


City of Alexandria, Virginia

MEMORANDUM

DATE: OCTOBER 18, 2007

TO: THE HONORABLE MAYOR AND MEMBERS OF CITY COUNCIL

FROM: JAMES K. HARTMANN, CITY MANAGER 

SUBJECT: CONSIDERATION OF NORTHERN VIRGINIA TRANSPORTATION
AUTHORITY (NVTa) REGIONAL PROJECT REQUESTS FOR FY 2009
AND FY 2010

ISSUE: FY 2009 and FY 2010 funding requests for new regional transportation funds.

RECOMMENDATION: That City Council:

- (1) Approve the transportation projects discussed below as those projects for which the City of Alexandria will request Northern Virginia Transportation Authority (NVTa) regional funding for FY 2009 and FY 2010; and
- (2) Authorize the City Manager to apply for these funds, and to enter into necessary agreements to accept project funding planned to be provided by NVTa.

DISCUSSION: The NVTa was created in 2002 to provide Northern Virginia localities with a regional authority responsible for: 1) improving air quality; 2) developing a long range regional transportation plan; and 3) advocating for transportation needs before the State and federal governments. NVTa has remained active in Northern Virginia transportation funding, supporting efforts to improve pedestrian safety, encouraging growth near transit, and providing jurisdictions with a streamlined CMAQ and RSTP process.

NVTa's initial 2002 enabling legislation did not give NVTa the right to raise taxes to meet its needs. In the 2007 session of the General Assembly, HB3202 was passed, granting NVTa the authority to enact up to seven taxes and fees to fund regional transportation in Northern Virginia. The legislation also authorized localities to enact an increase in vehicle registration fees, as well as tax commercial properties at a higher real estate tax rate. Shortly after this bill was enacted, efforts began to implement the provisions of the bill. These included forming five NVTa working groups (Financial, Legal, Project Implementation, Public Outreach, and Organizational) to assist in implementing HB3202. The Project Implementation Committee has done an extensive amount of work, including developing a method for producing a regional Six-Year Plan, prioritizing the projects in the plan, and producing implementation techniques. As part of

this process, NVTa requested in its September 27, 2007, meeting that all participating jurisdictions submit those projects they recommend as candidates for NVTa regional funding in FY 2009 and FY 2010. **Candidate projects must be either in or are currently being considered for inclusion in either the regional fiscally Constrained Long Range Plan (CLRP), Transportation Improvement Plan (TIP), or Transaction 2030 Plan. If a project is not in these plans, NVTa cannot fund it with the 60% NVTa funds.** All regional project recommendations have to be endorsed by the governing body of the submitting jurisdiction and submitted to NVTa by November 9, 2007.

The NVTa legislation specifies that NVTa revenues will be divided into two funding programs. The first, consisting of 60% of the revenues received by NVTa, is to be used to fund projects “of regional significance” adopted by the NVTa, including annual funding for WMATA (\$50 million) and VRE (\$25 million), and for debt service. Over a six-year period, the benefits accruing to each member jurisdiction from regional projects are to proportionally reflect the NVTa revenues generated in the jurisdiction. Regional projects will be prioritized using a regionally-adopted process and funding will be authorized by the NVTa Board. The second funding program, consisting of 40% of the revenues received by NVTa, returns funds to the member jurisdictions on a pro-rata basis for locally selected transportation projects. These projects are reported to NVTa. No regional prioritization or approval is needed.

60% NVTa Regional Funds

The following projects are recommended to be the City of Alexandria’s nominations for regional projects to be funded in FY 2009 and FY 2010. Preliminary NVTa revenue estimates indicate that after WMATA, VRE and NVTa debt service payments, Alexandria should receive benefits of about \$4.5 million per year from this 60% allocation program.

