

City of Alexandria, Virginia

MEMORANDUM

DATE: MARCH 5, 2012

TO: THE HONORABLE MAYOR AND MEMBERS OF CITY COUNCIL

FROM: RASHAD M. YOUNG, CITY MANAGER 

SUBJECT: BUDGET MEMO #7: TRAFFIC CALMING/IN-STEP PROGRAM

The purpose of this memorandum is to provide an update on the status of the traffic calming/IN-STEP program.

During the FY 2013 Proposed Operating Budget and Capital Improvement Program (CIP) process, staff has received questions about the status of funding for traffic calming projects.

The FY 2013 budget and CIP do not include funding for traffic calming. The program was discontinued in FY 2009 because of budget reductions resulting from the recession and has not since been reinstated. Traffic calming funding was considered as part of the budget and CIP development process, however it was considered a lower priority than the maintenance of existing infrastructure and therefore not funded. Staff estimates the annual staffing, capital, and maintenance costs to reinstate traffic calming/IN-STEP to be approximately \$532,000.

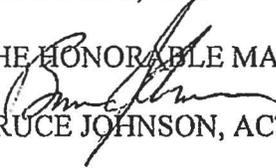
The attached memo from October 2011 provides more detail on the specifics of the program.

ATTACHMENTS: October 3, 2011 Cost to Reactivate IN-STEP Program and Transportation Coordinator Position memo from Acting City Manager Bruce Johnson to City Council

STAFF: Rich Baier, Director, T&ES
Abi Lerner, Deputy Director, T&ES Transportation
Laura Triggs, Acting Chief Financial Officer
Morgan Routt, Acting Budget Director
Chris Bever, Budget/Management Analyst, OMB

City of Alexandria, Virginia

MEMORANDUM

DATE: OCTOBER 3, 2011
TO: THE HONORABLE MAYOR AND MEMBERS OF CITY COUNCIL
FROM:  BRUCE JOHNSON, ACTING CITY MANAGER
SUBJECT: COST TO REACTIVATE IN-STEP PROGRAM AND TRANSPORTATION COORDINATOR POSITION

This memorandum is in response to Councilman Krupicka's request regarding reactivating the City's traffic calming program.

A Traffic Calming Coordinator position and Capital Improvement Program (CIP) funding for design and construction of new traffic calming devices were eliminated in FY 2009 as part of the mid-year budget rescission resulting from the economic recession. Staff estimates the cost of restoring the Traffic Calming Coordinator position, CIP funding, and annual maintenance to be approximately \$532,000 (\$82,000 for the position; \$350,000 in capital funding; and \$100,000 in annual maintenance specifically for traffic calming infrastructure) in the first year with additional funding required in future years. Before the elimination of the traffic calming program the Approved CIP included a funding plan of approximately \$2.3 million for the out-years of FY 2012 -2014. There is still a \$229,306 project balance from prior year allocations in the traffic calming capital project; however, those funds are designated for several previously planned projects. Project details, cost estimates and anticipated completion dates are contained on Attachment A.

When the traffic calming program was eliminated, staff shifted focus from traffic calming to utilizing available grant funding for pedestrian and bicycle safety projects, supplemented with a limited amount of City funding to support the bicycle mobility plan, Safe Routes to Schools, and other improvements such as countdown timers and curbs and ramps. Funding for new traffic calming devices such as speed tables/cushions and bulb outs are not included in either the operating or capital budgets. When staff receives calls from citizens requesting traffic calming, they are referred to the Police Department (to assist with enforcement of traffic laws), and notified that funds are currently not allocated for new traffic calming measures. Since the traffic calming program was eliminated, staff has received two dozen requests for neighborhood speed and volume studies which may result in physical and/or operational changes within a neighborhood as well as requests for measures, such as speed tables/cushions and medians or curb extensions to slow vehicular traffic and increase safe mobility within their neighborhood. Requests received over the last six month are included on Attachment A.

In order to reactivate the program to pre-FY 2010 levels, a new Traffic Calming Coordinator position would need to be funded and re-established and CIP funding for the construction of new traffic calming infrastructure provided. Staff estimates the cost to hire a Traffic Calming Coordinator GS 21, C-Step (salary/benefits) is \$82,000. Without a traffic calming coordinator, each approved new traffic calming project will consume 60 to 80 hours of existing City staff time. A program cannot be sustained without a full-time coordinator. The coordinator is needed to perform the traffic volume analysis; coordinate community outreach; work with legal staff to produce all program agreements; assist with engineering, design and placement of the speed humps, coordinate amongst involved departments, and provide construction inspections to monitor installation of the traffic calming devices. In FY 2008, staff had developed a draft of this program; however, the program was not fully developed or formally approved by City Council. It is anticipated that as annual/daily traffic projections grow at a rate of 2% and redevelopment continues within the region/city, requests for this service will continue to increase.

The amount of capital funding required to reactivate the program would be approximately \$350,000 for the initial design and installation of traffic calming infrastructure. The cost of speed cushions is on average approximately \$8,000 per location, with larger infrastructure projects like the many physical features on Commonwealth Avenue and Russell Road, costing up to \$200,000. The initial funding would allow the Traffic Calming Coordinator to design and begin construction of projects in the first year. Additional annual capital funding of \$350,000 would be required to implement additional projects in future years. The annual \$350,000 in capital funding assumes the design and implementation of three major projects per year, and two to five smaller scale projects.

The total cost to restart the program, including personnel (\$82,000), construction funding (\$350,000) and annual maintenance specifically for traffic calming (\$100,000) is approximately \$532,000. The recurring personnel and capital costs would total \$432,000, plus projected annual increases in personnel costs. Annual maintenance costs would be budgeted at \$100,000 in the first year of implementation and would increase annually as the number of implemented IN-STEP projects expands.

If City Council is interested in reinstating the IN-STEP program, that could be considered as part of the FY 2013 budget development process.

cc: Mark Jinks, Deputy City Manager
Kendel Taylor, Acting Director, OMB
Morgan Routt, Assistant Director, OMB
Richard Baier, P.E., LEED AP, Director, T&ES
Abi Lerner, P.E., Deputy Director, T&ES Transportation

Attachment A

Of the backlogged projects, the two highest priority projects are:

1. Bike parking: installing bicycle parking facilities citywide (\$40,000); anticipated date of completion – summer 2013
2. S. Pickett and Edsall pedestrian and bicycle improvements (\$140,000); estimated date of completion – spring 2013

Remaining backlogged projects include:

3. Mid-block Pedestrian Safety: citywide safety improvements to uncontrolled mid-block pedestrian crossings including King Street between Janney's Lane and Kings Court (\$40,000); anticipated date of completion – fall 2013
4. Bike Facilities: install additional bike lanes citywide implementing recommendations from the bike and pedestrian mobility plan to improve bicycle safety and mobility including on-street bikeways on Morgan, Dawes, Howard, and Taney (\$120,000); anticipated date of completion – current project balance not sufficient to complete project

With a remaining project balance of \$229,306, assuming costs estimated for projects 1 and 2 are correct, project 3 could be completed, and project 4 would remain unfunded.

Requests received for traffic calming devices over the past six months include:

- Holland Lane
- Howell Avenue
- E. Custis Avenue
- Mount Vernon Avenue
- W. Taylor Run
- E. Taylor Run
- Cambridge Road