

City of Alexandria, Virginia
FY 2024 Proposed Operating Budget & CIP
Budget Questions & Answers

March 29, 2023

Question: Can we prepare a memo on the unfunded DASH service expansion requests? Update on FY23 Budget Memo 96?

Response:

In response to the request to update FY 23's Budget Question #096, this memo outlines the unfunded DASH service expansions that would build upon the early success of the New DASH Network. The New DASH Network was the first phase of the 2030 Alexandria Transit Vision Plan (ATV) that was adopted by the Alexandria Transit Company (DASH) Board of Directors in December 2019; and reaffirmed by the Alexandria Mobility Plan that was adopted by Alexandria City Council in October 2021.

The ATV Plan seeks to increase the relevance and ridership of bus service in Alexandria by providing more useful bus service in places where more people can use it. As a result of this network redesign and free fares, DASH's systemwide ridership has more than doubled over the last 18 months and DASH has become the only major transit agency in the region to meet and exceed pre-pandemic ridership levels. DASH anticipates that this ridership will continue to grow with the return to the office for most of the federal workforce and the opening of the new Potomac Yard-VT Metrorail Station.

When the New DASH Network was implemented in 2021, it represented a "fiscally constrained" version of 2022 ATV Plan with frequencies that were lower than recommended on several key routes. The service improvements on Line 30 that were added into the Final FY 2023 City Budget were one of the five remaining improvements that were needed for DASH to fully realize the 2022 ATV Plan recommendations. This memorandum outlines the remaining four improvements that were deferred in FY 2022 and FY 2023.

The remaining unfunded route improvements from the 2022 Alexandria Transit Vision Plan (when implemented) will significantly improve transit access and service frequencies in neighborhoods across the city such as Potomac Yard, Arlandria; Del Ray, Old Town and Eisenhower Valley.

Further, the two highest-priority improvements listed below would increase weekend service on Lines 33 and 34, which will provide critical connections to the new Potomac Yard-VT Metrorail Station. These two improvements would require an additional \$240,000 in annual funding and are expected to generate 18,000 additional annual boardings. Finally, although the overall percentages of disadvantaged residents served by these routes are lower than some of the other improvements, staff anticipates that the percentages would be much higher for customers using the routes on Sundays who would be the direct beneficiaries of both improvements.

These four improvements in total cost \$1.6 million and, if funded, could be implemented in FY 2024 utilizing the existing DASH bus fleet. The improvements are projected to generate 91,000 additional passenger boardings in the first-year full year of service. The FY 2024 proposed budget includes a \$4.3

million increase in the General Fund transfer to fund the level of service established in the FY 2023 budget, which is a 17.8% increase over the current year.

Details of the **unfunded improvements from the 2022 Alexandria Transit Vision Plan are as follows:**

1. **Line 33 (King Street Metro to Potomac Yard via Del Ray/Arlandria).** Improves Sunday service to every 30 minutes instead of every 60 minutes.
 - a. **Cost:** \$120,000
 - b. **Anticipated ridership impact:** +11,000 annual boardings
 - c. **Benefits:** Line 33 provides seven-day service from the King Street Metro to the new Potomac Yard Metro via Del Ray and Arlandria. This improvement makes Sunday service on this route much more useful with buses running every 30 minutes instead of only once per hour. Most importantly, this helps to ensure that there are useful bus connections to the new Potomac Yard Metro from Arlandria and Del Ray, seven days per week, year-round.

2. **Line 34 (Lee Center to Potomac Yard via City Hall/Old Town North).** Improves Sunday service to run every 30 minutes instead of every 60 minutes.
 - a. **Cost:** \$120,000
 - b. **Anticipated ridership impact:** +7,000 annual boardings
 - c. **Benefits:** Line 34 provides seven-day service from Lee Center to the new Potomac Yard Metro via City Hall and Old Town North. This improvement makes Sunday service on this route much more useful with buses running every 30 minutes instead of only once per hour. Most importantly, this helps to ensure that there are useful bus connections to the new Potomac Yard Metro from Old Town North, seven days per week, year-round.

