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*Adjunct member

Date: October 20, 2010

To: National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board

From: David J. Robertson, COG Executive Director

Subject: Street Smart Program

Request

I am requesting guidance from the National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board (TPB) concerning FY 2012 funding from COG member governments for the Street Smart program. This information is requested by the COG Budget and Finance Committee for its November 10, 2010 meeting.

Background

The Metropolitan Washington Council of Government (COG) has adopted for many years a fiscal year membership dues policy that is based a per capita membership assessment rate, multiplied by the adopted population of each member government, as provided to COG annually by the city or county manager.

As of FY 2009, the membership assessment rate was \$0.65721 and yielded total assessments of \$3.2 million. COG froze assessments at the FY 2009 level in both FY 2010 and FY 2011 in recognition of the difficult fiscal challenges facing its member local governments.

COG's FY 2011 adopted budget is approximately \$25.9 million. The transportation planning program overseen by the TPB receives approximately 37 percent of the \$3.2 million in membership assessments as match for state and federal funds. The COG Budget and Finance Committee is presently reviewing management's revenue and expense recommendations, including membership assessments, for FY 2012.

In the past, COG has employed supplemental or voluntary assessments or fees from its member local governments for programs that may not have been considered part of the core regional work program. Based on feedback from the COG Board of Directors, management has been asked to integrate, where appropriate, supplemental fees into the COG Fiscal Year Work Program and Budget. In recent years, several programs, including foster care and cooperative purchasing, have been folded into the program, reducing the number and size of supplemental or voluntary requests.

Street Smart Funding

TPB established the Street Smart pedestrian safety program in 2002 and requested voluntary contributions from COG member governments at a level of \$0.05 multiplied by the adopted COG population for the Fiscal Year Work Program and Budget. Over the years, that approach has yielded varying levels of local funding support to match federal funds available to support this program. In FY 2010, COG members provided \$65,700 in local funds to match \$393,000 in federal funds and \$150,000 provided by WMATA.

Several COG members and jurisdictions have expressed frustration with supplemental or voluntary fees and have asked for one payment request from COG that is inclusive of all assessments of COG's general purpose local governments (some of COG's environmental programs retain a separate fee assessed of water and sewer agencies or other environmental agencies).

In June 2010, Alexandria Mayor William Euille specifically requested that COG include the Street Smart program in the COG Fiscal Year Work Program and Budget (letter attached).

Budget and Finance Committee

At its October 13 meeting, the FY 2012 Budget and Finance Committee tentatively recommended a freeze in membership assessments again in FY 2012, in light of continued economic challenges facing COG member governments. The Committee will meet again on November 10 to recommend a FY 2012 budget and membership assessment to the COG Board of Directors for action in January 2011.

However, the Committee was mindful of both the value of the Street Smart program and the rationale for minimizing or eliminating supplemental or voluntary assessments. The Committee asked management to prepare an optional FY 2012 membership assessment proposal that would include a modest increase in COG membership assessments to yield revenue to maintain the Street Smart program and enable TPB to discontinue the practice of requesting supplemental or voluntary assessments.

Next Steps

TPB guidance is requested in the following areas:

1. Support for continuing the Street Smart program and including funding in the FY 2012 COG Work Program and Budget, rather than funding through continued TPB requested supplemental or voluntary assessments.
2. The level of additional FY 2012 total membership assessment increase required to meet Street Smart program goals. (The current per capita assessment rate for COG members is \$0.65721. An increase of one cent per capita would generate \$49,000 in additional revenue, an increase of 1.5 cents would generate \$73,500, and an increase of two cents would generate \$98,000).
3. Written communication or recommendations from the TPB to the FY 2012 Budget and Finance Committee concerning this matter.

The TPB response will be shared with the Committee at its November 10 meeting when it is expected to approve a FY 2012 membership assessment and budget for COG Board of Directors review and consideration in January 2011.

I apologize for not being present at your meeting today to discuss this matter with you personally and I look forward to your input to management and the Committee, and ultimately, the COG Board of Directors concerning the Street Smart program.



City of Alexandria, Virginia
301 King Street, Suite 2300
Alexandria, Virginia 22314



William D. Euille
Mayor

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June 15, 2010

Mr. Ron Kirby
Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments
777 North Capitol Street, N.E. Suite 300
Washington, DC 20002-4290

Dear Mr. Kirby:

The City of Alexandria is providing this letter to outline our financial commitment to the FY 2011 (fall 2010 and spring 2011) Street Smart Safety Campaign. We are pleased to inform you that Alexandria will once again contribute \$7,000 to the Street Smart Safety Campaign. We are pleased to partner with other local jurisdictions on this important annual effort and pleased to learn of the program's effectiveness. However, we believe that this annual contribution should be worked into the Council of Governments' regular budget and not be a separate requested and billed item.

Please forward the invoice to:

Mr. Yon Lambert
Principal Transportation Planner
Transportation & Environmental Services
301 King Street, Room 3200
Alexandria, Va. 22314

Should you have any questions about Alexandria's efforts, please contact Mr. Lambert at yon.lambert@alexandriava.gov or 703.746-4081.

Thank you for your efforts on this program that addresses pedestrian and bicyclist safety, one of our region's most critical needs.

Sincerely,


William D. Euille
Mayor

cc: David Robertson, Executive Director, Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments

"Home Town of George Washington and Robert E. Lee"