



Legislation Text

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City of Alexandria, Virginia

MEMORANDUM

**DATE:** JUNE 21, 2022

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

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

**FROM:** YON LAMBERT, DIRECTOR, TRANSPORTATION AND ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES

**DOCKET TITLE:**

Consideration of a Resolution to support a Grant Application to the Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transportation (DRPT) for mitigation funding for Metrorail service impacts in 2022 to 2023. [ROLL-CALL VOTE]

**ISSUE:** Should the City submit a grant application to DRPT to mitigate the impacts of the Metrorail closures for the Potomac Yard Cutover and Yellow Line Bridge and Tunnel work?

**RECOMMENDATION:** That City Council adopt a resolution to:

1. Authorize the submission of a grant application up to \$1,000,000;
2. Commit the 20% local match funding; and
3. Authorize the City Manager to execute all necessary documents that may be required.

**BACKGROUND:** The Demonstration Project Assistance Program administered by DRPT is a competitive grant program that is meant to support local efforts to improve transit reliability, access to housing and employment centers, and public transportation mobility options. Applicants are required to provide a twenty percent (20%) match from non-state or federal funds.

In April 2022, the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA) announced two distinct and related projects that will impact Metrorail service to Alexandria. These projects include the following:

1. **Phase I: Rail cutover to Potomac Yard Metrorail Station and Yellow Line bridge closure (September 10, 2022 to October 22, 2022)** -- This project will tie in rail track to the new Potomac Yard Metrorail Station, due to be opened after this project. All stations south of Potomac Yard will be closed

during this period. WMATA will run trains to test signals, and needs access to switching equipment at Braddock Rd Metrorail station to conduct safety tests.

- 2. Phase II: Yellow line bridge closure only (September 10, 2022 to May 2023) --** This project will repair the Yellow Line tunnel in DC that approaches the Yellow Line Bridge across the Potomac. As the crossing between Pentagon and L'Enfant Plaza station is closed, riders will have to take the Blue Line to Rosslyn station to cross into DC.

WMATA has prepared a mitigation plan that includes shuttle bus bridges and a commitment to increased frequency on the Blue Line rail service. The City has also prepared a mitigation plan to support travel options for residents and workers in Alexandria. DRPT has announced that \$2 million is available to support jurisdictions with these mitigation plans.

**DISCUSSION:** Based on feedback from City Council at its May 24, 2022 legislative session, as well as successes during the 2019 Metrorail shutdown, the City has compiled a mitigation plan that recognizes the value of residents' time, cost and choice options. Elements of the plan could include the following types of mitigation measures:

- Robust communication, marketing and employer outreach, in partnership with WMATA
- Access to transportation options such as the water taxi, discounted Capital Bikeshare memberships, HOV lane changes, enhanced wayfinding, and discounted or free travel on Virginia Railway Express (VRE)
- Enhanced support for data monitoring such as bike trail counters and streetlight data

DASH buses are not anticipated to play the same role they did in 2019 due to a lack of operators and vehicles to take on additional routes.

During the oral update to City Council on May 24, 2022 staff proposed a local match of \$120,000; however, the staff is proposing to increase Council authorization to account for any mitigation measures that would support resident travel options above initial costs. While staff anticipates a match of \$120,000, the match could increase to \$200,000 if additional mitigation measures are identified.

At its June 15, 2022 meeting, the Transportation Commission endorsed this application (Attachment 2).

**FISCAL IMPACT:** DRPT requires a 20% local match. If the City's \$1 million grant request is awarded, the match would be up to \$200,000. The match would be funded through unappropriated Northern Virginia Transportation Authority (NVTA) 30% fund balance. Staff time to manage and administer these projects will be included in the applications where feasible.

**ATTACHMENTS:**

Attachment 1: Resolution

Attachment 2: Transportation Commission Letter of Endorsement

Attachment 3: Presentation

**STAFF:**

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