

MEMORANDUM

DATE: MARCH 4, 2008

TO: THE HONORABLE MAYOR AND MEMBERS OF CITY COUNCIL

FROM: JAMES 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 approve the items below for which the City will request federal action by the 2009 Congress.

DISCUSSION: Each year, Council presents Congressman James P. Moran 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. While the City will continue to seek federal funding for high priority needs, it will be reducing the number of its requests, in lieu of the reduction of earmarks that are likely to be approved by Congress. Also included below are recommendations for modifications to federal legislation that is before Congress for reauthorization in 2008.

RECENT FEDERAL APPROPRIATIONS: In late 2007, Congressman Moran (and Senators Webb and Warner) were able to get federal funding for the following City projects:

- \$350,000 for the Automobile Training Institute of Alexandria (ATIA) to provide unskilled workers with the training needed to serve as skilled workers in the automobile industry, which currently has a high demand for workers in this region. This initiative complements the federal/state/local welfare-to-work programs, by providing unskilled workers with the training needed to enter and stay in the work force earning more than subsistence wages.
- Nearly \$1 million dollars (awarded jointly to the City and Arlington) to further efforts to provide Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) service along the Potomac Yard corridor.
- Nearly \$1.2 million, awarded to the Corps of Engineers, Alexandria, and Arlington, to continue the development and implementation of the Alexandria-Arlington environmental restoration plan for Four Mile Run.

- \$94,000 to assist the Alexandria Police Department in purchasing computerized tools that will help the Department in fighting crime. *IxReveal Software* allows crime analysts to quickly review large police records systems using a variety of “search” mechanisms. Other software will allow the Department to conduct a forensic analysis of any type of electronic equipment that is seized during an investigation.
- \$492,000 to continue a Mid-Potomac River Study on environmental restoration of the Cameron Run/Homes Run watershed
- \$49,000 to help pay for capital improvements to Gadsby’s Tavern.
- Although the City will receive no funds directly, the federal government will conduct a study of the health effects of trona, a mineral that has been used at Mirant’s Potomac River power plant to reduce pollution.

REQUESTS FOR ADDITIONAL FEDERAL APPROPRIATIONS

A. Funding for Troubled Youth

1. Alexandria Seaport Foundation. The Alexandria Seaport Foundation has a proven record of working with troubled youth and preparing them for apprenticeship programs with the Carpenters Union. There is a need to extend this program to other construction and technical trades. Plumbing and electrical trades have advanced considerably in their complexity in recent years and are now responding to a "green" global economy. These trades are highly specialized and many young people do not possess the necessary skills in math to enter either the pre-apprenticeship training or apprenticeship training programs. The Seaport Foundation has proposed a program that would work with students in the Alexandria school system at an earlier age to ensure that youth who are interested in learning a trade or craft will be properly prepared to do so. The Foundation will be the operator of this type of program and will work with the Alexandria Court Service Unit to identify appropriate participants.

The program will feature in-school math workshops presented by building trades craftspeople. Starting in fifth grade, these workshops will focus on the two math subjects with the highest failure rates: fractions and geometry. Starting in eighth grade, there will also be twice weekly, after-school math enrichment classes specifically designed to prepare young people for the “green collar” jobs becoming available in the electrical and plumbing trades.

The City and the Seaport Foundation request \$200,000 for this new program.

2. Funding for Gang Prevention Services. A regional gang prevention task force has been working throughout Northern Virginia since 2003. In coordination with this task force’s work, the City of Alexandria would like to initiate two new programs. The first of these would address at-risk youth, ages 8-18, through a mentoring partnership program; and the second initiative would offer gang prevention, intervention, and outreach services, for youth and young adults ages 12-21, who are either at-risk of joining a gang or need a mechanism out of a gang.

The City requests funding for a full-time mentoring coordinator to work with our mentoring partners. This position would recruit, train, and coordinate those involved in Alexandria Mentoring activities. In addition, the City needs funds for two part-time outreach workers who will work directly with young people to connect them with community services that will help divert them from gang involvement. Finally, the City requests partial funding for the City's Gang Prevention & Intervention Coordinator, who oversees all City Gang Prevention Initiatives, and works with city and county staff in other jurisdictions to coordinate the region's gang prevention services.

It is critical that the work of the Northern Virginia Gang Task Force continue. For FY 2009, the City requests \$255,000 in federal funds for this important work.

B. Public Safety Needs

1. Police Vehicles to Respond to Terrorism and Other Major Emergencies. In the aftermath of the September 11 terrorist attacks, the City was given significant federal funding to boost its capabilities to respond to terrorist incidents and other major emergencies that would require a police response. Among the items that were purchased were six Police Department SUVs, each of which provides the capacity to rapidly transport several first responder officers and any necessary equipment to an emergency. Two vehicles are assigned to each of the Police Department's three Patrol Sectors, and are used on a 24 hour basis. Because of their age and use, these vehicles are now near the end of their life span. The City requests \$240,000 for the Police Department to replace these vehicles.

2. Security Upgrades at the Alexandria Jail. The City of Alexandria Detention Center houses on average, 165 local and state inmates per day. Following the terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001, the Detention Center began housing greater numbers of high profile, federal inmates, which brought on special security issues. With partial support from the federal government, extensive security upgrades were implemented shortly thereafter. A recent safety audit of the Detention Center revealed that additional safety and security upgrades are needed. In addition, as a result of the Woodrow Wilson Bridge expansion, the structure now is only 60 feet from the Mill Road Bridge ramps that are under construction.

