



Legislation Text

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City of Alexandria, Virginia

MEMORANDUM

**DATE:** MARCH 15, 2022

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

**THROUGH:** JAMES F. PARAJO, CITY MANAGER /s/

**FROM:** EMILY A. BAKER, DEPUTY CITY MANAGER  
YON LAMBERT, DIRECTOR, T&ES  
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**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 2028 to FY 2029 SMART SCALE projects. [ROLL-CALL VOTE]

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**ISSUE:** Consideration of a resolution to support Grant Applications to the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) and Department of Rail and Public Transportation (DRPT) for FY 2028 to FY 2029 SMART SCALE projects.

**RECOMMENDATION:** That the City Council approve the attached resolution (Attachment 1) to:

1. Authorize the submission of up to \$56 million in SMART SCALE applications from the City of Alexandria and DASH; 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 the six-road 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. Within Northern Virginia, congestion mitigation is the highest weighted factor at 45%; land use at 20%; accessibility at 15%, environmental quality at 10%, and safety and economic development at 5% each. 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 2023 for projects scheduled for implementation in FY 2028 to FY 2029.

To date, the City has been awarded nearly \$145,000,000 in SMART SCALE funding from projects (Attachment 2).

**DISCUSSION:** Based on the guidelines and criteria outlined in the SMART SCALE process, staff assesses previously approved unfunded or underfunded projects that align with the timing of SMART SCALE funding and criteria. Staff identified three City projects and one DASH project to be viable and competitive candidates for this round of funding. Both the City and DASH can submit up to four projects each. Because the timeline for submissions of pre-applications is significantly sooner than the application deadline, staff will develop more detailed cost estimates over the next several months. Staff is requesting approval to apply for up to the maximum amounts noted for each project.

**Project 1: I-395 Exit Ramp Improvements at Duke St: Up to \$14 million** - This project was identified as part of the Landmark Mall site redevelopment process. In coordination with INOVA Hospital, the City agreed to modify the I-395 exit at Duke Street to allow for direct vehicle access into the West End Alexandria site. The ramp will improve safety and access to the site.

**Project 2: Duke St and Van Dorn St Intersection Improvements: Up to \$20 million** -The Landmark/Van Dorn Small Area Plan proposes improvements to the Duke Street and Van Dorn Street intersection. While developers are implementing some improvements, safety upgrades at the new at grade crossings are not fully funded. The proposed project would include design and construction of interchange ramp realignments, crossing improvements, and a new sidewalk on Duke Street where none exists. The proposed sidewalk was identified as a priority project in the Alexandria Mobility Plan. Duke Street is also a high-crash corridor, and this project would support the City's Vision Zero Action Plan by improving safety for all road users. Finally, this project would enhance mobility, access, safety, and comfort for people walking to, from, or adjacent to the future West End Alexandria mixed-use development complex.

**Project 3: Metroway Extension: Up to \$10 million** - This project will include right-of-way and construction for an extension of the Metroway transitway on Route 1 north of Glebe Road to Evans Lane to provide access to the new Potomac Yard Metrorail Station and the Virginia Tech Innovation Campus. The transit corridor will connect into Arlington from Potomac Avenue. The project will include signalization upgrades, stormwater management, and electric vehicle charging infrastructure to support electric buses. The project was identified in the North Potomac Yard Small Area Plan and the Alexandria Mobility Plan as essential to the buildout of the Route 1 Transit Corridor.

**Project 4: DASH Facility Expansion Phase II: Up to \$12 million** - This project will include the installation costs of up to 20 additional electric bus chargers in the planned facility expansion, smart charging technology, energy banking systems, and the construction of an enclosure around the new bus bays to provide a climate-controlled environment for electric bus storage. These improvements to the DASH Facility support the continued transition to 100% electric buses.

During their March meetings, the Alexandria Transit Company (Attachment 4) and the Alexandria

Transportation Commission (Attachment 3) supported the applications.

**FISCAL IMPACT:** The total grant request is for up to \$56 million for both City and DASH applications. Staff time to manage and administer these projects will be included in the applications where feasible. SMART SCALE grants do not require a local match.

**ATTACHMENTS:**

Attachment 1: Resolution

Attachment 2: Prior SMART SCALE Project Awards & Proposed Funding

Attachment 3: Transportation Commission Letter of Endorsement

Attachment 4: ATC Letter of Endorsement

Attachment 5: Presentation

**STAFF:**

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