The following three projects are recommended to be nominated for NVTa regional funding:

1. King Street Metrorail Parking Lot and Bus Bay Reconfiguration (\$2,240,000 – FY 2009)
2. Holmes Run Greenway Shared-Use Path Improvements (\$2,260,000 – FY 2009)
3. Eisenhower Avenue Northern Platform Extension (\$4,500,000 – FY2010)

It should be noted that the City may amend its request for the 60% NVTa allocation if it wishes to do so at a later date.

1. Rebuild the King Street Metro Parking Lot and Bus Loading Area

The King Street Metro station is an important element of the regional public transportation system and the primary rail to bus transfer hub in Alexandria. It has become even more important following relocation of the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office (PTO) to Alexandria and the rapid development of the Carlyle and Eisenhower East properties.

The Washington Metropolitan Transit Authority (WMATA) and Alexandria have completed several projects to improve the station itself and the access into the station; however, Metrorail activity is not the only transit activity that is increasing at the station. Bus service operated by

both WMATA and DASH is increasing to serve the increasing passenger activity at this station. The planned new King Street trolley will also serve this station. The current arrangement of the King Street Station parking lot and bus lane does not permit expansion of bus service at the station, and overcrowding of the existing bus bays is evident today. A FY 2006 grant-funded individual is developing alternative service design concepts for the parking lot and bus lane at King Street Metrorail Station to improve access for pedestrians, accommodate a greater number of buses, and incorporate new activities at this facility. In FY 2007, a \$250,000 RSTP grant was allocated for the construction of improvements at the lot. In FY 2008, the City received an additional \$260,000 grant for the construction of improvements at this location and is currently requesting an additional \$1,200,000 of RSTP funding in FY 2009 to help fund construction of the facility.

WMATA is currently performing a preliminary engineering study to identify the types and cost of improvements at the King Street metro station. This study should be completed by the end of calendar year 2007. The current construction cost estimate for the needed improvements is \$4.3 million. I propose that the City request \$2.240 million of FY 2009 NVTa regional funding to cover the remaining cost of constructing this facility.

2. Holmes Run Greenway Shared-Use Path Improvements

The Holmes Run Greenway is one of the most heavily used non-roadway transportation corridors in the City of Alexandria. This approximately 3-mile linear park provides a key off-road bicycle and pedestrian connection from the high density residential and retail centers in the West End to the Eisenhower Valley and is a major connector to bicycle and pedestrian facilities in Fairfax County and Old Town Alexandria.

The trail currently provides access under Interstate 395 and Van Dorn Street via a tunnel and underpass. These facilities were originally constructed for service vehicles and have only recently been adapted for use by bicyclists and pedestrians. However, the facilities – which also include approach trails and a fair weather crossing – are in a serious state of disrepair. During periods of heavy rains, the facilities flood, ruining the lighting and depositing sediment and debris onto the fair weather crossing of Holmes Run. Seepage from adjoining concrete embankments creates water hazards. The tunnels are extremely small, presenting both real and perceived safety hazards for users, and vandalism is common.

In 2007, the Departments of Transportation and Environmental Services and Recreation, Parks and Cultural Activities began work on a \$250,000 RSTP grant to perform an engineering study of the tunnels to investigate ways to address ongoing maintenance, security and make general safety improvements for bicyclists and pedestrians. Originally \$260,000 was allocated in a FY 2008 grant for this project. This allocation was subsequently withdrawn to balance the actual amount of money allocated for northern Virginia. The City has been notified that these withdrawn funds will be restored in FY 2008 after this allocation is approved by the NVTa. This money will provide follow up funding to the engineering (RSTP) grants and allow the City to make physical improvements to these key regional connectors. The proposal for \$2,260,000 of FY 2009 NVTa funds will supplement the previous grants.

