

City of Alexandria, Virginia

MEMORANDUM

DATE: MARCH 2, 2011

TO: MEMBERS OF THE TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION

FROM: JIM MASLANKA

SUBJECT: AGENDA ITEM #4 - CMAQ-RSTP PROJECTS FOR FY 2013-2017

ISSUE: Consideration of the FY 2013-17 Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement Program (CMAQ) and Regional Surface Transportation Program (RSTP) Project funding requests.

RECOMMENDATION: That the Commission:

1. Receive a report on the CMAQ and RSTP plan which was approved by City Council on February 22, 2011 and transmitted to the Northern Virginia Transportation Authority after its approval.

DISCUSSION: 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.

There have been several discussions at the Commonwealth Transportation Board over the past month regarding problems that have been identified in the Commonwealth's CMAQ program. The Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) staff is concerned that they are having trouble obligating all of the Federal funds coming to Virginia. This is important to ensure that the Commonwealth does not lose Federal transportation funds. The problem is partially due to the fact that several metropolitan planning organizations (MPOs), including NVTA, only allocate CMAQ funding on an annual basis. In addition, a number of old CMAQ projects that are either inactive or complete are not closed out.

VDOT staff met with staff from the four air quality non-attainment MPOs to discuss the CMAQ program changes in more detail. VDOT staff explained that to include all of the CMAQ and RSTP allocations in the FY 2012 to FY 2017 Six Year Program, VDOT will need regional submissions by March 15, 2011.

In order to provide this information to VDOT by its deadline, NVTA has requested that all jurisdictions in northern Virginia develop a CMAQ and RSTP funding proposal for FY13-FY17 by February 15, 2011, indicating when the official formal governing body will approve this proposal.

Staff has developed the following programs for FY13-FY17, which has been reviewed by the City’s Transportation Commission. Project descriptions and additional background is included on subsequent pages.

FY 2013-FY2017 CMAQ-RSTP ALLOCATION REQUEST INITIALLY SENT TO NVTA

Project	FY13	FY14	FY15	FY16	FY17
1. DASH Bus Replacement	\$1,950,000	\$2,000,000	\$2, 050,000	\$2,100,000	\$2,150,000
2.Bicycle Sharing Initiative	\$400,000	\$400,000	\$250,000	-	\$300,000
2.Bicycle Parking at Major Metro Stops	-	-	-	\$250,000	-
3.Rebuilding the Mt. Vernon Trail Parallel to Abingdon Drive	\$500,000	-	-	-	-
5. Transit Store	-	\$500,000	-	\$500,000	-
6. Transit Analysis Study	-	-	\$500,000	-	-
7. Transportation Demand Management	\$700,000	\$500,000	\$500,000	\$500,000	\$700,000
8. Braddock Road Metro Multimodal Connections	-	\$250,000	\$1,000,000	-	-
9. Parking Technologies	\$400,000	\$250,000	\$250,000	\$250,000	\$250,000
TOTALS	\$3,950,000	\$3,900,000	\$4,550,000	\$3,600,000	\$3,400,000

After this allocation plan was transmitted to NVTA, staff reconsidered two of the chosen projects. Staff thought that it would be advisable for a pilot of the bicycle sharing program be funded in FY2013, with additional funding coming if the pilot is successful. This action resulted in a modified funding program in which Bicycle Sharing received funding in FY2013, and the additional funds which were freed up were allocated to buy another DASH bus in applicable years. The following table illustrates this change, and was adopted by City Council on February 22, 2011.

FY 2013-FY2017 CMAQ-RSTP ALLOCATION REQUEST ADOPTED BY CITY COUNCIL

Project	FY13	FY14	FY15	FY16	FY17
1. DASH Bus Replacement	\$1,950,000	\$2,500,000	\$2, 050,000	\$2,100,000	\$2,870,000
2. Bicycle Sharing Initiative	\$400,000	-	-	-	-
3. Bicycle Parking at Major Metro Stops	-	-	-	\$250,000	-
4. Rebuilding the Mt. Vernon Trail Parallel to Abingdon Drive	\$500,000	-	-	-	-
5. Transit Store	-	\$500,000	-	\$500,000	-
6. Transit Analysis Study	-	-	\$500,000	-	-
7. Transportation Demand Management	\$700,000	\$500,000	\$500,000	\$500,000	\$700,000
8. Braddock Road Metro Multimodal Connections	-	\$250,000	\$1,000,000	-	-
9. Parking Technologies	\$400,000	\$250,000	\$250,000	\$250,000	\$250,000
TOTALS	\$3,950,000	\$4,000,000	\$4,300,000	\$3,600,000	\$3,820,000

CMAQ/RSTP PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Nine projects are proposed for CMAQ or RSTP funding in FY 2013-FY2017. These are briefly described below, in priority order:

1. DASH Bus Replacement

For DASH to maintain its fleet, it must be replaced after the fleet's useful life has been reached. In addition, new buses are added to address high demand on existing routes and to serve new transit markets. With the funds available, the City should be able to buy two to three buses each year with FHWA funds.

