

City of Alexandria, Virginia

MEMORANDUM

DATE: SEPTEMBER 1, 2010

TO: MEMBERS OF THE TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION

FROM: JIM MASLANKA, CHIEF OF TRANSIT SERVICES, T&ES

SUBJECT: PRELIMINARY CONSIDERATION OF CMAQ/RSTP PROJECTS FOR
FY 2012

The purpose of this memorandum is to provide the Transportation Commission with a preliminary project list for consideration of FY2012 funding through the Regional Surface Transportation Program (RSTP) and Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality (CMAQ) program.

Annually, the City of Alexandria requests funds from the Commonwealth of Virginia, through the Northern Virginia Transportation Authority (NVTA), to acquire federal funds through the CMAQ and RSTP programs.

These requests must be submitted to NVTA by the end of September of the year prior to the funds' ultimate allocation. Staff provided a preliminary list to the Commission for consideration in July in order for the Commission to hold a public hearing and formally adopt project recommendations for City Council at this meeting. One project was not in the initial submittal. Staff is requesting that the Transportation Commission endorse continuing funding for the Transit Store from RSTP funds as it has done in the past, since existing grants will expire in FY2012. An amended summary table is provided below. Project descriptions and additional background is included on subsequent pages.

	Project	Pre-FY2011 Grant Funding	FY2011 Request	FY2011 Funding	FY2012 Request
1.	Exclusive Transitways	\$1,400,000	\$600,000	\$500,000	\$500,000
2.	DASH Bus Replacement	\$0	\$3,000,000	\$1,800,000	\$1,300,000
3.	TDM Programs	\$1,100,000	\$300,000	\$100,000	\$400,000
4.	Bicycle Racks on Buses	\$0	\$280,000	\$100,000	\$180,000
5.	Braddock Metro Tunnel	\$0	\$250,000	-	\$250,000
6.	Holmes Run	\$510,000	\$500,000	-	\$500,000
7.	Bicycle Sharing	\$0	\$500,000	-	\$180,000
8.	Eisenhower Ave Station	\$3,600,000	\$500,000	-	\$500,000
9.	Bicycle Parking/Metro	\$0	\$380,000	-	\$380,000
Totals		N/A	\$6,310,000	\$2,500,000	\$4,190,000

CANDIDATE FY2012 CMAQ AND RSTP PROJECTS

1. Preliminary Engineering of Exclusive Transitway Improvements

The City of Alexandria adopted a new version of the transportation element of the City's master plan in the fall of 2007. One of the key recommendations in the plan is to study and implement exclusive transitways in three key travel corridors in the City. If implemented, transitways will enable transit vehicles on them to travel faster than general purpose roadway lanes, thus making concepts like bus rapid transit more attractive to transit users in the City. The City reprogrammed \$500,000 of RSTP funds from FY 2006 to do an initial detailed feasibility study of this proposal. In FY 2009 the City was provided with an additional \$800,000 of planning and preliminary engineering funds to implement some of the previous study's recommendations. In FY2010 the City received \$100,000 to continue the preliminary engineering started in the previous study and \$500,000 in RSTP funding in FY2011. The City is proposing to request \$500,000 for this project in FY2012.

2. DASH Bus Replacement

In order that transit companies remain in a state of good repair, it must replace its buses after their useful life has been reached. Further, additional buses must be acquired to address overcrowding issues on existing routes and to serve new transit markets. According to the FY2009 approved CIP, DASH needs \$2.685 million a year to replace its existing fleet. DASH would also like to acquire additional vehicles at \$500,000-\$600,000/bus to relieve overcrowding on existing routes and to start new routes. Since the City does not have the funds now to replace, let alone expand, transit services, it has been relying upon Commonwealth Urban funds to provide for this need. After the FY2010 allocation, the Commonwealth will stop providing Urban Funding. Thus, we began to receive funds from RSTP/CMAQ for buses in FY2011, which are channeled through the Federal Highway Administration. We obtained \$1,800,000 in CMAQ funds for three DASH buses in FY2011. Since the City is scheduled to begin acquiring replacement buses for DASH in FY2012, the City is proposing that we use RSTP or CMAQ funds to acquire two DASH buses for replacement for \$1,200,000.

