for this project.

**B. Extending the Eisenhower Valley Metro Platform.** Due to the proximity of Alexandria to the Nation's Capital, the City's multi-modal transportation infrastructure plays a key role in both local and regional mobility. One of the City's existing Metro stations, the Eisenhower Avenue station, is in the section of East Eisenhower Valley where significant development is anticipated in the future. Currently, access to the station is only from the south side of Eisenhower Avenue. In order to maximize the use of this station, a platform extension is needed, so that the station can be accessed from the north side of Eisenhower. Among workers that would be served by this extension are employees of the United States Court House and the Patent and Trademark Office. The City is exploring options for financing this project, but funding is needed now to begin platform design.

We request \$1 million in federal funding for this project.

**C. Crystal City/Potomac Yard Transit.** Potomac Yard and Crystal City will be undergoing significant development in the next five to ten years in both the City of Alexandria and Arlington County. This development must be adequately served by the appropriate transportation modes. In order to determine what kind of transportation services are needed, the Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transportation contracted with a consultant to perform an alternatives analysis of the transit needs in this travel corridor. This study, which was recently completed, indicated that there is sufficient projected transit demand to justify some type of higher capacity transit than

that which now is available in the area. This study seemed to indicate that bus rapid transit is the most cost effective of providing for this transit need, but recommended a study of the environmental impacts of heavy rail, light rail, and bus rapid transit.

Neither the City nor the County has money budgeted for this study, and we are requesting \$1 million in federal funds to perform it. We would also like language incorporated into the new federal transportation legislation (TEA 3) authorizing funding for the future construction of such a transit system.

**D. METRO (WMATA) Bus Barn.** The City currently accommodates in North Old Town a Metro bus barn housing some 83 buses. Over the past decade, redevelopment and housing initiatives have escalated the existing incompatibilities of this use with the neighboring uses. WMATA has also shown an interest in relocating this facility. In addition, there is interest in the City in using at least a portion of this site, when redeveloped, for affordable housing (developing new affordable housing is a high priority for the City). The City would appreciate any assistance that Congressman Moran can give us on having the bus barn relocated, as well as redeveloping a portion of the site for affordable housing.

**E. Intelligent Transportation Systems: Real-Time Arrival Signage for Bus Stops.** The City would like to help increase transit ridership by initiating a pilot Intelligent Transportation System Project for a real-time internet/signage system to show the arrival time for City buses. Funding is needed to develop a system using low-frequency signals and up to ten signs at City bus stops. Riders will be given real time information on the signs about the arrival time of the next bus (this is similar to the information now available on signs at Metro subway stops). Equally important will be the ability to access this information over the Web, allowing riders who live near bus stops to better time their departure from home, so that they do not have to wait long at the bus stop (especially in bad weather).

The City requests \$500,000 in federal funds to develop a pilot system.

**F. Widening I-95 (Beltway Lane Balancing: Springfield Interchange to Telegraph Road).** Between the western terminus of the Woodrow Wilson Bridge and the eastern terminus of the Springfield interchange projects, there is a 3.5 mile segment of roadway which is currently eight lanes. The roadway segments on either side of this 3.5-mile, eight-lane segment are both designed to be 10 lanes. If this eight-lane segment is not widened to ten lanes, it could become a significant bottleneck on the beltway. It is therefore important for the region that this 3.5 mile segment (between Telegraph Road and Van Dorn Street) be widened, ideally while the Woodrow Wilson Bridge interstate construction is underway.

The City would appreciate Congressman Moran's help in finding funds for concept design and scoping of this project. Funding for its construction could be authorized in TEA 3.

**5. Recreation Transportation Program in Alexandria's West End.** The Alexandria Recreation Department would like to develop a transportation program for residents in Alexandria's west end. Unlike other areas of the City, several neighborhoods in the west end are a significant distance from any recreation center. This makes it difficult for children and others to traverse the busy streets between their residences and the centers. A program is needed to transport these people.

Targeted neighborhoods include those near South Reynolds, South Pickett, and South Whiting Streets; Yoakum Parkway; Stevenson Avenue; and Edsall Road; as well as Crestview Commons and apartments in the Landmark area. Vans would take children from west end schools to after-school programs at west end recreation facilities, and then return children to their neighborhoods later in the day. This service could also operate on weekends and school holidays, and for special events.

The City requests \$75,000 in federal funds for two 15-passenger vans that meet National Transportation Safety Board standards.

**STAFF:**

Bernard Caton, Legislative Director

Sandra Whitmore, Director, Recreation, Parks and Cultural Activities

Charles Samarra, Chief of Police

Rich Baier, Director, Transportation and Environmental Services