

# City Of Alexandria, Virginia

## MEMORANDUM

DATE: APRIL 2, 2008

TO: THE HONORABLE MAYOR AND MEMBERS OF CITY COUNCIL

FROM: JAMES K. HARTMANN, CITY MANAGER

SUBJECT: BUDGET MEMO # 57: FY 2009 DASH DISCRETIONARY SUPPLEMENTAL BUDGET REQUESTS

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This memo is presented in response to Councilman Wilson's question about the FY 2009 supplemental budget requests submitted to the City by the Alexandria Transit Company (DASH). DASH submitted four supplemental requests for the FY 2009 budget. These requests could cost up to \$706,000 in FY 2009 depending on the individual options selected. DASH reports that all four of these requests could be operated with the existing fleet of 62 buses due to the fact that they are primarily adding service during non-peak periods when additional buses are available.

The supplemental requests were approved by the DASH Board of Directors on November 28, 2007. In response to the new requests, the City Manager's Proposed Budget included \$130,000 in FY 2009 NVTA funding for expansion to DASH service (see Budget Memo #7). The funding was not specifically tied to any of the four DASH requests, but instead to increased operating costs as determined by DASH. The City's NVTA plan included this amount as an annual funding stream with a 5% annual cost escalator. This funding (FY 2009 – FY 2014) was to be used to address the highest priority service expansion needs as determined by DASH staff and presented to the ATC Board of Directors. The replacement of this funding has been placed in Tier V in terms of prioritizing the lost NVTA/VDOT revenues (see Budget Memo #27).

The supplemental requests were prioritized by DASH as follows:

1. The highest priority request as submitted by DASH was a request to increase midday frequency from 60 minutes to 30 minutes and provide new 60 minute Saturday service on the DASH AT6 route (King Street Metro to NVCC via King Street). The total cost for this request is \$96,000 (\$62,000 for weekday service and \$34,000 for Saturday service).

Service on the midday AT6 route has been experiencing some overcrowding on some trips. This overcrowding is primarily generated by Northern Virginia Community College (NVCC). The 2001 Regional Bus Study also identified 30 minute midday frequency as the minimum desirable

level on this type of route. Also, the City and DASH have received requests from the Stonegate and Park Center communities (which are served by the AT6 route) for Saturday service to their communities. This option would require the operation of one additional bus during midday and Saturdays, although no additional buses would need to be acquired.

2. The second priority request from DASH was to increase Saturday frequency on the AT1 (Eisenhower Ave. Metro to Seminary Plaza via Eisenhower Ave., Van Dorn St., and Beauregard St.) and AT2 (Braddock Road Metro to Landmark Plaza via Old Town, Seminary Rd., and Beauregard St.) routes to 30 minutes. This request would require \$98,000 in funding.

In January of 2008, the AT2 route was split into two routes (AT1 & AT2) in order to reduce overcrowding and improve on-time performance. Both routes are expected to be at the top of the system in productivity (AT2 is currently the second best). This Saturday service addition is expected to attract new riders to transit. Three additional buses would be operated on Saturdays with this option, but this could be covered by DASH's current fleet.

3. DASH's third priority request was for a new crosstown route operating from Landmark Mall to Potomac Yard Shopping Center via Beatley Library, Foxchase, Alexandria Hospital, Bradlee, Parkfairfax, and Arlandria. This request had four individual options: (a.) full weekday service, \$327,000; (b.) weekday midday service only, \$164,000; (c.) Saturday service, \$67,000; and (d.) Sunday service, \$49,000.

The 2001 Regional Bus Study, 2002 Crystal City/Potomac Yard Transit Alternatives Analysis, and the 2005 DASH Comprehensive Operational Analysis all identified the need for crosstown service in Alexandria. The DASH bus system was originally set up to feed Metrorail stations and provide neighborhood circulation. It did not provide crosstown service that could potentially improve mobility and connectivity in the City, as well as reduce travel time for certain trips.

This option would provide 60 minute service during peak and off-peak hours since it would not serve any Metrorail stations. If demand on this route was to increase, additional funding could provide for more frequent service. This new service could significantly improve transit travel times by up to 30 to 60 minutes for some individuals and could also attract new transit riders. Two additional buses operating at all times would be necessary for this option. The availability of the three Dash About buses would provide the flexibility in the fleet to provide this service.

4. The fourth and final priority request for DASH was to increase midday and Saturday frequency on the AT10 route (King Street Metro to Potomac Yard via Commonwealth Ave., Mt Vernon Ave., and Reed Ave.) from 60 minutes to 30 minutes at a total cost of \$103,000. Increasing weekday frequency would require \$70,000 and increasing Saturday frequency would require \$33,000.

The AT10 route has proven more productive than originally anticipated; it frequently places as the third most productive route in the DASH system. The 2001 Regional Bus Study identified 30

minute service for midday and Saturday operations as the minimum desirable level of service for this type of route. Increased frequency has the potential to generate additional ridership, which could in turn increase passengers per mile and passengers per hour for the AT10. This option would require the use of one additional bus during midday and Saturdays, but no additional buses would need to be purchased.

In summary, the four supplemental requests and their elements are:

<b>Route</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Cost</b>
1. AT6 Route	a. Weekday midday 30-minute service	\$62,000
	b. Saturday 30-minute service	\$34,000
2. AT1-AT2 Route	a. Saturday 30-minute service	\$98,000
3. New Crosstown Route	a. Full weekday service	\$327,000
	b. Weekday midday only service	\$164,000
	c. Saturday service	\$67,000
	d. Sunday service	\$49,000
4. AT10 Route	a. Weekday midday 30-minute service	\$70,000
	b. Saturday 30-minute service	\$33,000
<b>TOTAL W/ OPTION 3a *</b>		<b>\$740,000</b>
<b>TOTAL W/ OPTION 3b *</b>		<b>\$577,000</b>

\* Options 3a and 3b are mutually exclusive; only one of the two can be selected