



Legislation Text

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City of Alexandria, Virginia

MEMORANDUM

**DATE:** JUNE 18, 2024

**TO:** THE HONORABLE MAYOR AND MEMBERS OF CITY COUNCIL

**THROUGH:** JAMES F. PARAJON, CITY MANAGER /s/

**FROM:** ADRIANA CASTAÑEDA, DIRECTOR, TRANSPORTATION AND ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES

**DOCKET TITLE:**

Consideration of a Resolution to Support Grant Applications to the Virginia Department of Transportation for FY 2030 - FY 2031 SMART SCALE projects. [ROLL-CALL VOTE].

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**ISSUE:** Consideration of a resolution to support Grant Applications to the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) for FY 2030 - FY 2031 SMART SCALE projects.

**RECOMMENDATION:** That the City Council:

1. Authorize the submission of up to \$50 Million in SMART SCALE applications from the City of Alexandria;
2. Authorize the City Manager to execute all necessary documents that may be required; and,
3. Endorse a resolution to support a joint Grant Application with Northern Virginia Transportation Authority (NVTA) and Arlington County to the VDOT for FY 2030 - FY 2031 SMART SCALE projects.

**BACKGROUND:** In 2014, HB2 was signed into law and in June 2016, the program was renamed SMART SCALE. SMART stands for System Management Allocation of Resources for Transportation and SCALE stands for the six-road project scoring attributes: Safety, Congestion Mitigation, Accessibility, Land Use, Environmental and Economic development. State law assigns different weights to factors based on a project's location within a region of the Commonwealth. In Northern Virginia, the recently updated factors are as follows: congestion mitigation is the highest weighted factor at 45%; accessibility at 25%, environmental quality at 10%, safety is 15% and economic development at 5% each. The goal of SMART SCALE is to ensure

the Commonwealth invests limited tax dollars into projects that meet critical transportation needs. The Commonwealth will make awards in June 2025 for projects scheduled for implementation in FY 2030 - FY 2031. To date, the City and DASH have been awarded approximately \$153 million in SMART SCALE funding for projects (Attachment 2).

**DISCUSSION:** Based on the guidelines and criteria outlined in the SMART SCALE process, staff assess previously approved unfunded or underfunded projects that align with the timing of SMART SCALE funding and criteria. Staff identified three City projects as viable and competitive candidates for this round of funding. Full project submissions are due on August 1, 2024. City staff, in coordination with VDOT, will develop more detailed cost estimates over the next several months. At this time, the City is requesting approval to apply for up to the maximum amounts noted for each project.

**Project 1: King Street-Bradlee Safety and Mobility Enhancements: Up to \$20 Million** - This project will construct improvements to the access road and intersections along King Street between Quaker Lane and Menokin Drive. The design will include wider sidewalks, a separate path for people biking, e-biking, and scooting, safety improvements at intersections, and accessible and enhanced transit stops. The preferred concept involves converting a portion of the service road to a one-way configuration that includes a dedicated westbound transit lane and shifts the eastbound transit to King Street. This project currently has funding available for design. Staff have been working with the community since Fall 2023 to understand concerns with the roadway, develop conceptual design options, and identify improvements. This project is scheduled for a Public Hearing at the Traffic & Parking Board (TPB) scheduled for June 24, 2024, meeting. Staff will provide an update to City Council during the June 25<sup>th</sup> City Council legislative meeting based on the TPB recommendation for this project. More information on the engagement process and recommended design concepts can be found in Attachment 3.

**Project 2: Eisenhower Avenue and Van Dorn Street Improvements: Up to \$25 Million**- This project will improve operations at the intersection of Eisenhower Avenue and Van Dorn Street by relocating left turns through Metro Road. This change utilizes existing infrastructure to improve traffic delays at this intersection and provides space to improve intersection safety. The project also includes new and wider sidewalks as well as a separate path for people biking, e-biking, and scooting, providing better safety options for people getting to transit and the Van Dorn Metrorail Station. This project is the result of a corridor-wide safety study led by VDOT and conducted in collaboration with the City and funded through our Strategically Targeted Affordable Roadway Solutions (STARS/Pipeline Study) grant. The study began in Fall 2023 and included three phases of public outreach to better understand the concerns of the community, provide design options for feedback, and incorporate that input into the preferred concepts that would advance to design and construction, should they be funded. Staff will seek shorter-term funding to advance other safety recommendations along the corridor, and the SMART SCALE application will fund the design, right-of-way, and construction phases of the project west of the Metrorail Station. This recommendation is also consistent with the West End Transitway project and the NVT A 70% grant application for improvements for the South Van Dorn Street Bridge. More information on the engagement process and recommended design concepts can be found in Attachment 4.

**Project 3: Duke Street and Route 1 Intersection Improvements: Up to \$5 Million** - This project will design and implement safety improvements at the intersections of Duke Street and South Patrick Street & Henry Street. These improvements include constructing medians, redesigning the slip lane for safety, installing curb extensions, performing stormwater management, installing landscaping, and upgrading traffic signals and street lighting. This project was identified through the Vision Zero Program's High Crash Intersection map, which was developed through a citywide crash analysis completed in early 2022. In Fall 2022, the study and concept designs were initiated through Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments (MWCOG) grant. The study

included two phases of community outreach to identify concerns with the intersections and incorporate feedback on design options. At its March 25, 2024, public hearing, the Traffic and Parking Board approved the concepts. Staff is looking to advance interim safety measures, and the SMART SCALE application would fund the longer-term design, right-of-way (as needed), and construction phases of the project. More information on the engagement process and recommended design concepts can be found in Attachment 5.

**I-395 Shirlington Rotary and S. Glebe Road** - Additionally, the City has worked since 2018 with VDOT and Arlington County on a study to improve safety at the I-395 Shirlington Rotary & South Glebe Road Interchange that includes recommendations within the City of Alexandria (Attachment 6). The goal of the study was to improve safety at this interchange by eliminating the weave issues. The recommendations include reconfiguring the approaching ramps within the interchange and from I-395 to “T” more into Quaker Lane. A traffic signal will be installed at each new “T” intersection with Quaker Lane to better manage the traffic weave. Attachment 6 is the recommendation from the 2020 study. Over the past year, City staff have coordinated with NVTA, VDOT, and Arlington County to develop a project application to fund the recommendations of the study. Attachment 7 is a resolution of support for the City of Alexandria to jointly apply for funding for this project with Arlington County and NVTA. The funds would be managed by NVTA, and the project would be constructed by VDOT.

Letters of support for these projects can be viewed in (Attachment 8).

**FISCAL IMPACT:** The total grant request is for up to \$50 Million for all three City applications. SMART SCALE grants do not require a local match.

**ATTACHMENTS:**

Attachment 1: Resolution

Attachment 2: Prior SMART SCALE Project Awards & Proposed Funding

Attachment 3: King-Bradlee Background, Engagement Summary, and Concepts

Attachment 4: Eisenhower and Van Dorn Background, Engagement Summary, and Concepts

Attachment 5: Duke Street at Route 1 Background, Engagement Summary, and Concepts

Attachment 6: I-395 Shirlington Rotary Recommendation

Attachment 7: Resolution of Support for NVTA Application to SMART SCALE

Attachment 8: Presentation

**STAFF:**

Emily A. Baker, Deputy City Manager

Hillary Orr, Deputy Director, Transportation, T&ES

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