

# City of Alexandria, Virginia

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## MEMORANDUM

**DATE:** DECEMBER 18, 2019

**TO:** MEMBERS OF THE TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION

**FROM:** HILLARY ORR, DEPUTY DIRECTOR, TRANSPORTATION

**SUBJECT:** AGENDA ITEM # 4 – TRANSPORTATION DEMAND MANAGEMENT GRANTS

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**ISSUE:** Consideration of FY 2021 Transportation Demand Management (TDM) Operations Grants and required local funding match

**RECOMMENDATION:** That the Transportation Commission provide an endorsement to City Council for the approval of two TDM Operations grants (TDM) Operating Assistance and Mobility Programs

**BACKGROUND:** The City has operated a TDM program since 1981 and each year has applied for and received funds from the Commonwealth of Virginia. The annual TDM Operations Grant funds two City positions to manage the City's TDM program (GO Alex), to oversee multiple Federal and Commonwealth grants, and to support other multi-modal programs and projects across the City.

In April 2019, the City hired a part-time employee to work specifically on employer outreach efforts. This part-time position is funded by a separate grant (Virginia Department of Transportation Employer Outreach) since employer outreach is not an eligible activity covered by the TDM Operating Assistance Grant. This year, a new grant is available by DRPT called Mobility Programs. This grant specifically supports employer outreach activities that are not covered by the TDM Operating Assistance Grant. Similar to that grant, it provides funding for up to 80% of eligible expenses (such as personnel) with a 20% match from the City.

**DISCUSSION:** TDM is the application of policies and strategies to reduce trips made using single occupant vehicles (as outlined in the "Multimodal Transportation" goal of the City's FY 2017-2022 strategic plan) while still ensuring residents, workers, and visitors can reach destinations within Alexandria. Through the use of incentives, education, and marketing, TDM promotes more efficient use of the existing transportation system by influencing the time, route, or mode selected for a given trip. TDM also increases travel choices, offering the opportunity to choose how, when, and by what mode people travel. Recent concerns about climate change have also highlighted the environmental benefits of TDM programs in reducing greenhouse gas emissions, which is consistent with many of the goals from the Environmental Action Plan.

GO Alex provides value for the City by supporting several programs and projects, including:

- Platform Improvement Project Mitigation – Through planning for WMATA’s bus replacement operations, helping to build other modes, and a broad communication and outreach effort, the City kept increases in traffic delay to a minimum during this period, and accommodated many of the 18,000 daily Metrorail riders displaced during the closure.
- Mobile Store – An outlet selling SmarTrip cards and offering trip planning assistance, the Mobile Store interacted with nearly 29,000 commuters in the past fiscal year
- Transportation Management Plans (TMPs)– Managed and provided TDM support for 75 different TMPs for development across the City.
- Enhanced community outreach at events including Bike to Work Day and Park(ing) Day.

Attachment 1 provides an overview of the TDM efforts during FY 2019 and a brief description of programs and activities underway in FY 2020 and planned for FY 2021.

Additionally, with the increased need to support employers in the City, the employer outreach position could be upgraded to a full-time position by applying for the new Mobility Programs grant. These grants were endorsed by the Transportation Commission at their December 18, 2019 meeting (Attachment 2).

Although, this request includes a second grant and local match, the City contribution represents only an increase of \$8,740 from FY 2020 levels. The amount proposed for the TDM Operating Assistance grant is less than previous years now that the City has brought some of the program support in house and will not need as large of a budget for contractor support. If local match funds are not included in the FY 2021 Operating Budget, the City may withdraw, or otherwise amend, the grant application.

**ATTACHMENTS:**

Attachment 1: FY 2019 TDM Operations Report