



Legislation Text

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City of Alexandria, Virginia

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MEMORANDUM

**DATE:** OCTOBER 19, 2016

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

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

**DOCKET TITLE:**

Consideration of Grant Applications to the Virginia Department of Transportation for Transportation Projects Eligible under the Transportation Alternatives Program and the Bicycle and Pedestrian Safety Program.

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**ISSUE:** Consideration of Grant Applications to the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) for Transportation Projects Eligible under the Transportation Alternatives Program and the Bicycle and Pedestrian Safety Program.

**RECOMMENDATION:** That the City Council:

1. Authorize the submission of a \$800,000 grant application for a VDOT Transportation Alternatives Program grant for the Holmes Run Trail Connector; and
2. Authorize the submission of a \$400,000 grant application for a VDOT Bicycle and Pedestrian Safety Program grant for Pedestrian Safety Improvements at Seminary Road and Howard Street; and
3. Authorize the City Manager to execute all necessary documents that may be required under these programs.

**BACKGROUND:** In May 2016, City Council approved an update to the Bicycle and Pedestrian chapters of the Transportation Master Plan. These chapters recommended a series of priority projects intended to improve the multimodal network in Alexandria and provide facilities for safer walking and bicycling. Some of the projects are already funded or partially funded in the City's FY 2017 to FY 2026 Capital Improvement Program. Other projects are not yet funded but may be reflected in the City's 2017 Long Range Transportation Plan (LRP), which is a list of unconstrained (unfunded) projects and studies shown on various adopted or approved plans. The LRP is updated on an annual basis and approved by the Transportation Commission. With these applications, staff proposes to apply to VDOT for funds that would allow implementation of two priority projects that are reflected in City planning documents, and have received general support from the community. The projects, which are described below, were reviewed, and endorsed by the Transportation Commission at its October meeting and a letter is provided (Attachment 1).

**DISCUSSION:** The first project, the Holmes Run Trail Connector, would provide a connection on the south side of Holmes Run, between Ripley Street and North Pickett Street. There is currently an unpaved dirt path and no sidewalk where the proposed trail

would be constructed. Because the trail would be located in a Resource Protection Area, it will be constructed with pervious material. The project is recommended as one of the City's three priority trail projects in the Transportation Master Plan and is listed as a recommended project in the Holmes Run Park Plan. The City's third highest priority project, Old Cameron Run Trail, received \$5.3 million in FY 2017 Smart Scale funding. Council recently authorized staff to apply for an additional \$3.9 million in FY 2022 Smart Scale funding for the other project, the Backlick Run Trail.

Staff proposes to seek VDOT Transportation Alternatives Program funds for the Holmes Run Trail because this program is intended to fund projects that expand non-motorized travel choices and enhance the transportation experience by improving cultural, historical, and environmental aspects of transportation infrastructure. Projects are evaluated by VDOT based on how the project improves the existing transportation network, the sponsor's experience administering a federal-aid project, and project's readiness to proceed. VDOT awarded 21 trail projects across Virginia in 2016. Project submissions should be no more than \$1 million and applications are due November 1, 2016.

The second project, located at the intersection of Seminary Road and Howard Street, would provide pedestrian improvements adjacent to INOVA Hospital. Pedestrian improvements could include, but are not limited to, curb extensions, accessibility upgrades, and bus stop enhancements. With 26 crashes at this intersection since 2011, and many observed instances of midblock crossings, enhancements to this intersection are intended to improve the safety for all roadway users.

Staff proposes to seek Bicycle and Pedestrian Safety Program funds for this project. Funds from this program are intended to improve non-motorized transportation safety. Eligible projects include, but are not limited to, safety improvements at intersections, crosswalks, signs and pavement markings, accessibility features, and traffic calming measures. Projects should cost less than \$500,000 and should reduce crashes or risk potential. Proposed projects are evaluated based on risk factors from documented purpose and need to compete against other like projects. The grant application is due November 1, 2016.

**FISCAL IMPACT:** The Transportation Alternatives Program grant requires a 20% local match. As a result, the City match would be \$160,000, to be paid for with in-house design services at \$60,000 through in-kind matching funds, and \$100,000 of prior year funds from the Complete Streets CIP project. The funding provided through the VDOT's Bicycle and Pedestrian Safety Program does not require any City matching funds.

#### **ATTACHMENTS:**

Attachment 1: October 16, 2016 Transportation Commission Letter

Attachment 2: Presentation

#### **STAFF:**

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