The security upgrades and enhancements needed at the Alexandria jail include the following:

- The Detention Center has a detection system around the perimeter of the property to ensure that individuals are not inappropriately entering or leaving the property. Additional video surveillance and fencing is needed to enhance the perimeter security system.
- The Sheriff's Office has a team that handles emergency response incidents at the jail, including emergencies that require removal of an inmate from his cell. This team needs additional equipment and training to assist with these responses.
- The Sheriff's Office regularly transports high profile federal inmates, such as Zacarias Moussaoui, from the jail to the federal Court House. To improve the safety

of these inmates who could be targets of violent attacks, and the sheriffs deputies involved in the transports, an armored transport vehicle is needed.

The total cost of these security improvements is estimated at \$510,000. Since they are needed primarily because of the presence of federal prisoners, the City requests federal funding to pay for them.

C. Funding for Our Natural and Cultural Resources

1. Four Mile Run Master Plan. For several years, Alexandria and Arlington have worked jointly to develop an environmental restoration plan for Four Mile Run. We are ready implementing some of the initiatives needed to enhance the aquatic (in-stream) and riparian (adjacent-to-stream) habitats of Four Mile Run, and to increase access to Four Mile Run and the parkland surrounding it. We request \$1.25 million in federal funding for two purposes:

- \$500,000 for aquatic and riparian habitat improvement in the Alexandria portion of the project; and
- \$750,000 for design and engineering work on the Four Mile Run Pedestrian Bridge between Eads Avenue and Commonwealth Ave.

2. Fort Ward. As Virginia prepares to commemorate the 150th anniversary of the American Civil War, the nation's bloodiest conflict, the Commonwealth's localities have been asked to take appropriate actions as a part of this commemoration.

A series of forts and batteries was built to protect Washington, D.C., during the Civil War. Fort Ward in Alexandria is one of the few that remain. Maintaining and preserving the fort, which is owned by the City of Alexandria, requires constant upkeep. Currently, there is a need to replace the deteriorated revetement (pole support) that lines the interior of the Northwest Bastion of the fort, and the gun carriages. Also needed is the development of a visitor's path that meets ADA guidelines. Such a path would increase public accessibility and interpretation in the historic area and promote preservation by diverting visitors from the fragile earthwork walls.

The City would appreciate \$125,000 in Save America's Treasures funding to help pay for these projects.

3. Jones Point Light House. Jones Point Light House is the oldest inland lighthouse in the United States. It is located next to one of the original boundary markers for the District of Columbia, beneath the Woodrow Wilson Bridge. This National Register property needs interior restoration and interpretation. Among the improvements that are needed are the installation of a handicapped-accessible entrance, and the restoration of the building's interior and development of an interpretive exhibition about the Light House. The City would appreciate funding and direction to the Department of the Interior, which has title to the Light House, to undertake this work.

D. Alexandria's and the Region's Transportation Needs

For the past several years, Congressman Moran arranged for significant federal funding to come to the City, largely as a part of the federal SAFETEA-LU (Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users) legislation. Congress is now beginning to discuss the reauthorization of SAFETEA-LU, which currently runs through FY 2009. While the current authorization remains in effect, the City requests that Congress continue to appropriate full funding for the Alexandria projects authorized by the legislation.

The City is aware that SAFETEA-LU is due for reauthorization, and requests consideration of partial funding for a major transit project when reauthorization occurs. With the increased development that has occurred and continues to occur in the Alexandria and Arlington portions of Potomac Yard, City Council has expressed an interest in locating another Metro Station in the Alexandria section in Potomac Yard where space for such a station has been reserved. The City is examining various sources of federal, state, local, and private developer funding that could be used for this project if it is undertaken. We would like the federal government to provide approximately \$25 million over three years under any new SAFETEA-LU legislation. We recognize that our chances of getting federal funding depend in part on how much federal money is available under the reauthorization, and that rail to Dulles is one of the region's most important transit projects at this time.

OTHER REQUESTS

Parents and Children Needing Additional Services. Although the City is not seeking any federal earmarks for these programs, it does repeat a request made in previous years to provide additional funding for Child Day Care and Child Welfare Services.

The welfare reform reauthorization passed by Congress two years ago increased TANF work requirements, but underfunded the cost of this and other changes. TANF now requires mothers to seek work after their children are 12 months instead of 18 months of age. Due to this change in TANF work requirements, money was taken from federal dollars that Alexandria and other localities had used for the local child care fee system for working parents who are not receiving TANF benefits. The City asks that Congress fully fund the increase in child care costs that Alexandria and other localities are experiencing as a result of the changes in TANF work requirements.

Federal funding for basic child welfare services (child protection and foster care) has also failed to keep up with the need, and in some instances it has been reduced. The federal Child and Family Service Reviews, which are program audits, have shown that more needs to be done in Virginia and across the nation to adequately fund the child welfare system. The federal government has not, however, provided any money to help implement the Review recommendations. If the federal government sets the standards for the quality of service we provide to our families, it also needs to become a full partner in funding these needs. The City asks that Congress provide increased federal funding to support the changes recommended by the Child and Family Services Review.

Tax Credits for Renewable Energy. The City of Alexandria commends Congressman Moran and the House of Representatives for recently passing a renewable energy tax incentive package that would extend the renewable energy production tax credit for waste-to-energy and other renewable energy sources for an additional three years. We realize that this legislation may have difficulty in getting through the Senate, and that the President has threatened to veto the legislation. The City requests that Congressman Moran continue to support a renewable energy tax credit that includes waste-to-energy facilities.

STAFF:

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