

Fund 40000: County Transit Systems

Mission

To provide safe, reliable, clean, and effective public transportation service that complements the other elements of the multi-modal transportation system in Fairfax County and provides a cost-saving alternative to Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA) Metrobus service. To fund the County's share of operating costs for the Virginia Railway Express (VRE).

Connection to the Countywide Strategic Plan

The Fairfax County Board of Supervisors adopted the first-ever Countywide Strategic Plan on October 5, 2021. The Countywide Strategic Plan serves as a road map to help guide future work, focusing on the 10 Community Outcome Areas that represent the issues of greatest importance to the community. In February of 2023, the first Annual Report on the work of the strategic plan was released to the public. The report contains point-in-time progress highlights for each of the proposed plan strategies, plus a sample data dashboard and data story that is being replicated across all of the outcome areas, and a number of additional initiatives to embed the elements of the plan within department-level work. The report also includes a Year Two Implementation Model, which focuses on identifying the specific strategies that will move forward to implementation under the guidance of the Board of Supervisors. For more information on the Countywide Strategic Plan, please visit www.fairfaxcounty.gov/strategicplan. Fund 40000, County Transit Systems primarily supports the following Community Outcome Area:



Community Outcome Area	Vision Statement
Mobility and Transportation	<i>All residents, businesses, visitors and goods can move efficiently, affordably and safely throughout the county and beyond via our well-designed and maintained network of roads, sidewalks, trails and transit options.</i>

Focus

Fund 40000, County Transit Systems, provides funding for operating and capital expenses for the Fairfax Connector bus system. The Fairfax County Department of Transportation (FCDOT) manages, oversees, and coordinates the activities of the Fairfax Connector bus system, which in FY 2023 operated 93 routes, providing primarily intra-county service and access to Metrorail stations serving County residents. The system includes an authorized fleet of 351 buses.

Fairfax Connector bus service is operated by a private contractor from three operating facilities.

- The Huntington Division provides local service to the Huntington, Van Dorn Street and Franconia-Springfield Metrorail stations and in the Mount Vernon and Lorton areas and express service to the Pentagon Metrorail station.
- The Reston-Herndon Division includes service in the Reston, Herndon, McLean and Tysons areas to the Wiehle-Reston East, McLean, Spring Hill, and Tysons Metrorail stations; express service between Reston, the Pentagon Metrorail station, and Crystal City; local

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service between Herndon, Reston, and Tysons, and cross-county service between Fair Oaks and Reston.

- The West Ox Division provides service primarily in the I-66 Corridor between the Vienna Metrorail station and the Centreville, Chantilly, Fair Oaks, Oakton, and Fairfax Center areas; and 495 Express service between Tysons, Burke Centre, and Springfield.



The most recent Comprehensive Transit Plan (CTP) was completed in the spring of 2016 and the companion Transit Development Plan (TDP) was adopted by the Board of Supervisors in March 2016. The fiscally constrained TDP guides future investments and changes to the Fairfax Connector system. The TDP goals and objectives focused on expanding and improving access and mobility. To that end, FCDOT has made investments in a student pass program, express services, cross-county linkages, transit route improvements, an Intelligent Transportation System (ITS), bus fleet, infrastructure, and improvements to transit facilities.

A TDP update was completed in FY 2023 and will have a planning horizon of ten years. It will be named the 2023 Transit Strategic Plan (TSP). FCDOT developed a route optimization process for the plan, which incrementally reviews five regional sections of the Fairfax Connector bus network over a three-year time frame. Each section is based on a major Metrorail Station or activity center served by the Fairfax Connector. These include the Franconia-Springfield, Reston-Herndon, Vienna, Tysons, and Huntington Metrorail Stations.

In FY 2020, FCDOT started the planning process for optimizing routes in Vienna and Tysons. As part of the planning for Richmond Highway Bus Rapid Transit (BRT), FCDOT will also complete route optimization for the Huntington routes. The Vienna, Tysons, and Huntington planning efforts were completed in FY 2022.

