

City of Alexandria, Virginia

MEMORANDUM

DATE: JUNE 11, 2003

TO: THE HONORABLE MAYOR AND MEMBERS OF CITY COUNCIL

FROM: PHILIP SUNDERLAND, CITY MANAGER *PS*

SUBJECT: APPROVAL OF SUBMISSION OF FY 2005 CONGESTION MITIGATION AND AIR QUALITY IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM (CMAQ) AND REGIONAL SURFACE TRANSPORTATION PROGRAM (RSTP)

ISSUE: Application for federal transportation grant funds.

RECOMMENDATION: That City Council:

- (1) Approve the priority listing of transportation projects described below as those CMAQ and RSTP projects that the City will pursue for FY 2005; and
- (2) Commit the City to provide the match in FY 2005 for any of the funded projects that require matching funds from state or local transit funds.

DISCUSSION: At the end of August or the beginning of September, 2003, the City of Alexandria will be requested to provide to the Northern Virginia Regional Transportation Authority (NVTA) a set of candidate projects to be funded by the Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement Program (CMAQ) and Regional Surface Transportation Program (RSTP).

Each year, the Commonwealth allocates Federal CMAQ and RSTP monies to the region, that is allocated between jurisdictions within the NVTA. These funds normally amount to approximately \$25 million of CMAQ funds and \$25 million of RSTP funds. These funds have been allocated since FY 1993 for CMAQ and FY 1994 for RSTP.

The Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement Program (CMAQ) funds are allocated to regions in the country which either fail to meet Clean Air Act regulations, such as the Washington metropolitan region, or are nominally meeting the regulations, but are in a maintenance status, such as Richmond, Virginia. These funds must be used to fund activities that improve air quality. They may not be used to increase the capacity of roadways. Examples of appropriate use of these funds include traffic flow management, travel demand management strategies, ride-sharing programs, pedestrian and bicycle safety programs, education and outreach, inspection and maintenance programs, alternative "clean" fuels, and public and private partnerships.

The funds require a 20% local match, with the exception of traffic improvements, which are 100% funded by the federal government. The amount of air pollution reduction must be quantified as part of the grant submission.

Regional Surface Transportation (RSTP) funds are very flexible funds, that may be used to fund almost any regional transportation activity, including various road improvements, transit facilities, and transit equipment. The funds must be used for improvements that are regional rather than local improvements. The funds are especially valuable, as the federal government contributes 80% of the project funding, while the state contributes the remaining 20% match. Thus, no local match is required for these funds.

The following are projects that staff is proposing for funding by CMAQ or RSTP in FY 2005:

Community-Wide Transit Analysis: Currently, the City of Alexandria has a transit system that includes Metrorail, Metrobus, DASH services, DOT paratransit services, Fairfax Connector services, and private shuttles. Each of these has been very effective in providing transit services for the travel niches that they have allocated to themselves. On the other hand, the City is undergoing a number of major demographic shifts which may occasion the need to re-examine these transportation assumptions. Based upon the 2000 U.S. Census, it appears that there has been an increase in potential transit customers that currently reside in the western portion of the City. Several City services are already relocating to this portion of the City in order to serve them. The study will examine this demographic trend, collect origin and destination data from this group of people and the agencies that serve them, to determine the most effective means to provide adequate travel needs. The completed study will suggest modifications to transit services that will perform this function. The amount of the proposed study to be funded is \$300,000, using RSTP or CMAQ funds. Staff recommends that this project be given the highest priority ranking for FY 2005.

Eisenhower Valley Transit and Transportation Access Study: While there are currently some major activity generators in the Eisenhower Valley, such as the Federal Courthouse, Eisenhower Valley is likely to change immeasurably as the Patent and Trademark Office (PTO) and surrounding complex becomes occupied in 2003-2004. This study will analyze methods that improve transit and transportation access to serve new employment centers in the Valley. The study will build on the recommendations in the Eisenhower East Small Area Plan and the first phase of the Comprehensive Transportation Policy and Program Plan, currently underway. One study area proposed for funding by CMAQ or RSTP funds is a portion of the preliminary planning and engineering activities at a projected cost of \$200,000 required to modify the Metrorail Eisenhower Station using CMAQ or RSTP funds. Staff recommends that this project receive the City's second priority rating.

Potomac Yard Environmental Impact Study: Potomac Yard is undergoing significant changes in the amount of development being forecasted for the City of Alexandria. In order for this development to be adequately served by all transportation modes, the Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transportation has contracted with a consultant to perform an alternative analysis of the transit needs in this travel corridor. This recently completed study has indicated a sufficient

projected transit demand to justify some type of higher capacity transit in the area. The study appeared to indicate that Bus Rapid Transit is the most cost effective method to provide current transit need. The study also established that new Metrorail stations or a light rail line are all feasible means of addressing this transportation need. Therefore, it is important for the City to develop a transit system that maintains pace with the new development. Consequently, it is requested that the City receive \$300,000 of RSTP and CMAQ funds in an effort to more extensively determine the environmental impacts of the feasible transit options for the corridor. It should be noted that the Potomac Yard Environmental Impact Study would need to be a joint study with Arlington County, which is also applying for grant funds to cover their share of this joint study. Study activities would include a comprehensive engineering, cost and ridership impact review of various transportation options to determine a locally preferred alternative. Staff recommends that this project receive the City's third highest priority rating.

FISCAL IMPACT: The following projects, as described previously, may require local matching funds from the City. It is possible that City funds may be required to match federal funds. The projects, final budget, and potential matches are listed below. If matches are required, they will be financed using state or local transit funds.

Project	Federal Portion	Potential Local or State Match (FY 2005)	Total
Community Wide Transit Analysis	\$240,000	\$60,000	\$300,000
Eisenhower Valley Transit and Transportation Access Study	\$160,000	\$40,000	\$200,000
Potomac Yard Environmental Impact Statement	\$240,000	\$60,000	\$300,000

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