3. **Line 31 (NVCC-Alexandria to Braddock Road Metro via King Street/Old Town).** Extends all off-peak and weekend trips from King Street Metro to Braddock Road Metro to provide 15-minute off-peak headways in Old Town.
 - a. **Cost:** \$880,000
 - b. **Anticipated ridership impact:** +47,000 annual boardings
 - c. **Benefits:** Similar to the recent Line 30 changes, the improvements on Line 31 also improve weekday peak service in Old Town, which benefits any passengers traveling into Old Town from West Alexandria and King Street. With this improvement, staff estimates that more than 100 daily transfers from Line 31 at King Street Metro would be eliminated.

Lines 30 and 31 are co-branded as the “Old Town Circulator (OTC)” within Old Town. These improvements allow the OTC to run every 8-15 minutes during middays, evenings, and weekends. This additional frequency makes transit much more relevant and useful in Old Town and leads to reduced traffic, more visitors, increased business and reduced parking demand.

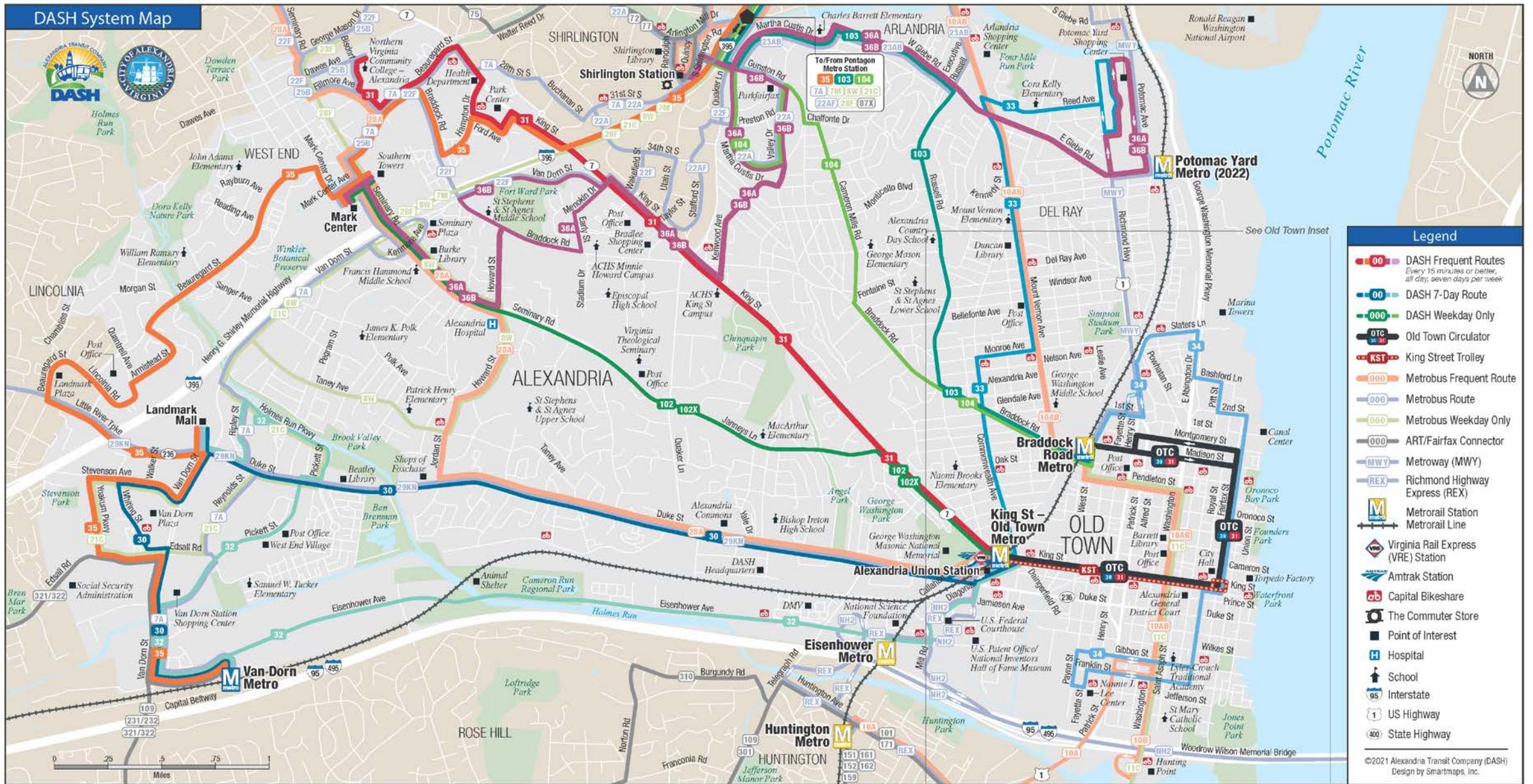
4. **Line 32 (Landmark Mall to King Street Metro via Eisenhower Avenue).** Improves midday, evening and weekend service to run every 30 minutes instead of every 60 minutes.
 - a. **Cost:** \$490,000
 - b. **Anticipated ridership impact:** +26,000 annual boardings
 - c. **Benefits:** Line 32 provides 7-day service from Landmark Mall to the King Street Metro via Holmes Run Parkway, South Van Dorn Street and Eisenhower Avenue. This improvement

