



Legislation Text

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City of Alexandria, Virginia

MEMORANDUM

DATE: NOVEMBER 4, 2015

TO: THE HONORABLE MAYOR AND MEMBERS OF CITY COUNCIL

FROM: MARK B. JINKS, CITY MANAGER /s/

DOCKET TITLE:

Consideration of Reprogramming of the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) Balance Allocation.

ISSUE: Council consideration of reprogramming of the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) balance of \$930,000 in the FY 2016 budget.

RECOMMENDATION: That the City Council allocate the currently unallotted TIP balance of \$930,000 for the following projects:

1. \$200,000 for Sidewalk Capital Maintenance
2. \$500,000 for the Holmes Run Greenway
3. \$230,000 for DASH Technologies

BACKGROUND: In developing the FY 2016 budget, WMATA's operating and capital programs put significant pressure on City funding sources, and in particular, its transportation sources. Due to uncertainty in the level of funding that would be required for WMATA, staff initially budgeted conservatively. This resulted in a fund balance of \$930,000 in the FY 2016 budget adopted by Council on May 7, 2015. At the time the budget was adopted, Council directed staff to work with the Transportation Commission to develop a list of projects to be funded with the \$930,000 remaining in the TIP. The proposed reprogramming of the TIP balance was discussed by the Transportation Commission at its October meeting. A letter from the Transportation Commission in support of these three proposed projects is provided in Attachment 1.

DISCUSSION: Because this funding is available for projects with FY 2016 implementation, funding priorities were developed for consideration based on immediate FY 2016 needs. The following are the proposed priorities to be funded.

Sidewalk Capital Maintenance: The current operating budget does not provide funding sufficient to reconstruct accessible concrete or brick sidewalks, so this project provides \$200,000 in funding to supplement the on-going repairs with reconstruction funding, and to improve pedestrian safety by providing accessible sidewalks. The funding will reduce the backlog of sidewalk maintenance requests, allowing the City to fulfill approximately 15 requests for sidewalk maintenance. **Proposed funding: \$200,000**

Holmes Run Greenway: This project involves the construction of significant upgrades to existing facilities along the Holmes Run Greenway, running north from North Ripley Street to the point beneath Interstate 395. The existing facilities currently provide access under Interstate 395 and Van Dorn Street via a tunnel, underpass, fair weather crossing and concrete trail system built into the concrete sidewall embankments lining the flood channel of Holmes Run. The trail is currently in very poor condition and has slippery and unsafe conditions for users. This project will replace and upgrade the existing trail, provide an accessible trail crossing and bridge at North Ripley Street, and raise portions of the trail out of areas that are frequently covered with water. With the project approaching final design, the cost estimate has been refined, with a total project cost of \$4.8M, and as a result, an additional \$500,000 will be needed to begin construction later this fiscal year. This project is funded primarily through a VDOT grant, which has deadlines in FY 2016 for the project to move into the construction phase. **Proposed funding: \$500,000**

DASH Technologies: To improve the efficiency of the DASH system, this project at \$230,000 funds the purchase and installation of Automated Passenger Counter (APC) technology on a total of 20 buses and 5 trolleys. The project is a component of the larger Automated Vehicle Location (AVL) Real Time Bus Information System project that is currently being implemented.

This technology will provide DASH with reliable, stop specific passenger boarding and alighting data. This data is essential for accurate reporting, farebox ridership validation, route evaluation and development and scheduling. By implementing the APC technology, DASH will be able to use this data to improve routing and scheduling and provide better service to DASH customers. The use of APC technology in transit has been proven to improve efficiency and reduce operating costs, while reducing the reliance and costs associated with outside consultants and temporary resources. This project was also included in the City's recent House Bill Two (HB2) grant application. However, because of the immediate need to fund this project, and because of the uncertainty in obtaining funds through HB2, which is a highly competitive grant process whose outcome will not be known for some time, staff proposes to re-program TIP funds for this purpose. The DASH technology application for HB2 is scalable, and funding, if awarded, could go to other DASH technology projects listed on the application. **Proposed funding: \$230,000**

FISCAL IMPACT: The minor operating impacts associated with the DASH technology project, such as system or software upgrades occurring approximately every three years at \$20,000 would be absorbed by DASH and considered annually through the budget process. There will be no operating impact associated with the sidewalk maintenance project, and the Holmes Run Greenway project would result in a nominal increase in the trail network which can be absorbed through the existing Shared Use Path Capital Improvement Program project. The \$930,000 in TIP funding is available for these projects in FY 2016.

ATTACHMENTS:

Attachment 1: Letter from the Transportation Commission to City Council

STAFF:

Emily A. Baker, P.E. Deputy City Manager
Yon Lambert, AICP, Director, T&ES
Morgan Routt, Acting Director, OMB
Carrie Sanders, Division Chief, T&ES