



ARLINGTON COUNTY, VIRGINIA

County Board Agenda Item Meeting of March 12, 2011

DATE: February 28, 2011

SUBJECT: Priorities for Fiscal Years 2013 - 2017 Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality (CMAQ) and Regional Surface Transportation Program (RSTP) Funding.

C. M. RECOMMENDATION:

Endorse the priorities for Fiscal Years 2013 - 2017 Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality and Regional Surface Transportation Program funding as shown in Table 1.

ISSUES: No issues have been identified.

SUMMARY: CMAQ and RSTP funds are important sources of transportation funding for the County. Historically, each Fall the Board approves a prioritized list of CMAQ and RSTP funding requests for submission to the Northern Virginia Transportation Authority (NVTA), which allocates program funding across the Northern Virginia region for the following fiscal year. On September 25, 2010, the County Board approved its FY 2012 priorities for CMAQ and RSTP funding.

In January 2011, under the direction of the Commonwealth Transportation Board (CTB), the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) met with all metropolitan planning organizations (MPOs) that are eligible to receive CMAQ funds, including NVTA, and requested that the MPOs submit regional project allocations for anticipated CMAQ and RSTP funding for an additional five-year period of FY 2013 – FY 2017 by March 15, 2011.

The four programs for which FY 2013 – FY 2017 funding are recommended to be sought by the County Board are:

- Arlington County Commuter Services
- Traffic Signal Optimization
- Transportation System Management and Operations
- Crystal City Virginia Railway Express Platform Extension

County Manager:

County Attorney:

22.

Staff: Jennifer Fioretti, DES, Division of Transportation
Dan Malouff, DES, Division of Transportation

BACKGROUND: The CMAQ and RSTP programs are federal sources of funds that can be used for planning, design and construction for the County’s transportation program. These funds have provided critical support for Arlington’s air quality improvement and transportation projects and programs since Fiscal Year (FY) 1993. Historically, each year the County submits a Board-approved list of funding recommendations to the NVTA, which uses a competitive process to determine sub-regional priorities for CMAQ and RSTP funding allocation.

In a presentation to the CMAQ Sub-Committee of the CTB on January 12, 2011, VDOT staff expressed concerns regarding the MPOs management of CMAQ and RSTP funds, noting that some MPOs were having trouble maximizing the use of these federal funds, including fully funding project phases according to current schedules and estimates. This is, in part, due to the fact that several MPOs, including NVTA, allocate CMAQ funding annually rather than programming funds on a multi-year basis. In addition, a number of old CMAQ projects that are either inactive or complete have not been closed out. The staff presented several options to address these concerns. Following discussion, the Sub-Committee agreed to recommend that the CTB allow the MPOs to continue to allocate CMAQ funding, provided that the regional CTB representative meet with the local organization and review the proposed project list.

On February 16, 2011, the CTB approved a resolution requiring that beginning with the State’s FY 2012 – FY 2017 Six Year Improvement Plan (SYIP), the district CTB member will work with appropriate MPOs, VDOT and Department of Rail and Public Transportation (DRPT) staff to recommend to the CTB a list of CMAQ projects for inclusion in the SYIP for all six years of CMAQ funds anticipated to be available to MPOs. The stated purpose of this CMAQ policy change as referenced in the CTB resolution is to “facilitate the maximization of the use of federal funds, including fully funding project phases according to current schedules and estimates.”

Subsequently, VDOT staff met with staff from the MPOs that are eligible to receive CMAQ funds, including NVTA, to discuss the CMAQ program changes. VDOT staff explained that to include all of the CMAQ and RSTP allocations in the FY 2012 to FY 2017 Six Year Program, VDOT will need regional submissions by March 15, 2011. NVTA adopted its FY 2012 recommendations on November 18, 2010; however recommendations for FY 2013 through FY 2017 must still be developed by the NVTA.