In September 2015, in partnership with Fairfax County Public Schools (FCPS), Fairfax Connector initiated the Student Free Fare Pilot Program, which provides free bus rides to the County's middle and high school population. Since program inception, the Connector has provided over 2.3 million student passenger trips. The program is now offering access to Metrobus service to students from Justice High School, Annandale High School, Falls Church High School, George C. Marshall High School, and the Davis Center. For the 2020 – 2021 school year, the average monthly usage was approximately 11,000 passenger trips. For the 2021– 2022 school year, monthly ridership has increased, averaging over 28,550 student trips per month.

Since 2017, FCDOT has received grant funding from the Northern Virginia Transportation Commission (NVTC) for implementation of express bus service along I-66 and I-395 using the Express lanes. Funding for bus services is generated from the Express lanes' toll revenue, with a goal of reducing congestion within the I-66 corridor inside the Beltway and along I-95/395. The information below reflects the average ridership on each express route in FY 2022:

- Route 396 (Backlick-Pentagon) provided over 2,185 average passenger trips per month, totaling near 55,000 passenger trips since 2020.
- Route 697 (Stringfellow to D Street SW D.C.) provided over 1,385 average passenger trips per month, totaling over 25,000 passenger trips since 2020.

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- Route 698 (Vienna-Pentagon) provided over 2,385 average passenger trips per month, totaling over 123,000 passenger trips since 2019.
- Route 699 (Government Center-Downtown D.C.) provided over 1,600 average passenger trips per month, totaling nearly 286,000 average passenger trips since 2017.



In FY 2023, to further improve system efficiency and reliability, FCDOT made service adjustments to Routes 334, 350, 351, 352, 353, 495, 722, 937, and 951, discontinued Route 644, and implemented new Route 660 to improve connectivity between Centreville and Tysons (a major employment center with approximately 105,000 jobs). Route 660 provides additional connections for passengers at the Government Center and Vienna Metrorail Station. Connector's routes in the Reston-Herndon area were modified in association with the Metrorail Silver Line Phase 2 opening to improve access and connectivity to the three new Metrorail stations located in the County.

FCDOT continues its commitment to environmental protection. As part of this effort, FCDOT received DRPT and Virginia Department of Environmental Quality (VDEQ) funds to purchase eight electric buses. Additional zero-emission buses will be added to the electric bus pilot program in FY2024. To further reduce emissions, the Fairfax Connector has a strict idling policy and utilizes clean technology on the diesel bus fleet to meet stringent emission standards for urban buses. FCDOT adheres to stormwater management best practices and the VDEQ standards for testing and monitoring at transportation sites.

FCDOT continues to invest in infrastructure with major construction projects underway. As part of the Silver Line extension, the County constructed the Herndon Station and Innovation Center Station Park-and-Ride Garages to provide commuters access to the Metrorail and the Connector bus system. The new Springfield and Monument Drive Commuter Parking Garages are under construction and are expected to be completed in late 2023.

The number of passenger trips on Connector decreased over 45 percent, from over 8.3 million trips in FY 2019 to 4.6 million in FY 2021, due to the COVID-19 pandemic. However, ridership is rebounding, with 5.2 million trips in FY 2022 and a projected 6.0 million trips in FY 2023.

Additionally, the economic impacts of the pandemic continue to have an adverse effect on local, regional, and state transportation revenues, such as fuel taxes. County staff continue to monitor these revenues in relation to ongoing regional transit requirements. While some of these revenues decreased, Fairfax Connector did receive relief under the federal Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act.

Connector received \$26.3 million in CARES Act credits allocated to the region to support the County's transit system. These credits were used toward capital, operating, and other transit-related expenses to prevent, prepare for, and respond to the COVID-19 pandemic, including the loss of passenger fare revenues.

County and Regional Transportation Projects

Commercial and Industrial (C&I) real estate tax revenue and Northern Virginia Transportation Authority (NVRTA) local 30 percent funds are collected in Fund 40010, County and Regional Transportation Projects, and a portion is transferred to the County Transit Systems budget. In FY 2024, this amount totals \$39.7 million. This amount will be used to:

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- Support West Ox Division rush hour and midday service
- Increase frequencies on overcrowded priority bus routes (Routes 171, 401/402, 950)
- Support Route 981 from Wiehle-Reston East to Dulles Airport
- Improve the frequency of Richmond Highway corridor routes and Route 310 from Franconia Road to Rolling Valley

General Fund Support / Use of Balances

General Fund support is provided to Fund 40000 for Fairfax Connector requirements and for the County share of the subsidy for commuter rail services operated by the Virginia Railway Express (VRE). The FY 2024 General Fund transfer to Fund 40000 is \$43.0 million, unchanged from the FY 2023 Adopted Budget Plan level.

