



City of Alexandria, Virginia
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October 24, 2011

The Honorable Chair and Members
Commonwealth Transportation Board
1111 East Broad Street, Room 3054
Richmond, Virginia 23219

Dear Secretary Connaughton and Members of the Commonwealth Transportation Board:

In lieu of testifying at the Commonwealth Transportation Board's October 25 hearing, the following presents the City of Alexandria's recommendations regarding projects which should be included in the FY 2013 to FY 2018 Six-Year Program.

- The City of Alexandria wants to thank the Commonwealth for all of the assistance it has provided regarding increasing vehicular access to the Mark Center BRAC-133 site. We appreciate your efforts in programming \$80 million for a new variable direction transit/HOV ramp from the HOV lanes in I-395 to Seminary Road. We also appreciate the efforts the Governor has made in establishing a Task Force to monitor the process of moving employees into this facility.
- In order to address one of the most serious choke points on I-395 south, we believe that one lane needs to be added on southbound I-395 in the Route 236/Duke Street area where one lane currently drops off. While we understand that a full assessment study will need to be undertaken, we would request that VDOT make this study a priority to expeditiously undertake and complete. VDOT should also begin to identify the necessary funding source to undertake this project, so that when the study is complete, funding will be identified.
- In regards to BRAC-133, we would urge the Task Force to earmark additional funds in the short term to expedite transit vehicles in this travel corridor through Transit Signal Priority. We estimate such this expenditure to be \$650,000.
- On the transit side, we appreciate that the Commonwealth has provided funds to assist the City in performing an environmental assessment of a streetcar connecting Braddock Road Metro Station with the Crystal City Metro Station through Potomac Yard and Crystal City, and that the Commonwealth will provide funding for expansion buses which the City will be acquiring shortly.
- We further thank the Commonwealth for the \$50 million it has allocated to provide Virginia's annual contribution to match the federal government's allocation of funds to rebuild the WMATA system.
- We are very appreciative of all of the work the staffs of the Virginia Department of Transportation and the Division of Rail and Public Transportation have provided us in assisting

"Home Town of George Washington and Robert E. Lee"

us in flexing funds to transit projects and in helping us obtain necessary planning inputs for several projects.

- We would request that the Commonwealth Transportation Board take into account the six-year RSTP and CMAQ request we just forwarded to the Northern Virginia Transportation Authority as an important indicator of Alexandria's transportation priorities over the next six years.
- The City of Alexandria has taken an important step to ensure that its residents have high-quality transportation options. In May, 2011, the Alexandria City Council adopted a budget which increased the property tax levied by the City to fund a variety of transportation projects. Some of the major projects funded by this \$143 million ten year program include:
 - Constructing and operating a BRT service in transit Corridor C (Van Dorn-Beauregard).
 - Constructing and operating a BRT service in transit Corridor B (Duke Street).
 - Expanding DASH bus services.
 - Expanding trolley services.
 - Building transit stations, including the renovation of the King Street Metrorail station.
 - Constructing new or improving existing multi-use trails in the City.
 - Improving the King/Quaker/Braddock Intersection.
- In addition to these funds, the City of Alexandria will be investing \$275 million to build a new Potomac Yard Metrorail station, which we hope to have constructed by 2016 or 2017. This new station would be funded by a combination of private and public funds.
- Since the next few years will see increases in the need for transportation funds in Alexandria, in Northern Virginia, and in the entire Commonwealth, the City of Alexandria requests that the Commonwealth Transportation Board advocate to the Governor and the General Assembly for new or expanded sources of revenue to reinvigorate needed transportation infrastructure and transit capital programs. Revenues from all major transportation funding sources continue to deteriorate, yet needs continue to rise. For example, the City formerly received approximately \$8 million to \$10 million in new transportation Urban Funds each year from the Commonwealth. Now we receive no new Urban Funds. New funding should substantially increase in order to cover major transit needs, as well as road construction and maintenance. Any new transportation funding should not be taken by the Commonwealth from traditional core service General Fund programs, such as education and public safety.
- We were pleased to hear that you do not plan to reduce maintenance payments to cities and towns. State gasoline tax revenues have always been used to pay for maintenance. If the State is unwilling to raise sufficient revenues to pay for transportation needs, it should not transfer the

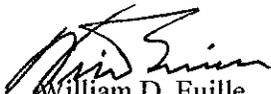
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responsibilities for raising these revenues to localities, which would then have to increase local tax rates to pay for this added responsibility.

- DRPT's draft plan calls for over \$200 million of HOT Lane transit improvements, but only \$22 million is currently funded. If the remaining \$178 million is inserted into the six-year program without new revenue sources, existing transit programs will suffer a loss of Commonwealth provided funds. We cannot afford such a loss of funds.
- The City also supports the continuation and expansion of the Virginia Department of Transportation's revenue sharing program. This program allows localities to match State funding with local funding to make crucial improvements to the locality's street and highway system.
- We urge you to keep transit funding levels as planned once they are approved at the beginning of each fiscal year. Since local government budgets and tax rates are generally set in the spring, reducing the State assistance contracts mid-year (as has been done in two recent fiscal years) can result in disruptive service cuts and fare increases. At a time when transit usage has increased, and the City is relying on increased transit services and usage to reduce congestion, making such cuts can be extremely counter-productive.

Finally, we want to thank you for your time, efforts and dedication in seeking solutions to the Commonwealth's many complex transportation issues in a time of inadequate resources.

Sincerely,


William D. Euille
Mayor

cc: The Honorable Members of City Council
Members, Alexandria Legislative Delegation
Bruce Johnson, Acting City Manager
Mark Jinks, Deputy City Manager
Rich Baier, Director, Transportation & Environmental Services
Bernard Caton, Legislative Director