DISCUSSION: Table 1 outlines the CMAQ and RSTP grants the County will receive for FY 2012, and summarizes the proposed recommended priorities for FY 2013 – FY 2017 projects. Four projects are requested for FY 2013 – FY 2017, having a total cost of \$34,636,491 million. It is unlikely that all four will be fully funded, so staff will emphasize the following relative priorities while seeking maximum funding. Detailed project descriptions for recommended FY 2013 – FY 2017 grant requests and additional information regarding NVTA’s grant process are below the table.

Table 1: FY 2012 Grants and FY 2013 – FY 2017 Priorities for CMAQ and RSTP

Priority 2012	Project Title	Funding Source	FY 2012 Request	FY 2012 Award	FY 2013 Request	FY 2014 Request	FY 2015 Request	FY 2016 Request	FY 2017 Request
1	Arlington County Commuter Services	CMAQ	\$4,200,000	\$4,200,000	\$4,305,000	\$4,412,625	\$4,522,940	4,636,013	\$4,751,913
2	Traffic Signal Optimization	CMAQ	No request	No request	No request	\$400,000	No request	No request	\$450,000
3	Transportation System Management & Operations	RSTP	\$160,000	\$160,000	\$1,823,200	\$1,823,200	\$1,823,200	\$1,823,200	\$1,823,200
4	Crystal City VRE Platform Extension	CMAQ	\$250,000	\$0	\$510,000	\$1,532,000	N/A	N/A	N/A
N/A	Bike-Sharing Capital & Operations	CMAQ	\$350,000	\$243,000	No request				
N/A	Washington Boulevard Trail Ph. II	CMAQ	\$250,000	\$0	No request				
Total			\$5,210,000	\$4,603,000	\$6,638,200	\$8,167,825	\$6,346,140	\$6,459,213	\$7,025,113

FY 2013 – FY 2017 Priorities for CMAQ and RSTP

The NVTA Jurisdiction and Agency Coordinating Committee (JACC) will submit the Northern Virginia regional project funding allocations for FY 2013 – FY 2017 to VDOT on March 15, 2011. The NVTA will ratify the proposed program for FY 2013 – FY 2017 at its April 14, 2011 meeting. Northern Virginia projects can expect to receive a total of approximately \$115 million in CMAQ funds and \$158 million in RSTP funds between FY 2013 – FY 2017. It is estimated that the combined amount of money available to Northern Virginia projects in FY 2013 will be approximately \$52.5 million. Funds are projected to grow 2% annually and are expected to reach \$56.7 million by FY 2017. On February 24, 2011, the Transportation Commission heard the proposed priorities and voted unanimously 10-0 to support staff's recommendation that the County Board endorse the priorities for Fiscal Years 2013 - 2017 Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality and Regional Surface Transportation Program funding as shown in Table 1.

- **Arlington County Commuter Services (ACCS) - \$22,628,491 requested from CMAQ**

ACCS relies on CMAQ grants to fund more than half its annual operating budget. The FY 2013 – FY 2017 work plan provides for the operations of Commuter Stores® in Crystal City, Ballston, Rosslyn, and Shirlington, a Mobile Store and Internet store (CommuerDirect.com®) that provides Arlington and regional customers with information and tickets, tokens and passes for all regional transit systems and transportation options. ACCS is the only agency in the NOVA region that provides information and passes for all transit systems and travel options in the region. This is a vital service because 80% of workers in Arlington commute in from other parts of the region. Arlington also partners with Washington DC to support the goDCgo TDM program which serves more NOVA commuters. These funds also provide for outreach, promotion and distribution of information to employers, building managers and the hospitality industry through Arlington Transportation Partners (ATP) (whose employer clients spend \$18 million per year in transit incentives) and consumer campaigns like the Car-Free Diet which promote biking, walking, transit and other options as being good for your health, for your wallet and our environment. Funds also provide marketing efforts to promote transit ridership (ART and Metrobus), biking (BikeArlington), walking (WALKArlington), carsharing, ridesharing and other alternatives to driving alone. New region serving initiatives will include: marketing the Silver Line, whose users ACCS is well equipped to target coming both into and going out of Arlington; and supporting NVRC's BRAC ridesharing initiative marketing transportation options to commuters to Alexandria, Fairfax and Prince William.

