



Legislation Text

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City of Alexandria, Virginia

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MEMORANDUM

**DATE:** MARCH 4, 2020

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

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

**DOCKET TITLE:**

Consideration of a Resolution to Support Grant Applications to the Virginia Department of Transportation and Department of Rail and Public Transportation for FY 2026 to FY 2027 SMART SCALE projects. [ROLL-CALL VOTE]

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**ISSUE:** Consider approval of a resolution to support Grant Applications to the Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transportation for FY 2026 to FY 2027 SMART SCALE projects.

**RECOMMENDATION:** That City Council:

1. Authorize the submission of up to \$143.5 million in SMART SCALE applications; and
2. Authorize the City Manager to execute all necessary documents that may be required.

**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 project scoring attributes: Safety, Congestion mitigation, Accessibility, Land use, Environmental and Economic Development. The State law assigns different weights to factors based on a project's location within a region of the State. In Northern Virginia, congestion mitigation is the highest weighted factor at 45%; land use at 20%; accessibility at 15%; environmental quality at 10%; economic development at 5%; and safety at 5%. The goal of SMART SCALE is to ensure the State invests limited tax dollars into projects that meet critical transportation needs. The State will make awards in June 2021 for projects scheduled for implementation in FY 2026 to FY 2027.

**DISCUSSION:** The City has developed a list of five projects based on the guidelines and criteria outlined in the SMART SCALE process. Because the timeline for submissions of pre-applications is significantly sooner than the application deadline in previous years, staff will develop detailed cost estimates over the next several months. Staff is requesting that City Council authorize the following project list with maximum amounts, which will later be refined for the applications. The Transportation Commission approved a preliminary list of projects at its February 19 meeting (Attachment 2). Since the Transportation Commission endorsement, staff refined the project cost for the Duke Street Transitway in preparation for applying to NVT, and the total cost estimate has been reduced by \$25 million, less than the \$100 million endorsed by the Commission. The request to Council therefore is to authorize the application for \$75 million from NVT. The projects are:

- **Route 1 at East Glebe Road: Up to \$10 million** - This project was recommended in the North Potomac Yard Small Area

Plan and the Oakville Triangle and Route 1 Corridor Plan. The project will design, acquire right-of-way and construct improvements at the intersection of East Glebe Road and Route 1 (Richmond Highway), including a dedicated left turn, thru and right-turn lane for eastbound traffic. The project will also upgrade the pedestrian and bicycle facilities along this portion of the road. The project will be built in coordination with future development at Oakville Triangle, which could include phased construction. The project would be leveraged with \$1.6 million in funding required by the Oakville Triangle development. The design and construction would also be coordinated with the Route 1 Metroway Extension project (between E. Glebe Road and Evans Lane).

- **Route 1 South Improvements: Up to \$3.5 million** - This project was recommended in the South Patrick Street Housing Affordability Strategy. The project entails installing a 10-12'-wide landscaped median refuge island on South Patrick Street (Route 1) from Wolfe Street to Jefferson Street (from the current four-foot wide, concrete median) and narrowing the travel lanes to calm vehicular traffic. The project addresses safety and accessibility across South Patrick Street. The Vision Zero Action Plan also identified South Patrick Street as a high-crash corridor. During the South Patrick Street Strategy, residents have also identified the width of South Patrick Street and its traffic as a barrier to access other parts of Old Town.
- **Duke Street Transitway: Up to \$75 million** - This project will enable implementation of transitway improvements on Duke Street between the King Street Metro Station and Landmark Mall. The project is one of the City's three transitways identified in the Transportation Master Plan. Initial improvements could provide transit priority, address right-of-way needs, development of stations and acquisition of zero-emission buses. The City currently has \$12 million in NVTAF funds for the planning, environmental work and design. City Council previously instructed staff to seek FY 2024 to FY 2025 NVTAF 70% funds for Phase 1 construction and the City will know by June 2020 if funding is awarded. The Smart Scale request is based on the maximum amount needed for initial implementation and could be adjusted based on funding secured from NVTAF.
- **Upper King Street Multimodal Improvements: Up to \$40 million** - This project would fund design, right-of-way and construction of traffic/multimodal and streetscape improvements along King Street between King/Quaker/Braddock and North Hampton Street. Today, there is a significant lack of these facilities, contributing to safety needs along this corridor.
- **Landmark Transit Center: Up to \$15 million** - This project includes the design and construction of a new transit center within the redeveloped Landmark Mall. The project is recommended in the Landmark-Van Dorn Corridor Plan, and the Alexandria Transit Vision Plan. The station would serve local transit as well as two transitways - the Duke Street Transitway and the West End Transitway, to provide a seamless connection between transit routes. The transit center would be located along a new "transit street" including new roadway made of reinforced concrete, sidewalks, six transit bays, platforms and shelters, lighting, and street furniture. The project would be coordinated with the redevelopment of the mall.

**FISCAL IMPACT:** The funding provided through SMART SCALE does not require any City matching funds. However, there will be direct operating costs associated with the Duke Street Transitway (additional subsidy to either DASH or WMATA, depending on the operator) and potentially the Landmark Transit Center.

**ATTACHMENTS:**

1. Resolution
2. February 19, 2020 Transportation Commission Letter
3. PowerPoint Presentation

**STAFF:**

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