



ARLINGTON COUNTY, VIRGINIA

County Board Agenda Item Meeting of September 8, 2007

DATE: August 21, 2007

SUBJECT: Priorities for Fiscal Year 2009 Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality and Regional Surface Transportation Program Funding

C. M. RECOMMENDATION:

Endorse the priorities, listed in Table 1, for Fiscal Year 2009 Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality and Regional Surface Transportation Program funding as shown in Table 1.

ISSUES: None.

SUMMARY: Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality (CMAQ) and Regional Surface Transportation Program (RSTP) funds are important sources of transportation funding for the County. Each fall the Board approves a prioritized list of CMAQ and RSTP funding requests for submittal to the Northern Virginia Transportation Authority (NVTA). The five projects for which FY 2009 funding is recommended to be sought are:

- Arlington County Commuter Services
- Traffic-Signal Optimization
- Transportation System Management and Communications Plant Upgrade
- Bus Shelter and Safety Enhancements
- Parking Master Plan
- Traffic-Signal System Upgrade

BACKGROUND: The CMAQ and RSTP programs are important federal sources of funds for planning, design and construction for the County transportation program. These funds have provided critical support for Arlington's air quality improvement and transportation projects and programs since Fiscal Year (FY) 1993. 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 projects.

DISCUSSION: Table 1 outlines the CMAQ and RSTP grants the County received for FY 2008, and summarizes the proposed recommended priorities for FY 2008 CMAQ and RSTP projects. These projects are also discussed in detail below. Six projects are requested having a total cost

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of \$8.3 million. It is likely that all six won't be fully funded, and staff will seek maximum funding while emphasizing the relative priorities shown.

Table 1: FY 2008 Grants and FY 2009 Priorities for CMAQ and RSTP

Priority	Project Title	Funding Source	FY 2008 Award	FY 2009 Request
1	Arlington County Commuter Services	CMAQ	\$3,000,000	\$3,500,000
2	Traffic Signal Optimization	CMAQ	\$0	\$360,000
3	Transportation System Management & Communications Plant Upgrade	RSTP	\$1,940,000 (RSTP & CMAQ)	\$2,100,000
4	Arlington Bus Shelter and Safety Enhancements	RSTP	\$0	\$500,000
5	Parking Master Plan	RSTP	\$0	\$450,000
6	Traffic Signal System Upgrade	CMAQ	\$0	\$350,000
Total			\$4,940,000	\$7,260,000

The NVTA will adopt a proposed program for FY 2009 at its November 2007 meeting and then submit the list to the Commonwealth Transportation Board (CTB) for concurrence and consideration of State matching money. Northern Virginia projects can expect to receive a total of approximately \$29 million in CMAQ funds and \$34 million in RSTP funds in FY 2009. The combined amount of money available for these two programs in FY 2009 is similar to what was available to Northern Virginia for FY 2008. The Transportation Commission will review these recommendations on August 30, 2007.

- Arlington County Commuter Services (ACCS) - \$3,500,000 CMAQ.** ACCS relies on CMAQ grants to fund nearly half of its annual operating budget. The FY 2009 work plan provides for the continuing operation of Commuter Stores in Crystal City, Ballston and Rosslyn, as well as Mobile Stores that provide Arlington and Metro-area customers with tickets, tokens and passes for several regional transit systems. These funds will also provide for wholesale outreach, promotion and distribution of information to employers, building managers and the hospitality industry and will fund marketing efforts to promote transit ridership, biking, walking, ridesharing and other alternatives to driving alone. Additionally, increases in monies in FY 2009 will assist in funding increased rent for our new Arlington Transportation Partners (ATP) space, some new contract services for carsharing/biking/walking, a small increase in a marketing budget which hasn't grown over the last two years and an additional staff person at the upcoming Ballston Commuter Store/Bike Center.

- **Traffic-Signal Optimization - \$360,000 CMAQ.** For almost a decade, Arlington County has been undertaking a comprehensive program to upgrade its computerized traffic signal system in an effort to optimize timing for efficient and safe pedestrian and vehicular 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. In 2003 the County embarked on a major program to optimize the signal timing and which was achieved at 190 intersections by June 2005. Additional CMAQ funding received in 2005 is being used for the optimization of the remaining 77 intersections within the County, scheduled for completion by late Fall 2007.