3. Transportation Demand Management (TDM) Programming

The Alexandria Rideshare program was established in 1984 to promote carpooling and vanpooling to reduce energy consumption and improve air quality. The program has evolved over the years from promoting carpooling and vanpooling into a complete Transportation Demand Management (TDM) program, promoting all non-drive-alone modes of transportation. These modes and numerous support programs are promoted to a wide array of audiences including residents, businesses, commuters, and visitors. Today, the Division of Transportation Planning writes, publishes, and distributes rideshare/TDM program information via electronic and non-electronic formats. Information includes education about using transportation alternatives, event advertising, program updates and initiatives, and transportation news and notices. The means by which information is disseminated includes a monthly e-mail to subscribers, maintenance of a program web

site, a quarterly newsletter, and flyers. Transportation Planning is continually improving the delivery of these services, and ascertaining their effectiveness. The Office has recently reframed the program the “Local Motion” program and has had an extensive amount of outreach activity, including many new interfaces using the internet. As part of its continuing effort to enhance the program, the Transportation Planning Office is in the midst of developing a long range Transportation Demand Management Plan for the city which will be completed later this year. It will determine policy goals for the program, and determine how effective the program is in meeting the goals as well as make recommendations to enhance and expand the reach and effectiveness of the program.

The funding may also be used to supplement the TDM efforts of the BRAC-133 site which has a very aggressive mode split target. City staff believes that one of the functions of these funds will be to tailor different TDM programs to help BRAC meet the mode split goal it has set with the City.

The effectiveness of the City’s efforts to get SOVs off the road, partially attributable to the City’s TDM efforts, is illustrated by the results of the Transportation Planning Board’s (TPB’s) Household Interview Survey conducted in 2007 and 2008. This survey found that between 1994, when the survey was last performed, and 2008, Alexandria experienced a major increase in the use of non-SOV travel. Transit use to work went from 22.0 % in 1994 to 26.9% in 2007/2008, while bicycling and walking went from 4.5% in 1994 to 9.0% in 2007/2008.

Ever since the transit store opened, in June, 2002, the Old Town Transit store has been supplying information about transit options and selling different types of fare media. The expenses to build and operate the store have come from a series of RSTP grants which have provided this funding. The City had previously banked a series of grants to fund the activities of the transit store, but projecting necessary cash flow results in a FY2012 RSTP grant being necessary to continue the operations of the transit store since the current grant will expire in FY2012.

This request is to provide continuing funding funds for Transportation Demand Management activities and operating funds for the Transit Store. Previous funding for these activities includes \$250,000 for Ridesharing Enhancement in FY 2007, \$400,000 for Alternative Transportation Promotion in FY 2008, and \$300,000 for Transportation Demand Management Analysis and Initiatives in FY 2009. In FY2010, the City received \$150,000 to continue this work. In FY2011 we received \$100,000 in CMAQ funds for TDM work. With the BRAC-133 site and results of the long range TDM plan and recommendations for enhanced programming, \$400,000 in funds are needed to expand the TDM program in FY2012 and fund the transit store operations for two years in FY2012 and FY2013.

5. Bicycle Racks on Buses

Bicycle racks on buses are common on urban transit systems across the country. Currently, the Alexandria Transit Company (DASH) is the only transit system in the Washington, DC urban core that does not have bicycle racks on its vehicles. (Prince

George's County TheBus and the City of Falls Church GEORGE also do not have racks on their buses.) Installing bike racks on buses, which are mounted on the front of the bus and fold up when not in use, have proven to be a cost effective, easy to implement strategy that improves bus ridership and the image of transit. Studies have shown that bus racks increase revenues and ridership of between 1-2% nationally. A recent Milwaukee County study estimated an increase of up to 1% in ridership due to bike racks. Bicycle racks for buses range in cost but Fairfax County recently spent approximately \$4,000 per bus for equipment, installation, training and shipping on its Connector buses. This project received \$100,000 in RSTP funds in FY2011, and the City will request \$180,000 in RSTP or CMAQ funds in FY2012 to equip all DASH buses with bicycle racks.

6. Braddock Road Metro Multimodal Tunnel

The Braddock Metro Neighborhood Plan recommends studying the feasibility of building a tunnel connection under the freight rail tracks from the Braddock Road station itself. Such a tunnel would "provide a grand new station entry from the west, saving pedestrians walking time by eliminating the existing need to walk south to the Braddock Road underpass to reach the station" according to the Plan. In addition, the plan recommends studying a potential future pedestrian-bike connection and a potential walking route connection to the northern gateway.

This project would perform feasibility and conceptual design to improve multimodal access and improve mobility options to the station. Staff is recommending that we request \$250,000 of RSTP or CMAQ funds for this project.

