City of Alexandria, Virginia
FY 2027 Proposed Operating Budget & CIP
Budget Questions & Answers

April 9, 2026

Question:
What would it look like to transition responsibility for cleanup/maintenance of bus stops to DASH?

Response:
At present, DASH takes care of the following aspects of Bus Stop Maintenance:

- Installing low scale bus stops (poles, signs)
- Installing and maintaining technology at bus stops (solar lights, real time bus information displays)
- Posting service-related information at bus stops

The following responsibilities are handled exclusively by the City:

- Installation of shelters, benches, pads, etc.
- Maintenance and repair of bus stop shelters
- Cleaning of bus stops
- Clearing of trash at bus stops
- Clearing of snow at bus stop shelters (contracted)

The following are three possible models, common amongst peer transit agencies, of how bus stop cleanup/maintenance can be transitioned to DASH:

<u>Scenario 1: Transfer of Contractor Oversight</u>
DASH would take on a direct role in oversight of contracted bus stop work (snow removal), while all other bus stop responsibilities remain unchanged.

What is needed: Establishment of oversight responsibility by DASH for the 3rd party contract.

- Pros: Improves accountability and alignment with transit operations; allows for more direct response to customer concerns
- Cons: Does not address any challenges with bus stop maintenance, quality of snow clearing, cleaning, and upkeep on a day-to-day basis.

Customer Impact: Possibly improved conditions and increased accessibility at bus stops delivered more quickly following snow events.
Cost: Undetermined – assumes current contract is retained - no new costs for DASH but current City costs remain.

Scenario 2: Partial Transition of Responsibilities

DASH would build partial in-house capabilities for select, high-impact functions, such as snow removal at bus stops, shelter cleaning, and light shelter maintenance (replacing broken glass). City staff would retain responsibility of waste collection, shelter installation, concrete work, and tree maintenance.

What is needed: An additional $200k annually would need to be added to DASH subsidy, along with minor one-time tooling costs which need more time to determine. These staff resources could be deployed year-round to support not only bus stop snow clearing, but also ongoing light maintenance, cleaning, and customer information distribution.

This investment would be partially offset by a reduction in existing City expenditures. Currently, the City spends approximately $70,000 on contracted cleaning and approximately $9,000 on light maintenance of bus shelters, in addition to roughly $7,560 per snow event for shelter clearing. Transitioning these responsibilities in-house to DASH could eliminate these costs, depending on the number of snow events in a given year and the extent of responsibility shifted.

- Pros: Focuses on the most critical safety and accessibility needs; allows for incremental implementation. This would bring existing snow clearing to be an in-house function and not handled by a contractor.
- Cons: Does not address any challenges with waste management or more significant storm response capacity.

Customer Impact: Potential targeted improvements, particularly in safety, accessibility, winter operations, and bus shelter conditions.
Cost: $200,000 annual operations plus $100,000 in one-time capital investment for DASH (it is possible for DASH to pursue grants to offset the capital expenses) less the City savings of approximately $79,000 annually.

Scenario 3: Full Transition to DASH Operations

DASH would build full in-house capabilities to manage all aspects of bus stop maintenance and supplement waste management efforts.

What is needed: An additional $400k annually would be added to the DASH Subsidy and major one-time equipment and tooling costs which need more time to determine. Cost savings would result from elimination of contracted work for bus stop snow clearing, and reduction of responsibility of City staff for light maintenance, heavy maintenance, cleaning, and waste management. While total City cost offsets require further analysis, they are expected to exceed the approximately $79k identified for cleaning and light maintenance, as they also include installation and upkeep of shelter components and related infrastructure.

- *Pros: Full control over standards, prioritization, and performance; strongest alignment between service and stop conditions; expands attention beyond shelters to all bus stops; staff can deliver year-*

round improvements in maintenance, cleanliness, bus appearance, and customer information distribution

- *Cons: Highest cost and implementation complexity; requires significant expansion of operational capacity*

Customer Impact: Highest potential improvement through consistent, systemwide enhancements.
Cost: $400,000 annual operations (+) $175,000 one-time capital investment (it is possible for DASH to pursue grants to offset the capital expenses)