Due to the significant development that is occurring throughout Arlington County, with more than 10 new signalized intersections per year being added to the network, and the change in traffic patterns/volumes resulting from the development, there is a need to implement a recurring program of optimization. It is recommended that a three-year cycle of signal optimization be undertaken so that signal timing can be optimized to accommodate the new signals that are being added and the changes in patterns/volumes that are occurring. The request for \$360,000 in FY 2009 funds will supplement the previously-allocated \$540,000 in FY 2007 to begin another round of optimization, covering all now 270 signals throughout the County, on a recurring basis of optimization.

- **Transportation System Management and Communications Plant Upgrade - \$2,100,000 RSTP.** The requested funds would help Arlington to continue with its ongoing efforts to upgrade the aging communications plant for the signal system. The existing twisted-pair (copper) system built during the early 1980s is degrading and communication failures are becoming more common. 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 sending video for the recently-installed, Closed-Circuit Television (CCTV) camera system, making it easier for the County to expand its Intelligent Transportation System (ITS) technologies and enhance the traffic-signal system. Using the existing funds, the County has already selected a consulting firm and started the design for Phase-1 fiber-optics run for the first 60 signals. The estimated cost for upgrading the entire system with fiber-optic cables is \$14,000,000. The first RSTP grant of \$2,500,000 was approved for this project during FY 2007.

This additional funding would allow Arlington to include over 15% of its signalized intersections (40 signals) under the fiber-optic plant. These funds would also enable the design and installation of overhead system detection to monitor traffic conditions in real time. Real-time data enable appropriate corrective actions to be taken to help reduce congestion and aid with local and regional incident/emergency management and coordination. Additionally, this fiber-optic plant will also provide for communications and data sharing for the upcoming transit-center project on

Columbia Pike, allowing the transit system to be tied into our existing traffic control center.

- **Bus Shelter and Safety Enhancements - \$500,000 RSTP.** The County is in the process of implementing a set of recommended enhancements on a list of 100 priority bus stops which were identified by a study completed in 2003. This new funding would identify the next set of 100 priority stops for improvements based on the stop's safety, proximity to trip generators, ridership and the accessibility of the stop. The type of improvements that will be made with the current and future funding will include the installation of ADA-compliant pedestrian pads, benches, shelters and lighting.
- **Parking Master Plan - \$450,000 RSTP.** An Arlington County Parking Master Plan will provide an opportunity to take a new look at parking. Parking can be a tool to assist economic development, to improve the quality of life in neighborhoods, and to address environmental concerns, all at the same time. Techniques commonly referred to as "parking management" can be employed to direct and control parking demand and supply to best achieve the goals of the County and its citizens.

The specific objectives for the Arlington County Parking Master Plan are:

- to ensure sufficient parking to achieve the County's economic and in-fill development goals and boost Smart Growth principles;
- to ensure parking supply and rates that support transit, other alternative modes, and air quality;
- to evaluate rate structures supportive of a comprehensive parking strategy; and
- to provide a two-year, five-year and long-term outlook of parking supply versus demand and identify opportunities for meeting that demand.

This project is intended to reflect a combination of technical analysis and strategic consensus building around policy recommendations that emerged from the technical analysis. The product of this process is a policy framework that provides a blueprint for decision-making for parking management in Arlington 2035.

- **Traffic-Signal System Upgrade - \$350,000 CMAQ.** This would fund preliminary engineering for the development of the next generation of computerized-traffic-signal system. The new traffic signal system would benefit from the micro-computing and technology explosion of the past several decades. These new systems are more adaptable, more reliable, and often cheaper to operate (in real dollars) than traffic signal systems of the past.

FISCAL IMPACT: Since FY 2006, the state has provided the match for both CMAQ and RSTP funds, so no local match is required from Arlington. All of these grant funds are accounted for in Fund 313, except for the Arlington County Commuter Services grant that is accounted for in Fund 101 (General Fund). These grant funds are only received on a reimbursement basis.