



Legislation Text

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City of Alexandria, Virginia

MEMORANDUM

DATE: SEPTEMBER 21, 2021

TO: THE HONORABLE MAYOR AND MEMBERS OF CITY COUNCIL

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

DOCKET TITLE:

Consideration of a Resolution for Submission to the Northern Virginia Transportation Authority (NVTa) for Regional Transportation Funding in FY 2026 to FY 2027. [ROLL-CALL VOTE]

ISSUE: What should the City propose to the Northern Virginia Transportation Authority (NVTa) for 70% regional funding in FY 2026 to FY 2027?

RECOMMENDATION: That the City Council:

1. Adopt the resolution (Attachment 1) to approve applications to the NVTa for 70% regional transportation funding for up to \$5 million for West End Transitway Phase II Design of South Van Dorn Street and up to \$5 million for the Holmes Run Trail Bridge at Morgan Street; and,
2. Authorize the City Manager to submit the proposal to the NVTa and enter into any necessary agreements with NVTa to accept the funds.

BACKGROUND: In April 2013, House Bill 2313 was signed into law, levying additional taxes and a fee in Planning Districts that meet population, motor vehicle registration, and transit ridership criteria. The revenues generated in Northern Virginia through these taxes and fees are deposited into a fund managed by the NVTa. Thirty percent (30%) of the funds are distributed directly to member localities to use on transportation projects. The remaining seventy percent (70%) of the funds are distributed by NVTa for regional transportation projects. Since FY 2014, the City has been awarded approximately \$179 million in NVTa 70% regional funds, the bulk of which went to the Potomac Yard Metro Station (\$69.5 million) and the Duke Street Transitway (\$87 million). The City uses NVTa 30% funds largely for transit capital and operating costs, subject to annual budget consideration by City Council. For a summary of projects and funding, see Attachment 2.

DISCUSSION: On July 1, 2021, the NVTa formally requested applications seeking 70% regional transportation funding for FY 2026 and FY 2027 as part of the FY 2022 to FY 2027 Six-Year Program update. In this funding round, the City can only submit projects that are currently included in the NVTa's approved regional plan, TransAction 2030. Staff proposes the City submit applications for two projects totaling up to \$10 million.

Project 1: West End Transitway Phase II Design - South Van Dorn Street

The first application will continue to fund the West End Transitway project, which has been a priority for the City since the corridor was identified in 2008. The project has been phased to design and construct improvements along the corridor as right of way is available. The City already received \$4.6 million from NVTa for the design of Phase 1 of the West End Transitway. In addition, the City has received an additional \$67.2 million in SmartScale funds for the construction of the Phase 1 improvements for the West End Transitway, including facilities at Southern Towers. Phase I focuses on queue jump lanes at intersections, new stations, non-motorized improvements, and bus purchases. Design will begin in Fall 2021. This application seeks up to \$5 million to design South Van Dorn Street and the Van Dorn bridges between Metro Road and McConnell Avenue to accommodate dedicated transit lanes (where right of way already exists) as well as improve non-motorized facilities along the bridge for better connections between new developments and the Metrorail station. Design would include structural, civil and traffic engineering as well as community engagement, environmental work, staff time and substantial contingency funds.

The existing Van Dorn Street bridge currently includes a narrow sidewalk along the east side, and no bicycle facilities. In 2016, the City completed the West End Transitway Alternatives Analysis and the Environmental Documentation was completed in 2017. A conceptual plan for the full build out of the transitway included dedicated bus lanes on Van Dorn Street for the transitway from Metro Road to the north and maintained existing vehicle travel lanes. The Eisenhower West Small Area Plan also recommends multimodal improvements to the South Van Dorn Street bridge. In FY 2022, the City will conduct a feasibility study that looks at traffic, concept options and develops more refined cost estimates to better understand the level of funding needed for design and construction in future years. Beginning the design of Phase II improvements in areas where the City has already acquired right of way makes the City very competitive for construction funds for this project.

Project 2: Holmes Run Trail Bridge at Morgan Street

In 2018, a portion of Holmes Run Trail that connects to North Morgan Street was closed due to flooding and severe erosion that undermined the stability and integrity of the trail and boardwalk. In 2019, the City experienced historic flooding, which severely damaged three additional sections of Holmes Run Trail, including two bridge structures. For FY 2021 and FY 2022, the City committed \$6 million to repair these damaged sections of the trail and stabilize the streambank north of North Morgan Street near Dora Kelly Park.

Even when the trail is open, the existing fair weather crossing for Holmes Run Trail in Dora Kelly Park is regularly impassable due to high water levels. Trail users are then forced to detour onto North Beauregard Street, which was identified as a high-crash corridor in the City's Vision Zero Action Plan. In an effort to further increase the resiliency of the trail network and provide safer and more reliable access for trail users, staff proposes to request up to \$5 million from NVTa to replace the fair weather crossing at this location with a pedestrian and bicycle bridge. This project will create a more resilient and useful trail network in the West End.

FISCAL IMPACT: There is no fiscal impact to the City as NVTa 70% funds do not have a local match requirement. However, the City plans to include design funds in the FY23 CIP for the Holmes Run Trail Bridge at Morgan Street project.

ATTACHMENTS:

Attachment 1: Resolution

Attachment 2: NVTAFunding Summary

Attachment 3: Presentation

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