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COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA
County of Fairfax
BOARD OF SUPERVISORS



January 12, 2009

The Honorable Pierce Homer
Secretary of Transportation
Commonwealth of Virginia
Patrick Henry Building, Third Floor
1111 East Broad Street
Richmond, Virginia 23219

Dear Secretary Homer:

I am writing on behalf of the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors to provide comments to you and the other Commonwealth Transportation Board (CTB) members regarding the mid-year revision to the Virginia Six-Year Improvement Program for Interstate, Primary, and Urban Systems and Public Transportation. On January 12, 2009, the Fairfax County Board approved the discussion of specific project reductions that were identified in the draft mid-year revised program. These concerns are included as Attachment A to this letter.

The Board requests that this letter and its attachment be made a part of the Revised Six-Year Program allocation public hearing record and that full consideration be given to these comments in preparing the revised allocation document for FY2009 – FY2014 in January 2009.

If you need any further clarification or information, please let me know.

Sincerely,

Sharon Bulova, Vice Chairman
Fairfax County Board of Supervisors

Attachment A

cc: Members, Commonwealth Transportation Board
Members, Fairfax County Delegation to the General Assembly
Members, Fairfax County Board of Supervisors
David S. Ekern, Commissioner, Virginia Department of Transportation
Charles M. Badger, Acting Director, Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transportation
Morteza Salehi, Northern Virginia District Administrator, Virginia Department of Transportation
Anthony H. Griffin, County Executive
Robert A. Stalzer, Deputy County Executive
Katharine D. Ichter, Director, Department of Transportation

Fairfax County Concerns Regarding Reductions in the Mid-Year Revision to the FY 2009 – FY 2014 Six-Year Improvement Program

The following tables list the proposed funding reductions for specific County interstate and primary road projects within Fairfax County:

Project	Funds in Adopted Plan	Total Cut	Remaining in Program
I-66 Pavement Rehabilitation from I-495 to Rt. 50	\$68,931,756	\$66,431,756	\$2,500,000
I-66 Vienna Metrorail Access and Capacity Improvement	\$25,595,000	\$17,504,000	\$8,091,000

Project	Funds in Adopted Plan	Total Cut	Remaining in Program
Rt. 7 Widening from Rolling Holly Dr. to Reston Ave.	\$24,552,000	\$1,172,169	\$23,379,831
Rt. 29 and Gallows Rd. Intersection Improvement	\$121,108,000	\$38,884,826	\$82,223,194

There are five project reductions of particular concern to Fairfax County:

1. Route 66 – Vienna Metrorail Accessibility and Capacity Improvements (UPC 81009): This project will increase the accessibility to and the capacity of the Vienna Metrorail Station. It will allow faster transit access to the station and help encourage bus ridership. The project is currently in the design phase. Fairfax County has worked hard in the past several years to secure federal and state funding to implement this project. Removing \$17.5 million from the Program will only delay the project further and potentially cause significant cost increases.
2. Route 7 – Widen to Six Lanes from Reston Avenue to Rolling Holly Drive (UPC 52327): This is a long-standing interjurisdictional project between Loudoun and Fairfax Counties. It has undergone several project scope changes, implementation delays, and cost increases since it began in the 1990s. The Board is concerned that despite all the scope reductions to date to reduce costs, progress towards construction remains stalled. For the current FY 2009 -2014 Six-Year Program, Fairfax County agreed to fund another shortfall that had been identified with \$8.0 million from the County's Commercial & Industrial (C&I) tax proceeds. However, subsequently the County was advised that the costs had once again

increased. If the full project cannot be funded, the County desires to complete at least the westbound lanes of this project including the Seneca Road signal and intersection improvements with the previously allocated NVTB bond funding, supplemented by the \$8 million C&I funding. Further funding reductions and delay of this project risk additional escalation of costs and potential scope reductions.

3. Route 29 and Gallows Road Intersection Improvement (UPC 11395): This is one of Fairfax County's top priorities. It has experienced years of delays and resulting cost escalation. Multiple funding sources have been encumbered to construct the project, and complex land acquisition and utility relocations are proceeding. Construction is scheduled to begin in 2010. Although VDOT has advised the County that they are trying to better position themselves and the project for federal stimulus money, since this is one of the prime projects in Northern Virginia that will meet a likely stimulus criteria of "ready-to-go" to construction, the Board is concerned that if the stimulus package fails to materialize, falls short of funds, or has significant delays being adopted, this project will again be in jeopardy. Any reduction of funds or further delays in implementation would jeopardize progress made so far and make it vulnerable to additional cost increases. In FY 2008, VDOT committed to keeping this project on schedule and ensuring that all necessary funding would be there when needed to keep it on schedule.
4. Route 7100 Fairfax County Parkway through EPG (UPC 88556): This is a critical project to mitigate the increased traffic volume expected as a result of the Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) expansion at the Engineering Providing Ground (EPG) which will be occupied in 2011. The adopted and revised draft FY 2009 – 2014 Six-Year Programs have both Phases I and II of this project funded. However, the Board had requested that VDOT retain any excess funding -- resulting from lower than expected Phase I and II bids -- for Phases III and IV of the project to better position these later phases for construction. The draft revised Program shows a reduction of \$6.644 million for Phases I and II but does not indicate whether these excess funds have been applied to Phases III and IV. The magnitude of costs of the BRAC transportation improvements is \$1.6 billion and only a small portion of these needed funds have been secured. Therefore, it is critical to keep funds allocated to BRAC-related projects on those projects.

5. Mass Transit Trust Fund and Transit Capital Assistance Grant Reductions: State transit operating assistance grants and capital assistance grants through the Department of Rail and Public Transportation are reduced in the revised Program. The proposed reduction in the Mass Transit Fund Capital program disproportionately affects Northern Virginia Transportation District Commission member jurisdictions, including Fairfax County and the Virginia Railway Express, because they receive 94% of this program, while the capital funding for the remaining state-wide needs is from the Mass Transit Capital program bond funds, which is not being reduced under the revised plan. For Fairfax County, the combined operating and capital fund loss is approximately \$5.1 million. These funds are used for a myriad of transit projects in the county. Reduction of this magnitude will have a serious impact on efforts to reduce the use of single-occupancy vehicle trips and is counter to helping the region meet air quality standards. The Board requests reconsideration of this funding reduction.

Additionally, the Board had the following comments on funding needed for the Capital Beltway HOT Lanes Construction (UPC 13335, 68805, 84742, 87771, 89486, 91084, 91085, 91086, 91087): The Board strongly supports VDOT's efforts to more fully address significant quality of life issues for communities along the Beltway resulting from the on-going Beltway HOT lanes construction and the allocation of funding for this purpose. These include such issues as tree removal, landscaping, noise, and pedestrian accessibility, concerns which the Board had previously raised about the project. VDOT has agreed to take some important and significant steps to better mitigate these impacts but must have adequate project funds to proceed with these efforts. Further, the Board expressed its support for VDOT's enhancement grant application seeking funds to address gaps in the pedestrian network between the Beltway project limits and adjacent pedestrian connections.