

October 16, 2014

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

Re: Commonwealth Transportation Board (CTB) Testimony Letter

Dear Secretary Layne and Members of the Commonwealth Transportation Board:

This letter presents the City of Alexandria's ("the City") comments on the proposed FY2016 to FY2021 Six-Year Improvement Program.

As you know, the City 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 village centers, forming a more urban, vibrant and sustainable City and Northern Virginia region. 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 starting to implement HB2313, which provides a real opportunity to address the backlog of 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 the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) implements HB 599 and HB 2. We urge the 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.
- Approximately \$60 million a year of bond funds have been invested by the Commonwealth in major capital investments. It is our understanding that this significant source of funding will expire in 2018, unless the Commonwealth takes action to replace

these funds. We would urge the CTB and the legislature to address this issue before it drastically affects the Department of Rail and Public Transportation's (DRPT's) ability to invest in needed transit infrastructure.

- We do understand that transportation revenues at the state and regional levels are not being received in the amount originally projected. We appreciate the efforts VDOT, DRPT, and the CTB have made to minimize impacts on the jurisdictions in Virginia who have received FY2015 funds. We would also urge that careful measures be used to adjust the Six-Year Program in future years to provide scarce resources to meritorious projects.
- We agree with the continuing efforts of DRPT to implement the statewide transit assistance formula and we extend our thanks to them for working with the region to address concerns regarding how Metrorail ridership is counted, which is essential to the new operations formula.
- The City requests that \$1 million of the surplus Seminary Road HOV ramp funds be allocated to resolving a major fire suppression design issue caused by overzealous value engineering on the Woodrow Wilson Bridge. The current dry pipe system unnecessarily increases 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, which is at risk.
- We acknowledge the assistance the Commonwealth has provided in improving vehicular access to the Department of Defense, Mark Center BRAC-133 site, including the programming of significant monies for a transit ramp from the HOV lanes at I-395 to Seminary Road and the construction of short and mid-term improvements at the site. Since the construction of the HOV ramp is imminent, we would ask that the CTB fund interim pedestrian connections across the Seminary Road Bridge, which are needed for school children who walk from high-density residential areas on the north side of I-395 to the middle school on the south side of I-395.
- We appreciate the continued Commonwealth support of regional and local transit services, including Metrorail and Metrobus service in the City. In particular, we are appreciative of the Commonwealth's \$50 million match to the federal Passenger Rail Investment and Improvement (PRIIA) grant, which funds the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority's capital improvements. We ask that the Commonwealth continue to provide the funding to ensure that our rail system is in a state of good repair.

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- WMATA adopted its 10-year strategic plan-*Momentum or METRO 2025*, which calls for a number of critical investments in transit over the next decade. In the next six years alone, WMATA is seeking an additional \$444 million in funding from the Commonwealth and Northern Virginia localities for the *METRO 2025* program. This is in addition to the current stream of state and local capital funds which flow to WMATA annually. As WMATA continues to discuss the long-term implementation and funding of *METRO 2025*, we ask that the CTB consider significant additional long-term funding assistance for this plan as a signature economic investment in the region's future and the impact this has on the state's tax receipts.
- We thank the CTB for all of its assistance in funding the local portion of the new Metroway bus service in the Route 1 corridor in Alexandria and Arlington. This is the region's first use of dedicated lanes for local bus service. We are currently performing an Environmental Assessment of the West End Transitway on Van Dorn and Beauregard. If a Build Alternative is chosen we plan on working with DRPT to develop a solid financing plan which would include seeking significant federal assistance.
- The City supports the continuation and expansion of VDOT's revenue-sharing program. This program allows localities to match state funding to make crucial 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 programs. We urge the CTB to continue funding for bicycle and pedestrian facilities at a high level in the Six-year Transportation Program.

We want to thank the CTB, VDOT staff and DRPT staff for your time, efforts, and dedication in seeking solutions to the Commonwealth's many complex transportation issues.

Sincerely,

William D. Euille

Mayor

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cc: The Honorable Members of the City Council

Rashad M. Young, City Manager

Mark Jinks, Deputy City Manager

Yon Lambert, Acting Director, T&ES

Sandra Marks, Deputy Director of Transportation, T&ES