Fairfax Connector Bus Replacement Reserve

A significant long-term issue in transportation concerns the bus replacement needs for the Fairfax Connector fleet. To help minimize the fiscal impact of future bus replacement needs, funding is being reserved at the Northern Virginia Transportation Commission (NVTC) in addition to begin utilizing the County's Master Lease Program. The Board of Supervisors has directed that, beginning in FY 2025, all new buses purchased will be electric.

Virginia Railway Express (VRE)

Fund 40000, County Transit Systems, includes the County's share of the subsidy for commuter rail services operated by VRE. The service is a joint effort among NVTC, the Potomac and Rappahannock Transportation Commission, the Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transportation, and the participating jurisdictions of Fairfax County, City of Manassas, City of Manassas Park, Fredericksburg, Prince William County, Spotsylvania County, and Stafford County. The City of Alexandria and Arlington County are also contributing jurisdictions.

The operation and maintenance costs associated with the commuter rail system are funded from a combination of ridership revenues, state contributions and contributions from the participating and contributing local jurisdictions. According to the VRE Master Agreement, at least 50 percent of the operating costs must be paid by passenger fares, with the remainder funded by the participating jurisdictions according to a funding formula. The FY 2024 Fairfax County subsidy is estimated at \$5.6 million, a decrease of approximately \$800,000 from the FY 2023 Adopted Budget Plan level due to the application of federal stimulus funds.

FY 2024 Funding Adjustments

The following funding adjustments from the FY 2023 Adopted Budget Plan are necessary to support the FY 2024 program. Included are all adjustments recommended by the County Executive that were approved by the Board of Supervisors, as well as any additional Board of Supervisors' actions, as approved in the adoption of the Budget on May 9, 2023.

Increased Operating Expenditure Requirements **\$9,438,437**

An increase of \$9,438,437 in expenditures is reflected. This includes a net increase of \$10,461,848 in operating requirements for the Connector system associated with a contract rate increase included in the five-year operating contract; 14,175 hours of additional service, and increased diesel fuel costs. These increases are partially offset by a decrease in subsidy requirements for VRE of \$803,411 due to federal stimulus support and a \$220,000 decrease in WMATA expenses for bus operations and maintenance costs at the West Ox Bus Facility.



Capital Requirements

\$2,783,924

Capital project funding of \$13,612,450 is included, an increase of \$2,783,924 when compared with the FY 2023 Adopted Budget Plan and is primarily associated with the purchase of buses to operate expanded service in the I-66 Corridor. It should be noted that Fairfax Connector has significant bus replacement needs and adjustments to meet these needs are anticipated for future quarterly reviews.

Changes to FY 2023 Adopted Budget Plan

The following funding adjustments reflect all approved changes in the FY 2023 Revised Budget Plan since passage of the FY 2023 Adopted Budget Plan. Included are all adjustments made as part of the FY 2022 Carryover Review, FY 2023 Third Quarter Review, and all other approved changes through April 30, 2023.

Carryover Adjustments

\$49,790,585

As part of the *FY 2022 Carryover Review*, the Board of Supervisors approved funding of \$49,790,585, due to capital project increases of \$26,885,000 for buses that have reached the end of their useful life and to support expanded service in the 495 corridor; operating expense increases of \$5,765,000 for expanded bus service, software, advertising for new Silver Line service, transit studies and maintenance for electric buses; and \$17,140,585 for the carryover of encumbrances and capital project balances, primarily for the purchase of buses, continued implementation of the Intelligent Transportation System (ITS), upgrades to the farebox recovery system and transit studies. These increases are offset with a combination of state aid received through NVTC, support from DRPT and an estimated increase in farebox revenue.