3. Eisenhower Avenue Metrorail Northern Platform Extension

The Eisenhower East area of Alexandria is developing rapidly and transforming into a dense urban activity center. Continually increasing residential and employee populations are driving the need for transit improvements that leverage the Metrorail service that is available in the area. Since much of this activity is located north of Eisenhower Avenue, and the Metro station is on the south of this roadway, the addition of a second station entrance on the north side of Eisenhower Avenue is needed to minimize conflicts between pedestrians accessing the station and motor vehicles soon to be operating on a six-lane Eisenhower Avenue. The City has received previous grant funding to undertake planning a second station entrance and attendant transit facility improvements. The City received an RSTP grant for \$200,000 in FY 2005 to define transit and transportation access opportunities in the Eisenhower Valley, and will be receiving approximately \$3,000,000 in additional funding for FY 2006 through FY 2009 from Federal SAFETEA-LU earmarks. These funds will be used for preliminary engineering, design and construction of related improvements in Eisenhower Valley.

The preliminary cost estimate for the proposed platform extension and second entrance is \$20 million. The City proposes to request \$4.5 million of NVTa money in FY 2010 which would be used for partial funding of the construction of the platform extension and new northern station entrance on Eisenhower Avenue. The balance of the needed funding would be sought from NVTa and/or other sources in future fiscal years.

SUMMARY:

Project	NVTa Request	Fiscal Year	Prior Funding	Total
King Street Metro Station Parking Lot and Bus Bay Reconfiguration	\$2,240,000	FY 2009	\$860,000 (3 Years) \$1,200,000 FY 2009 RSTP	\$4,300,000
Holmes Run Greenway Shared-Use Path Improvements	\$2,260,000	FY 2009	\$510,000 (2 Years) \$750,000 FY 2009 RSTP	\$3,520,000
Eisenhower Metro North Platform Extension	\$4,500,000	FY 2010	\$3,000,000 SAFETEA-LU (FY 2006-2009) \$200,000 RSTP	\$7,700,000
Total	\$9,000,000		\$6,520,000	\$15,520,000

40 % NVTa Local Funds

In addition to the preceding regional projects, the City should also receive approximately the following amounts for FY 2008, FY 2009 and FY 2010 from the distribution of 40% of NVTa revenues back to the local jurisdictions:

FY 2008	\$2,640,000
FY 2009	\$7,920,000
FY 2010	\$7,920,000

This assumes that the State Supreme Court affirms the legality of the NVTa legislation by the end of 2007. It should be noted that the NVTa Bond validation lawsuit includes funding for projects such as the Crystal City/Potomac Yard Transit Corridor.

Staff recommends that these funds be used for some of the following projects in amounts and in the fiscal years to be proposed in conjunction with the FY 2009 proposed City budget and Capital Improvement Program. These are not required to be regional projects.

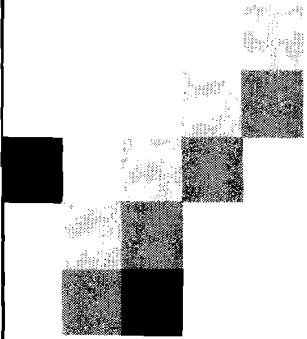
- Additional funding for the Eisenhower Metro Platform Extension
- Preliminary Engineering for Dedicated Transit Corridors
- Bicycle and Pedestrian Projects
- DASH Bus Capital Expenses
- WMATA Transit Operating Expenses
- DASH Transit Operating Expenses
- Street Rehabilitations
- Citywide Transportation Improvements

While no specific projects, funding amounts and year of funding request for the 40% NVTa Local Funds projects has been asked for by NVTa, NVTa has requested that each jurisdiction submit a list of projects or project categories that each jurisdiction is considering. This list is not binding and may be amended by the City at a later date.

FISCAL IMPACT: The proposed projects do not require local matching funds from the City. The fiscal impact on the City will be positive as NVTa-raised monies will fund needed projects, and provide some fiscal relief to the City budget and CIP.