7. Holmes Run Pedestrian/Bicycle Tunnel Construction, Phase II

The three-mile Holmes Run greenway is one of the most heavily used non-roadway transportation corridors in the City of Alexandria. This linear park provides a key off-road bicycle and pedestrian connection from the high density residential and retail centers on the West End to the Eisenhower Valley and is a major connector to bicycle and pedestrian facilities in Fairfax County and Old Town Alexandria. The trail provides access under Interstate 395 and Van Dorn Street via two tunnels. These tunnels were originally service tunnels and have only recently been adapted for use by bicyclists and pedestrians. However, the tunnels are in a serious state of disrepair. During periods of heavy rains, the tunnels flood, ruining the lighting and depositing sediment and debris onto the fair weather crossing of Holmes Run. Seepage from adjoining concrete embankments creates water hazards. The tunnels are extremely small, presenting both real and perceived safety hazards for users and vandalism is common.

In FY2007, the City of Alexandria received a \$250,000 RSTP allocation to perform an engineering study of the tunnels to investigate ways to address ongoing maintenance, security and make general safety improvements for bicyclists and pedestrians. A subsequent allocation in FY2009 provided \$260,000 in construction funds for this project, which is estimated at more than \$3 million. This project received no funds in FY2010 or in FY2011. The proposal for \$500,000 of FY 2012 RSTP or CMAQ funds will supplement the previous allocations.

8. Bicycle Sharing Initiative

The District of Columbia and Arlington County are proceeding with plans to replace DC's existing SmartBike program with a 1,100 bike system called Capital Bikesharing. This system is intended to be regional in nature for use by residents of all jurisdictions. Alexandria is working at the regional level, through the Council of Governments, to pursue federal funding sources for an approximately 150-bike system at 18 locations in the City. Bike sharing programs aim to provide short-term bicycle rental from unattended urban locations, particularly those near transit stops. It does not compete with traditional bike rental programs which are more recreational in nature.

Staff proposes to use \$180,000 of RSTP or CMAQ funds in FY2012 for bike sharing. Staff is also pursuing other sources of federal funding for bicycle sharing initiatives. The City is committing to provide \$180,000 toward a Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments regional application to the TIGER II program for a regional bike sharing program. The \$180,000 is the City's 20% match of Alexandria's proposed \$870,000 participation in a regional bike sharing program. The overall grant application for all jurisdictions participating in the regional bike sharing program is \$10 million.

9. Eisenhower Avenue Station

The Eisenhower East area of Alexandria recently has begun to transform itself into a new town within a town. This has been occasioned by the Patent and Trademark Office's move between the King Street and Eisenhower Metro stations in 2004. This addition of a major source of employment in this portion of the City has spun off extensive amounts of development in the area near the Eisenhower Metro Station. The latest ridership estimates show that the station will grow from handling approximately 4,000 trips per day to over 10,000 trips per day. Since much of this activity is north of Eisenhower Avenue, and the current Metro station is south of this roadway, the addition of another station entrance north of Eisenhower Avenue is required to minimize the number of conflicts between pedestrians using the station and motor vehicles.

The City has previously received \$3.6 million from FTA Section 5309 funds and matching Commonwealth funds for the Eisenhower project. Approximately \$1.8 million will be used to do the environmental work and preliminary design for a new north station entrance. The other \$1.8 million will be used to construct transit amenities consistent with recently approved development projects in the southern station in Eisenhower. This project to build the northern entrance to the Eisenhower Metrorail station is estimated to cost \$20,000,000. We are proposing to request \$500,000 of CMAQ or RSTP funds for this project in FY2012.

10. Bicycle Parking at Major Transit Stops

According to recent data, bicycle-to-work trips in Alexandria have dramatically increased in recent years, with a bicycle mode share now nearly five times the national average. However, bicycling has not been well integrated into the city's transit system – particularly with respect to the provision of safe, secure bicycle parking. This project would improve integration of bicycling and transit by improving bicycle parking at Alexandria's Metrorail stops. The City proposes to install modular bike stations (secure,

indoor bicycle parking facilities) at Metrorail stations with high usage by bicycle commuters. This program would be coordinated with WMATA's regional initiative to improve bicycle access and would encourage regional commuters to use bicycles once they arrive in Alexandria. This project was not funded previously and the City proposes to request \$380,000 in FY2012 CMAQ/RSTP funds for this initiative.