Performance Measurement Results by Community Outcome Area

Mobility and Transportation

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, Fairfax Connector ridership decreased by 18.6 percent to approximately 6.7 million in FY 2020, as compared to FY 2019. Ahead of many transit agencies, the Fairfax Connector resumed full service on all routes on August 29, 2020, with some service enhancements, including a new commuter route from the Stringfellow Road Park-and-Ride Lot to Southwest Washington, D.C. Ridership continued to decline in FY 2021 to 4.6 million. In FY 2022, ridership improved by nearly 14 percent with an annual ridership of 5.2 million, returning to approximately 62 percent of pre-pandemic levels.

Due to health and safety concerns stemming from the pandemic, the VRE ridership surveys used to gather this data have not been conducted since 2019. However, ridership surveys were undertaken in 2022 and will be utilized for future estimates.

Community Outcome Area	FY 2020 Actual	FY 2021 Actual	FY 2022 Estimate	FY 2022 Actual	FY 2023 Estimate	FY 2024 Estimate
Mobility and Transportation						
Efficient and Varied Transportation Options						
Percent change in FAIRFAX CONNECTOR passenger trips	(18.62%)	(32.69%)	17.05%	13.70%	15.57%	6.67%
Percent change in service provided for platform miles	(6.22%)	7.55%	9.55%	11.10%	4.46%	2.19%
Percent change in service provided for platform hours	(4.26%)	5.28%	7.50%	8.70%	2.84%	1.25%

A complete list of performance measures can be viewed at <https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/budget/fy-2024-adopted-performance-measures-pm>

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FUND STATEMENT

Category	FY 2022 Actual	FY 2023 Adopted Budget Plan	FY 2023 Revised Budget Plan	FY 2024 Advertised Budget Plan	FY 2024 Adopted Budget Plan
Beginning Balance	\$25,149,725	\$14,822,000	\$25,512,691	\$5,111,457	\$5,111,457
Revenue:					
Local Revenue					
Miscellaneous Revenue ¹	\$101,541	\$100,000	\$100,000	\$100,000	\$100,000
SmarTrip Revenue ²	2,338,438	3,008,916	3,392,533	3,214,958	3,214,958
Bus Advertising	153,486	250,000	250,000	165,000	165,000
Bus Shelter Program	129,425	183,750	183,750	184,500	184,500
WMATA Reimbursements, West Ox Bus Operations Center ³	386,677	600,000	500,000	380,000	380,000
Subtotal - Local Revenue	\$3,109,567	\$4,142,666	\$4,426,283	\$4,044,458	\$4,044,458
Revenue from the Commonwealth					
State Aid (NVTC) Operating ⁴	\$11,916,971	\$25,907,267	\$28,281,609	\$27,553,975	\$27,553,975
State Aid (NVTC) Capital ⁵	28,731,944	2,193,526	23,743,526	9,587,450	9,587,450
Toll Revenue for Operating - NVTC Commuter Choice Program	2,316,697	5,010,984	5,110,984	1,871,317	1,871,317
Toll Revenue for Capital - NVTC Commuter Choice Program	0	0	0	4,025,000	4,025,000
VA Dept. of Rail and Public Transportation (VDRPT) Operating ⁶	329,723	0	4,960,682	2,785,639	2,785,639
VA Dept. of Rail and Public Transportation (VDRPT) Capital	0	0	5,080,000	0	0
North County Bus Service - CIA ⁷	1,272,251	1,201,295	1,201,295	1,184,861	1,184,861
DRPT TRIP ⁸	0	0	1,952,320	1,939,320	1,939,320
Subtotal - Revenue from the Commonwealth	\$44,567,586	\$34,313,072	\$70,330,416	\$48,947,562	\$48,947,562
Total Revenue	\$47,677,153	\$38,455,738	\$74,756,699	\$52,992,020	\$52,992,020
Transfers In:					
General Fund (10001)	\$40,633,472	\$42,965,059	\$42,965,059	\$42,965,059	\$42,965,059
Metro Operations and Construction (30000)	3,279,574	3,410,757	3,410,757	3,547,187	3,547,187
Contributed Roadway Improvements (30040) ⁹	181,732	134,000	134,000	179,192	179,192
County and Regional Transportation Projects (40010) ¹⁰	37,400,000	38,522,000	38,522,000	39,677,660	39,677,660
Total Transfers In	\$81,494,778	\$85,031,816	\$85,031,816	\$86,369,098	\$86,369,098
Total Available	\$154,321,656	\$138,309,554	\$185,301,206	\$144,472,575	\$144,472,575