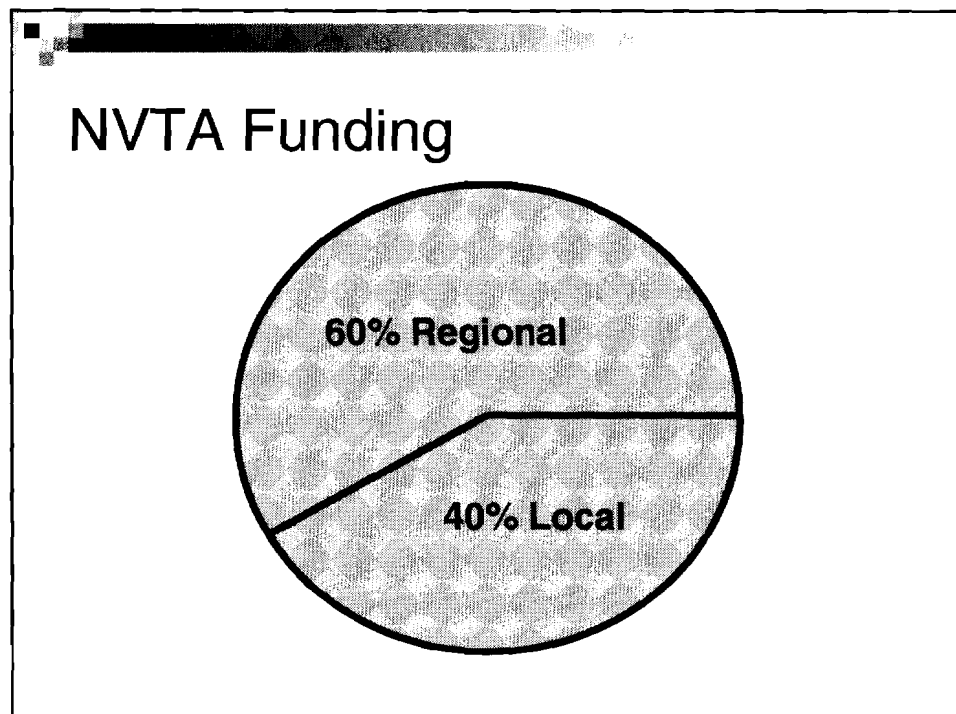
STAFF:

Mark Jinks, Deputy City Manager
Richard J. Baier, P.E., Director, T&ES
Bernard Caton, Legislative Director
Thomas H. Culpepper, P.E., Deputy Director, T&ES
James Maslanka, Division Chief, Transit, T&ES
Karen Winey, Grants Coordinator



NVTA Regional Project Funding Requests

Alexandria City Council
October 23, 2007



Proposed NVRTA Regional Funding FY 2009 – FY 2010

Project	NVRTA Request	Fiscal Year	Prior Funding	Total
King Street Metro Station Parking Lot and Bus Bay Reconfiguration	\$2,240,000	FY 2009	\$860,000 (3 Years) \$1,200,000 FY 2009 RSTP	\$4,300,000
Holmes Run Greenway Shared- Use Path Improvements	\$2,260,000	FY 2009	\$510,000 (2 Years) \$750,000 FY 2009 RSTP	\$3,520,000
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Total	\$9,000,000		\$6,520,000	\$15,520,000

Major Projects - Fully Funded

DASH Maintenance Facility	\$35 M
Eisenhower Avenue Widening	\$18 M
Crystal City / Potomac Yard Transit Corridor	\$21.8 M
King / Beauregard Improvements	\$11.5 M

Major Projects - Partially Funded

Eisenhower Station Platform Extension	\$7.5 M
King Street Station Parking / Bus Loading Reconfiguration	\$2.1 M
DASH Vehicle Purchases	\$16.5 M
Mill Road Extension, Phase II	\$3.0 M
Dedicated Transit Corridors	\$1.3 M
Bradlee Transit Center	\$0.5 M
Royal Street Garage Relocation	\$3.4 M

Major Projects - Not Funded

Clermont Interchange Phase II
Potomac Yard Metro Station
Edsall Road Connector (Farrington / S. Pickett)
Duke Street Median / Turn Lane Improvements (Wheeler to Jordan)
Stevenson Ave. Intersection Improvements (Van Dorn to Yoakum)