This program is recommended to be the City's first priority for CMAQ/RSTP funding.

2. Bicycle Sharing Initiative

Bicycling is a practical, cost-effective and efficient way to move through Old Town and Carlyle/East Eisenhower areas of Alexandria which are both compact, dense areas of mixed use development with many low-speed streets and existing on- and off-street bicycle facilities and parking. While the City is making improvements on many fronts to encourage more sustainable transportation choices, one major goal in the City's Transportation Master Plan is to implement a pilot bicycle sharing program. Public bicycle rental programs (also known as "bike sharing") aim to provide short-term bicycle rental available at unattended urban locations.

A Bicycle Sharing Pilot Initiative would seek to identify an appropriate bike sharing technology and up to 10 locations in Old Town, Carlyle, and Del Ray for bike sharing stations. While the pilot initiative would primarily provide feasibility information and make key recommendations about future development, it should provide the option of implementing a pilot project in Old Town, Carlyle and Del Ray.

This project is recommended to receive the City's second highest priority for CMAQ/RSTP funding.

3. Bicycle Parking at Major Transit Stops

Bicycle commuting has risen dramatically in Alexandria since 2005, in part due to improved on- and off-street connections to the City's bikeway network. However, the City still lags behind other local jurisdictions in providing safe, secure bicycle parking at its major transit stops. To address high demand and current use levels that meet or exceed capacity, the City is seeking funds for modular, enclosed, unattended bicycle parking "stations" at Metro stops. These shelters range in size from 10'x20' to 10'x40' and are designed to provide a low-cost, high-capacity solution that will also encourage short bicycle trips to complement public transit usage.

This project is recommended to be the City's third highest priority for CMAQ/RSTP funding.

4. Rebuilding the Mt. Vernon Multi-use Trail Parallel to E. Abingdon Drive

Currently, the Mt. Vernon multi-use trail is badly constricted in the section parallel to East Abingdon Drive, south of Slater's Lane. Methods for widening this portion of the trail will be studied, a method chosen, and the path widened. This action will make this important link in the region's pedestrian-bicycle network safer and better able to handle the amount of traffic on it.

This project is recommended to receive the City's fourth priority for CMAQ/RSTP funding.

5. Transit Store

Funding the operations of the City's transit store is a continuing priority of CMAQ and RSTP funds. This has occurred through the use of RSTP funds since the store opened in 2002, and will continue with CMAQ funds when the FY2012 allocation is used. These grants will keep the store in operation providing transit assistance and transit media.

This program is recommended to receive the City's fifth priority for CMAQ/RSTP funding.

6. Transit Analysis Study

It is necessary to periodically examine all transit services in the City. The City was able to do so in the Community-Wide Transit Analysis, which was completed at the end of 2010. By 2015, it will be necessary to do a similar study to determine the performance and needs of transit services at that time.

This project is recommended to receive the City's sixth priority for CMAQ/RSTP funding.

7. Transportation Demand Management Advancement

The City's Transportation Demand Management program is tasked with the goal of reducing the number of single person occupied vehicles (SOV's) during peak travel times. To do this, the program has developed an extensive set of techniques to convince City residents and City employees to use such modes as transit, car sharing, teleworking, and methods of ridesharing.

This program is recommended to receive the City's seventh priority for CMAQ/RSTP funding.

8. Braddock Road Metro Multimodal Connections

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 preliminary engineering to improve multimodal access and improve mobility options to the station.

This project is recommended to be the City's eighth highest priority for CMAQ/RSTP funding.

9. Parking Technologies

This study will fund the assessment of various techniques for managing parking better, and will fund the installation of such measures as multispace meters, real-time parking management, performance parking implementation, and pay-by-phone parking as a means of cutting emissions by eliminating excessive driving to find parking.

This project is recommended to receive the City's ninth priority for CMAQ/RSTP funding.