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Category	FY 2022 Actual	FY 2023 Adopted Budget Plan	FY 2023 Revised Budget Plan	FY 2024 Advertised Budget Plan	FY 2024 Adopted Budget Plan
Expenditures:					
Fairfax Connector					
Fairfax Connector Operating Expenses					
Transit Administration	\$2,321,663	\$3,698,832	\$6,529,245	\$4,750,286	\$4,750,286
Huntington Division	39,463,077	41,358,885	41,358,230	44,583,101	44,583,101
Reston-Herndon Division	33,114,387	36,410,301	36,523,303	39,145,361	39,145,361
West Ox Division, County Connector ¹¹	28,677,508	31,102,620	35,965,850	34,553,738	34,553,738
Subtotal - Connector Operating Expenses	\$103,576,635	\$112,570,638	\$120,376,628	\$123,032,486	\$123,032,486
Capital Projects	23,187,647	10,828,526	52,913,121	13,612,450	13,612,450
Total Connector Service	\$126,764,282	\$123,399,164	\$173,289,749	\$136,644,936	\$136,644,936
Total WMATA Service	\$386,677	\$600,000	\$500,000	\$380,000	\$380,000
Total Bus Services, Connector and WMATA	\$127,150,959	\$123,999,164	\$173,789,749	\$137,024,936	\$137,024,936
Commuter Rail ¹²	\$1,658,006	\$6,400,000	\$6,400,000	\$5,596,589	\$5,596,589
Total Expenditures	\$128,808,965	\$130,399,164	\$180,189,749	\$142,621,525	\$142,621,525
Total Disbursements	\$128,808,965	\$130,399,164	\$180,189,749	\$142,621,525	\$142,621,525
Ending Balance	\$25,512,691	\$7,910,390	\$5,111,457	\$1,851,050	\$1,851,050
State Aid CARES Credit Reserve ¹³	\$12,131,067	\$7,910,390	\$5,111,457	\$1,851,050	\$1,851,050
Transportation-Related Requirements	13,381,624	0	0	0	0
Unreserved Balance	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0

¹ Miscellaneous revenue includes such items as reimbursement from the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA) for the value of WMATA tokens collected on Fairfax Connector routes, insurance recoveries, and miscellaneous developer contributions.

² Fare revenue is received either directly by the County as SmarTrip fare payments, or indirectly through contractor billings.

³ WMATA reimburses the County for its share of space at the West Ox Bus Operations Center, a joint use facility for WMATA and the County Connector. WMATA initiated operations from this site in Spring 2009. Funding is reduced due to decreased utilization by WMATA.

⁴ State Aid for mass transit is disbursed to NVTC, where it is made available to the County.

⁵ State Aid to support the Fairfax Connector Bus Replacement Program. Funds will be transferred to the County and appropriated for the purchase of replacement buses as scheduled in the multi-year replacement cycle.

⁶ Reimbursement from the Department of Rail and Public Transit (DRPT) in the amount of \$2.8 million supports operating assistance for I-95 Express Lanes (Route 393), I-66 Outside the Beltway (Route 660), and I-495 NEXT (Route 798) bus service.

⁷ North County Bus Service provides public transit services between the George Bush Center for Intelligence and McLean Metrorail Station.

⁸ DRPT's Transit Ridership Incentive Program (TRIP) is a new statewide grant program designed to support improvements to regional connectivity and ridership by supporting zero fare and subsidized fare pilot programs. Fairfax County has received a three-year grant to support a pilot low-fare program for income eligible riders.

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⁹ FY 2024 reflects a transfer of \$179,192 from Fund 30040, Contributed Roadway Improvements, to support shuttle bus service in the Franconia-Springfield area. The transfer is based on actual receipts in the previous fiscal year and may fluctuate as proffer revenue changes. This service was previously provided as a WMATA route and these funds were transferred to Fund 30000, Metro Operations and Construction. Beginning in FY 2022, Fairfax Connector began operating the service and received the contributions.