During FY10, these programs eliminated 40,000 daily vehicle trips in the county by helping people shift from driving alone to transit, carpooling, walking, bicycling and teleworking. The program also prevents more than 638,000 vehicle miles of travel (VMT) per day, saves 26,000 gallons of gasoline each day and eliminates more than 72,000 tons of CO2 pollution per year, helping Arlington County lead the way in reducing its carbon footprint. The lack of congestion, ease of accessing travel options, and health and environmental benefits enhance Arlington's business climate and quality of life.

- **Traffic Signal Optimization - \$850,000 requested from CMAQ**

For almost a decade, Arlington County has been undertaking a comprehensive program to upgrade its computerized traffic signal control system in an effort to optimize timing for efficient and safe traffic flow. The benefits of traffic signal optimization include improved pedestrian and bicycle movement, efficient vehicular flow, reduced fuel consumption, reduced mobile emissions, improved corridor-wide signal coordination, and reduced delays for emergency and transit vehicles. The request for FY14 and FY17 funds will be used to complete the third and fourth rounds of optimization in the County.

- **Transportation System Management & Operations - \$9,116,000 requested from RSTP**

The requested funds would help Arlington continue its ongoing efforts to upgrade the aging Transportation Management & Communications Plant for the signal system. The existing twisted-pair (copper wire) system built in the early 1980s has little expansion capacity. It is degrading quickly resulting in slower and frequent communication failures; extensive maintenance is required to keep the existing communication system in operation. The new fiber-optic based system will have sufficient capacity to meet our present and future Transportation System Management & Communications needs. The project will be completed in three phases, with an estimated cost of \$18.8 million. Replacing copper with fiber-optic cables will make the system faster and more reliable. Compared to copper, fiber-optic cables will also provide an exponentially greater capacity for the County to expand its Intelligent Transportation System (ITS) technologies and enhance the traffic-signal system.

In May 2006, Arlington completed its Communications Master Plan to assess the demands and needs of the County's current and future communications network for transportation-related technology deployments. In summary, the recommended plan will (1) replace the 52 miles of aging twisted pair communication copper wire cable with fiber-optics cable; (2) expand the County's existing Closed-Circuit Television (CCTV), transit signal priority and emergency vehicle preemption systems; (3) add arterial detection zones to monitor traffic conditions in real-time and take appropriate corrective actions to help reduce congestion and aid with local and regional incident / emergency management and coordination; and (4) use dynamic message signs to present real-time traffic information and emergency alerts to the motoring public for making informed decisions.

- **Crystal City Virginia Railway Express (VRE) Platform Extension - \$2,042,000 requested from CMAQ or RSTP.**

This project responds to a request from VRE to fund preliminary engineering, final design, and construction to lengthen the existing platform from 400 feet to 650 feet and extend the canopy length by 100 feet at the VRE Crystal City station in Arlington County.

This platform extension is part of a program of canopy and platform extensions system-wide to better accommodate boarding and alighting of longer VRE consists and support long-term facility needs. Due to its importance as a regional destination station and high ridership volume, extending the platform is a high VRE priority.

Although VRE receives funding from the Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transportation (DRPT) for many capital projects, platform extensions have traditionally been funded using regional CMAQ money from the jurisdiction in which the station is located.

FISCAL IMPACT: Adoption by the County Board of the County Manager's recommendation will be an endorsement of transportation project priorities for Arlington County to the Northern Virginia Transportation Authority for FY 2013 – FY 2017 Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality (CMAQ) and Regional Surface Transportation Program (RSTP) funding. Since FY 2006, the state has provided the match to federal funds for CMAQ and RSTP projects, therefore no local match is required.