makes service on this route much more useful with buses running every 30 minutes instead of once per hour during weekday middays, evenings and weekends. This is a critical improvement for continuing to support existing and future transit needs along Holmes Run Parkway, South Pickett Street, and the dense development in Eisenhower East.

A map of the entire DASH transit system is also provided for reference as Attachment 1. Further analysis regarding costs, ridership impacts, equity implications, and cost efficiency are included as Attachment 2.

Attachments: (1) DASH System Map
(2) DASH FY23 Unfunded Improvements Table

Attachment 1: DASH System Map



Attachment 2: DASH FY2024 Unfunded Improvements Table

DASH FY 2024 UNFUNDED ATV IMPROVEMENTS							DASH Service Planning Decision Framework (1)				
							Ridership	Equity (2)		Impact/Alternatives	Cost Efficiency
Priority Order (1 = top priority)	Line #	Areas Served	Proposed Improvement	Net Annual Platform Hours	Net Annual Cost	Net Operator Requirement	Net Change in Annual Boardings (Projected)	Low Income Residents within 1/4 mile (City Avg = 10%)	Minority Residents within 1/4 mile (City Avg = 51%)	Description of Benefit / Cost of Not Improving	Annual Cost Per Add'l Boarding (Lower = More Cost Efficient)
FY 2024 DASH Supplemental Requests											
1	Line 33	Del Ray, Arlandria, Potomac Yard	Sunday service improved to run every 30 minutes instead of every 60 minutes to provide better connectivity to new Potomac Yard Metro	945	\$120,000	1	11,000	8%	38%	Shorter waits for buses on Sundays in Del Ray, Arlandria; better Sunday service to new PY Metro	\$10.91
2	Line 34	Potomac Yard, Old Town North, City Hall, Lee Center	Sunday service improved to run every 30 minutes instead of every 60 minutes to provide better connectivity to new Potomac Yard Metro	963	\$120,000	1	7,000	9%	31%	Shorter waits for buses on Sundays in Old Town; better Sunday service to new PY Metro	\$17.14
3	Line 31	NVCC, King Street, Old Town	Extend offpeak/weekend short trips from King Street Metro to Braddock Road Metro for 15 minute service in Old Town; extend weekday evening hours.	7,196	\$880,000	4	47,000	7%	39%	More one-seat trips from King St to Old Town; better connections to West End; more frequent OTC	\$18.72
4	Line 32	Eisenhower Valley, Landmark Mall, Van Dorn Metro, Carlyle	Improve midday, evening and weekend service from every 60 minutes to every 30 minutes.	3,989	\$490,000	3	26,000	9%	54%	Shorter waits for buses on Eisenhower Avenue during middays, evenings and weekends.	\$18.85
FY 2024 DASH Supplemental Requests				13,093	\$1,610,000	9	91,000	8%	42%		\$17.69

Notes:

(1) DASH Service Planning Decision Framework includes a list of factors that inform service planning decisions, in order of their importance. The framework is based on the goals defined by the Alexandria Transit Vision Plan, and was adopted by the ATC Board in January 2021.

(2) Equity analysis uses census block data to determine the minority and low income percentages of the groups that would be affected by proposed changes, per DASH Title VI Service Equity Analysis policy. Aggregate impact of changes should be +/- 10% of service area average.