

Attachment 1

Subject: CTB Testimony on the FY 2015 – FY 2020 Six-Year Improvement Program

Date: April 24, 2014, 6 PM

Location: 4975 Alliance Drive, Fairfax

Good evening Secretary Layne, Commissioner Kilpatrick, Director Mitchell, and members of the Commonwealth Transportation Board. My name is Timothy Lovain and I am a member of the Alexandria City Council. I am here this evening to provide testimony on the draft FY2015 to FY2020 Six-Year Improvement Program on behalf of the City.

As you know, the City of Alexandria is working towards a transportation system that encourages the use of alternative modes of transportation and reduces dependence on the private automobile. We have been building this multi-modal network with the Commonwealth's support, and it is resulting in the establishment of transit-oriented, pedestrian-friendly activity centers, forming a more urban, vibrant and sustainable Alexandria. Continued leadership and funding from the Commonwealth is essential to the realization of this vision.

- In the past, the City has asked the CTB to identify new, dedicated funding sources for transportation. We are very appreciative of the work of the General Assembly and CTB in approving and implementing House Bill 2313. The new funding provides a real opportunity to address the backlog transportation projects that are critical to our region's connectivity and economy. The success of HB2313 relies on continued coordination at all levels of government, particularly as VDOT implements House Bill 599 and evaluates and prioritizes regional transportation projects. We urge CTB and VDOT to work closely with the Northern Virginia Transportation Authority (NVTA) to refine a methodology for rating projects in a transparent and timely manner.

- We also appreciate the continuing efforts of DRPT and the Transit Service Delivery Advisory Committee to implement the statewide transit formula. We are pleased to see the development of pilot programs to address congestion mitigation and the needs of transit-dependent riders. And we thank DRPT for working with the region to address concerns regarding how Metrorail ridership is counted, which is essential to the new operations formula for transit.
- The General Assembly also called on DRPT, in coordination with TSDAC, to develop a tiering—or prioritization—of capital funding. DRPT has approved a proposal establishing statewide priorities for transit investments. However, in its proposal, DRPT also called for a modification to the methodology for allocating the state share of capital by basing state reimbursements on gross total project cost rather than the non-federal share of project costs. The current DRPT method results in disparity across the state in the required local contribution for capital projects, with a disproportionate impact on Northern Virginia. This approach penalizes jurisdictions that already devote significant local dollars to transit projects and is likely to encourage systems to federalize more projects, ultimately driving up costs. Furthermore, the analysis assumes continued federal funding at current levels and in a manner that is set out in legislation that is set to expire this August.
- The City again requests that \$1 million of the surplus Seminary HOV ramp funds be allocated to resolving a major fire suppression design flaw on the Woodrow Wilson Bridge. The current dry pipe system reduces response times, which increases risk to the bridge and its users until first responders arrive. Given the dollar amount of the Six-Year Program, this is a small amount in comparison to the multi-billion value of the Woodrow Wilson Bridge.
- WMATA's adopted 10-year strategic plan – *Momentum* – calls for a number of critical investments in transit over the next decade. We are appreciative for the match that DRPT is providing in FY2015 to help fund the first year of this plan. As

WMATA and the jurisdictions continue to discuss the long-term implementation and funding of *Momentum*, we ask the CTB to consider significant additional long-term funding for this plan as a possible economic investment in the region's future and the impact this has on the state's tax receipts.

- The City is currently conducting an Environmental Impact Statement for the proposed Potomac Yard Metrorail station. If a build alternative is selected, which would be consistent with adopted City plans, the station will represent the largest transit investment in the City in modern times. In addition to local funding already identified in the City's Capital Improvement Program, we plan to seek funding from the Commonwealth for the planned station in future Six Year Improvement Programs.
- The City is disappointed to see that Urban funds have again been withdrawn from the Six-Year Improvement Program. At its zenith, our City received about \$10 million in Urban Funds annually for key projects. Local jurisdictions have historically relied on Urban funds to support high priority projects and we urge the CTB to seek restoration of at least a portion of these funds.
- The City supports the continuation and expansion of VDOT's revenue-sharing program. This program allows localities to match state funding to make critical improvements to the local street and highway system.
- The City has made significant enhancements to its bicycle and pedestrian network over the last several years, offering residents and commuters additional transportation options. Federal and state funding have been critical to the success of these projects. We are encouraged that that Transportation Alternatives funding continues to be prioritized for bicycle and pedestrian improvements, and that a portion of these funds are available to large urban areas. The Transportation Alternatives fund is a relatively small source that supports programs that move many people at a low cost per trip.

- We appreciate the assistance the Commonwealth has provided in improving vehicular access to the Mark Center BRAC-133 site, including the programming of significant monies for a new variable direction transit ramp from the HOV lanes at I-395 to Seminary Road and the construction of short- and mid-term improvements at the site.
- We appreciate the continued support of regional and local transit service, including Metrorail and Metrobus service in the City. In particular, we are grateful for the Commonwealth's \$50 million match to the Federal PRIIA grant, which funds the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority's capital improvements. We ask that the Commonwealth continue to provide this funding to ensure that our rail system is maintained in a state of good repair.
- The CTB should continue to support VRE with full funding for track access lease payments. We urge DRPT to make a multi-year funding commitment to eliminate this uncertainty from VRE's future.
- As always, we thank the staff members from VDOT and DRPT who have provided significant assistance in flexing funds to transit projects and in helping to obtain necessary planning inputs for several projects.

We request that this testimony be made part of the Draft Six-Year Improvement Program public hearing record, and that full consideration be given to these comments in preparing the final FY2015-FY2020 SYIP. Please let me know if I can provide any clarifications regarding the City's testimony.