

City of Alexandria, Virginia

MEMORANDUM

DATE: SEPTEMBER 16, 2015

TO: MEMBERS OF THE TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION

FROM: SANDRA MARKS, DEPUTY DIRECTOR, T&ES

SUBJECT: AGENDA ITEM #5 - CONSIDERATION OF HOUSE BILL TWO GRANT APPLICATIONS

ISSUE: Consideration of Grant Applications to the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) and Department of Rail and Public Transit (DRPT) for Transportation Projects eligible Under House Bill Two (HB2).

RECOMMENDATION: That the Transportation Commission:

1. Approve submission of \$16.3 million in HB2 transportation grant applications to VDOT and DRPT for the following projects (projects would be submitted individually and prioritized in the following order):
 - a. \$1.8 million for DASH technology;
 - b. \$1 million for broadband communications infrastructure associated with the Transportation Security Administration site;
 - c. \$7 million for adaptive traffic signal controls;
 - d. \$6 million for Old Cameron Run Trail; and,
 - e. \$500,000 for the Farrington Connector Feasibility Study

BACKGROUND: In 2014, HB2 was signed into law. The law requires the Commonwealth Transportation Board (CTB) to develop and implement a quantifiable and transparent prioritization process for making funding decisions for capacity enhancing projects within the six-year improvement program. The goal of HB2 is to ensure the state invests limited tax dollars into projects that meet critical transportation needs. For FY 2017 through FY 2022, there is \$500 million available for high priority projects statewide, and \$100 million available for the Northern Virginia District.

Over the summer, staff from VDOT and DRPT developed and refined an application process for HB2 grants. The process was completed in July and the application period for projects opened August 1 with all applications due by September 30, 2015. After applications are submitted, staff from VDOT and DRPT will screen candidate projects to determine if they qualify to be scored. Selected projects will be scored in the fall and winter 2015. In January 2016, a list of all submitted projects and their scores will be submitted to the CTB, posted on-line, and will be

available for public comment.

In April 2016, the draft Six Year Plan will be released by the CTB, followed by public hearings to gather input. The CTB is expected to make its final decision on which projects to fund through HB2 by July 2016. It has not been determined yet whether the HB2 project application and evaluation process will be conducted annually or biannually, however, the CTB is considering a biannual solicitation.

The CTB will use the following factors to score submitted projects: congestion mitigation, economic development, accessibility, safety, environmental quality, and land use. The Board will assign different weights to such factors based on a project's location within a region of the state. Within Northern Virginia, congestion mitigation is the highest weighted factor at 45%; land use at 20%; accessibility at 15%; environmental quality at 10%; economic development at 5%; and safety at 5%.

DISCUSSION: Staff has developed the following list of projects, in order of priority, based on the guidelines and criteria outlined in the HB2 process. The prioritized project list includes:

1. DASH Technology: \$1,829,000 requested for a DASH smart yard bus tracking system, computer automated dispatch and automated vehicle location system, automatic voice annunciators, and automated passenger counting systems for DASH buses.
2. Broadband Communications Link for Transportation Security Administration Site: \$1 million requested to help mitigate the impacts of the proposed Transportation Security Administration (TSA) development on Eisenhower Avenue. The new TSA site will require the installation of two new traffic signals which would be provided by the developer. However, additional communications infrastructure is needed to connect these new signals with the City's existing traffic signal system. This project would install the following:
 - a. Communications conduit and fiber optic cable between Van Dorn Street and Clermont Avenue;
 - b. Traffic cameras at key locations along Eisenhower Avenue to monitor TSA traffic; and,
 - c. Communication network infrastructure to connect the new and existing traffic signals and provide synchronization along Eisenhower Avenue to mitigate the impacts of TSA related traffic.
3. Traffic Adaptive Signal Control: \$7 million requested to reduce congestion on the City of Alexandria's transportation network by continuously optimizing traffic signal operation. The current traffic signal control system utilizes 30-year-old control technology and is not capable of adapting to changing conditions that occur on an almost daily basis. This project would:
 - a. Upgrade the central control hardware and software for 250 traffic signals;
 - b. Upgrade the traffic signal controllers in the field;
 - c. Install vehicle sensing technology and cameras;
 - d. Utilize technology to track traffic conditions and collect historical trends; and

- e. Use adaptive signal control to improve transit operations.
- 4. Old Cameron Run Trail: \$6 million requested to increase pedestrian and bicycle connectivity in an area of the City where new development and population growth is occurring. The project would construct a shared-use path between Eisenhower Avenue near Telegraph Road to on-road bicycle facilities that link to the Mount Vernon Trail, addressing a major gap in the City's trail system.
- 5. Farrington Connector Feasibility Study: \$500,000 requested to evaluate the feasibility of the extension of Farrington Avenue in the Eisenhower West Planning Area. The study would assess how this connection would serve future development in the Eisenhower West area, provide increase connectivity, relieve congestion on Van Dorn Street, and increase efficiency of the West End Transitway on Van Dorn Street.