



Legislation Text

File #: 24-2190, Version: 1

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 a Grant Application to the Safe Streets & Roads for All (SS4A) Program of the U.S. Department of Transportation (USDOT). [ROLL-CALL VOTE].

ISSUE: Consideration of a resolution to submit an application to the Safe Streets and Roads for All (SS4A) Program by the U.S. Department of Transportation (USDOT) for a Planning and Demonstration grant to support Vision Zero safety initiatives.

RECOMMENDATION: That the City Council:

1. Approve a Resolution (Attachment 1) supporting the submission of a grant application by August 29, 2024, for the Safe Streets and Roads for All (SS4A) Program for up to \$750,000.
2. City Council hereby commits to include up to \$150,000 in funds for the local match, if awarded, in its Capital Improvement Program budget; and
3. Authorize the City Manager to apply for the SS4A grant and enter into any agreements with USDOT to accept and implement the grant.

BACKGROUND: The Bipartisan Infrastructure Law established the Safe Streets and Roads for All (SS4A) discretionary grant program with \$5 billion in appropriated funds from FY 2022 to 2026. Up to \$1 billion is available in FY 2024. The SS4A program funds regional, local, and Tribal initiatives through grants to prevent roadway deaths and serious injuries. The SS4A program supports the National Roadway Safety Strategy and the USDOT's goal of zero deaths and serious injuries on our nation's roadways. SS4A grants fund programs to make roads safer for all users by providing resources to communities for developing and implementing safety plans.

The program includes funding for Planning and Demonstration grants. Award amounts will be based on total estimated project costs, and \$461 million must be awarded for planning and demonstration grants.

In 2017, the City adopted a Vision Zero Policy accompanied by an Action Plan with the goal of eliminating traffic fatalities and severe injuries by 2028. As part of that plan, Eisenhower Avenue was identified as one of the City's high-injury corridors.

DISCUSSION: The Eisenhower Avenue Transportation Study, conducted jointly by the Virginia Department of Transportation and the City, identified critical safety concerns raised by the community. These include speeding, cut-through traffic, inadequate walkways, trails, and bike paths, as well as limited and unsafe crossing opportunities. In response, a series of roadway safety enhancements have been proposed to address these issues in the short and long term. To implement interim improvements along the corridor, the City is seeking funding from the SS4A grant, with a proposed budget of up to \$750,000. These funds will be utilized to redesign the Eisenhower Avenue Corridor from Mill Road to Metro Road and implement recommendations derived from the Eisenhower Avenue Transportation Study.

The project aims to enhance safety and accessibility for all modes of transportation, aligning with the goals outlined in the Eisenhower West Small Area Plan. Specifically, the plan calls for separate paths for pedestrians and cyclists, which will be realized through future redevelopment efforts. In the interim, the project seeks to address existing gaps in the network and mitigate the risks associated with high speeds and limited crossing opportunities.

Various roadway redesign options were explored, including lane adjustments, parking additions, and the installation of dedicated spaces for cyclists and pedestrians. Feedback from the community, along with traffic studies and city policies, informed the proposed design, which prioritizes the removal of travel lanes while maintaining center turn lanes. This approach allows for the installation of separated bicycle paths, additional crossing opportunities, and improved traffic flow.

The project aligns with the SS4A grant's objectives to promote safety on public roadways and prevent crashes resulting in death or serious injury. Furthermore, it supports the City's Vision Zero Action Plan by targeting high-injury corridors and intersections. Additionally, the project advances the goals of the Alexandria Mobility Plan to create a safe and comfortable environment for walking and biking, in line with recommendations from the Eisenhower West Small Area Plan.

FISCAL IMPACT: SS4A grants require a 20% local match. If the City's grant request is awarded, the match would be up to \$150,000 and would be funded through Northern Virginia Transportation Authority (NVTA) 30% fund or the GoAlex Fund.

ATTACHMENTS:

Attachment 1 - Resolution
Attachment 2 - Presentation

STAFF:

Emily Baker, Deputy City Manager
Hillary Orr, Deputy Director of Transportation, T&ES
Tarrence Moorer, Assistant Director, Internal Services, T&ES
Christopher Ziemann, Division Chief, Transportation Planning, T&ES
Alex Carroll, Complete Streets Program Manager, T&ES
Dan Scolese, Senior Transportation Engineer, T&ES

Philippe Simon, Grants Coordinator, Strategic Management Services, T&ES