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May 17, 2012

The Honorable Chair and Members of the  
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 May 3 hearing, the following letter presents the City of Alexandria's ("City") input on the FY 2013 to FY 2018 Six-Year Program and a number of other key transportation matters.

- We wish to thank the Commonwealth for including the Virginia match of \$50 million for Federal dedicated funding for the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority. We appreciate this significant commitment to maintaining Metro's assets and ensuring that Metro can continue to safely and efficiently meet the region's transportation needs. It appears that the federal government will supply its \$150 million, which will be invaluable in keeping the Metrorail system safe and in a state of good repair.
- The City 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 \$8 million to \$10 million in new transportation Urban Funds each year from the Commonwealth. Now we receive no new Urban Funds. New funding must cover major transit needs, as well as road construction and maintenance; however, subsequent transportation funding should not be taken by the State from traditional core service general fund programs, such as education and public safety.
- It does not appear as if transit funding is being reduced this year which we applaud. As a general principle, we would request that you not reduce transit funding levels once they are approved at the beginning of the 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) may result in disruptive service cuts and fare

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

increases. Today, to an even greater extent, the City is relying on increased transit services to reduce congestion. Hence, making such cuts can be extremely counter-productive.

- In regards to transit, we noticed that you did not include funds in the draft document to assist the City in buying replacement buses for DASH. Also notably missing was additional funding to be used toward the purchase of expansion buses needed to complete transitway funding between the Braddock Road Station and Crystal City in Arlington County via Potomac Yard. We hope that the omission of any funds to acquire replacement buses for DASH from FY 2013 through FY 2018 was an oversight. We notice that the FY 2012-17 SYP provided CMAQ funds annually to acquire DASH buses as requested by the City through the NVTA's submittal in UPC #92739. The FY 2013-18 SYP did not provide funds for DASH buses beyond FY 2012 in either UPC #92739 or in UPC#98899, as requested in the FY 2013 NVTA application. We requested that the Commonwealth assist us by funding a portion of the cost to buy buses required to provide premium bus service on the Potomac Yard transitway. While we understand funds may not be available for this purpose this year, it remains a high priority for the City and will be requested in 2013.
- Upon examining the FY 2013-18 Six Year Plan carefully, we notice a possible omission from the FY 2012-17 Six Year Plan. The Northern Virginia Transportation Authority requested that the City of Alexandria receive \$240,000 of CMAQ funds to perform Preliminary Engineering of Exclusive Transitways. These funds were not shown in the Final FY 2012-17 Six Year Plan or the draft FY 2013-2018 Six Year Plan. We believe that these funds should be included in the final FY 2013-2018 Six Year Plan in project UPC #79794.
- The City of Alexandria wishes to thank the Commonwealth for the efforts of its staff and its commitment of \$80 million to address BRAC-133 transportation issues.
- The City of Alexandria strongly urges the Commonwealth to consider rebuilding the I-395 bridge over Sanger Avenue to be able to widen Sanger Avenue to permit an exclusive transitway to connect Van Dorn and Beauregard streets, thus improving transit access considerably for the Mark Center BRAC-133 complex.
- 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.

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- As the CTB proceeds in its deliberations to the degree that additional funds may be identified, we would request that the CTB focus on funding projects in the City contained within the regional Constrained Long Range Plan (CLRP).
- In addition to addressing the foregoing major issues, the City requests that:
  - the CTB allocate more funds to such transit expenses as buying replacement and expansion buses, since the Commonwealth's funding limitations limit Alexandria's ability to improve its existing transit services and to expand them;
  - the CTB, DRPT and VDOT support, promote, and encourage walking and bicycling as more viable modes of transportation. Also, in concert with U.S. Secretary of Transportation Ray LaHood's policy direction, look for opportunities to enhance pedestrian and bicycle connectivity in Northern Virginia.
  - the CTB support the policy that major transportation corridor studies related to facilities wholly within one VDOT construction district, should be managed by that construction district rather than the VDOT Central Office. Regional VDOT staff is better equipped to address the concerns of the affected citizens and local governments.
  - the Commonwealth adopt policies that streamline transportation project review by further delegating the design review process from VDOT to the local governments and by adopting a uniform timeframe for plan reviews that remain under VDOT jurisdiction. These efforts would save Virginia taxpayers money and simultaneously result in timely approvals of contextually appropriate projects, and
  - the CTB adopt a policy for an earlier release of the annual draft plan to facilitate a more comprehensive review.

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,



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Mayor

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cc: The Honorable Members of City Council  
Rashad M. Young, City Manager  
Mark Jinks, Deputy City Manager  
Richard J. Baier, P.E., LEED AP, Director, T&ES  
Abi Lerner, Deputy Director, T&ES Transportation  
Antonio Baxter, Division Chief, T&ES Administration  
Jim Maslanka, Capital Projects Manager, T&ES Transit Services