¹⁰ The FY 2024 transfer of \$39.7 million from Fund 40010, County and Regional Transportation Projects, is consistent with a transportation funding list periodically updated and approved by the Board of Supervisors. Of this total, \$27.4 million is from Commercial and Industrial (C&I) real estate revenue and \$12.3 million is from HB 2313 local revenues.

¹¹ In order to account for revenues and expenditures in the proper fiscal year, audit adjustments have been reflected as an increase of \$108,000.00 to FY 2022 expenditures for bus operations at the West Ox garage. The Annual Comprehensive Financial Report (ACFR) reflects all audit adjustments in FY 2022. Details of the audit adjustments are included in Attachment VI the *FY 2023 Third Quarter Review*.

¹² Fairfax County participates in the Virginia Railway Express (VRE) Master Agreement and provides an annual subsidy to VRE operations and construction.

¹³ As a result of the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) regional transit services support included in the Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Security (CARES) Act, Fairfax County received \$26.3 million in credits allocated by WMATA to support the loss of passenger fare revenue, capital, operating and other County transit-related expenses to prevent, prepare for and respond to the COVID-19 pandemic. This credit is reflected in Fund 30000, Metro Operations and Construction, and reduced the annual state aid contribution for Fairfax County's share of its WMATA subsidy for FY 2022. These credits have remained at NVTC. During FY 2021, \$8.6 million of these credits were utilized and in FY 2022, \$5.6 million of the CARES credits were utilized to offset anticipated reductions in Fairfax Connector SmarTrip and cash fare revenue. An additional \$6.9 million was used for the same purpose in FY 2023 and a further \$3.2 million is being used for FY 2024. The remaining \$2.0 million will be held in reserve for future years or unanticipated issues.

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SUMMARY OF CAPITAL PROJECTS

Project	Total Project Estimate	FY 2022 Actual Expenditures	FY 2023 Revised Budget	FY 2024 Advertised Budget Plan	FY 2024 Adopted Budget Plan
Backlick Rd North Park-N-Ride Bike Improvement (TS-000027)	\$121,760	\$4,570.40	\$116,606.31	\$0	\$0
Burke VRE Park and Ride Renovation (2G40-195-000)	325,000	0.00	75,000.00	250,000	250,000
Bus Garage Facility Renovations (TF-000059)	1,650,000	0.00	0.00	1,650,000	1,650,000
Bus Shelter Replacement (TS-000022)	937,466	9,750.00	184,373.36	100,000	100,000
Clean Air Communities Program Local (TF-000056)	2,197,261	130,292.04	2,066,969.21	0	0
Connector Intelligent Transportation Sys (3G40-003-000)	11,115,580	582,527.80	2,371,808.58	0	0
FAIRFAX CONNECTOR 495NEXT BUSES DRPT (TF-000058)	5,200,000	0.00	5,200,000.00	0	0
Fairfax Connector Buses - Capital (TF-000048)	46,495,744	18,837,256.14	21,446,575.53	0	0
Fairfax Connector Electric Buses (TF-000057)	11,639,436	0.00	11,639,436.00	0	0
Fairfax Connector Support Vehicles (TF-000053)	626,399	160,571.10	315,828.07	150,000	150,000
Farebox Upgrade/Replacement (TF-000039)	8,074,944	0.00	4,088,039.23	3,454,700	3,454,700
Mid-Life Overhaul (TF-000040)	19,027,676	2,906,686.36	4,146,211.48	2,600,000	2,600,000
NVTC Commuter Choice I-66 Route 598 Buses (TF-000061)	4,069,500	0.00	0.00	4,069,500	4,069,500
NVTC Commuter Choice I-95/395 Route 391 Buses (TF-000060)	678,250	0.00	0.00	678,250	678,250
Shop Equipment (TF-000051)	2,074,597	363,216.44	993,701.06	660,000	660,000
West Ox Maintenance Renovation (TF-000049)	470,000	192,777.00	268,572.00	0	0
Total	\$114,703,613	\$23,187,647.28	\$52,913,120.83	\$13,612,450	\$13,612,450