



COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA

Commonwealth Transportation Board

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Agenda item # 2

RESOLUTION OF THE COMMONWEALTH TRANSPORTATION BOARD

February 21, 2023

Made By: Ms. Hynes, Seconded By: Mr. Yates,

Action: Motion Carried

Title: Authorization for the Commissioner of Highways to Enter into a Memorandum of Agreement with the United States of America, acting by and through the Department of the Interior's National Park Service (NPS), the Department of Transportation's Federal Highway Administration Eastern Federal Lands Highway Division (FHWA-EFL), and the County of Arlington, Virginia for the Mount Vernon Trail North Enhancements Project (UPC 119478 #SMART22).

WHEREAS, the United States Department of the Interior National Park Service administers the national park system of the United States and George Washington Memorial Parkway, a unit of the NPS, maintains and operates the 18 mile Mount Vernon Trail (MVT); and

WHEREAS, NPS' *George Washington Memorial Parkway: Mount Vernon Trail Corridor Study*, conducted by the US Department of Transportation's Volpe National Transportation Systems Center and released in May 2020, identified opportunities to improve the MVT; and

WHEREAS, Arlington County, in collaboration with NPS and pursuant to § 33.2-214.1 of the *Code of Virginia*, submitted an application to request funding for the Mount Vernon Trail North Enhancements project to SMART SCALE, the Commonwealth's transportation project prioritization process; and

Resolution of the Board

Authorization for the Commissioner of Highways to enter into a Memorandum of Agreement for the Mount Vernon Trail North Enhancements Project

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WHEREAS, VDOT shall provide funding in an amount of up to \$28,980,424, as allocated by the Commonwealth Transportation Board (CTB) in the Fiscal Year 2023-2028 Six-Year Improvement Program for the implementation of the Project (UPC 119478), and have no further obligation to pay Project costs in excess of \$28,980,424; and

WHEREAS, NPS shall provide funding in the amount of \$4,000,000 for the implementation of the Project and, subject to the availability of funds appropriated by Congress, identify and allocate any funds needed to complete the Project in excess of the Project's estimated cost of \$32,980,424; and

WHEREAS, NPS and Arlington County have requested that FHWA-EFL, using funds provided by NPS and the CTB, design and construct the Project; and

WHEREAS, subsection A of § 33.2-221 of the Code of Virginia authorizes the CTB to enter into all contracts or agreements with the United States government; and

WHEREAS, VDOT requests that the CTB approve and authorize the Commissioner of Highways to enter into and execute the Memorandum of Agreement among VDOT, NPS, FHWA-EFL, Arlington County, and, potentially, the City of Alexandria, to implement the Project.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that pursuant to § 33.2-221(A) of the *Code of Virginia*, the CTB hereby authorizes the Commissioner of Highways or his designee to enter into the Memorandum of Agreement for the Project, attached hereto as Exhibit A, with such changes and additions as the Commissioner deems necessary.

CTB Decision Brief

Authorization for the Commissioner of Highways to Enter into a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) with the United States of America, acting by and through the Department of the Interior's National Park Service (NPS) and the Department of Transportation's Federal Highway Administration Eastern Federal Lands Highway Division (FHWA-EFL), and the County of Arlington, Virginia (County) for the Mount Vernon Trail North Enhancements Project.

Issues: Pursuant to subsection A of § 33.2-221 of the Code of Virginia, the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) is requesting that the Commonwealth Transportation Board (CTB) authorize the Commissioner of Highways to enter into a MOA with NPS, FHWA-EFL, and the County for improvements to the George Washington Memorial Parkway's Mount Vernon Trail (MVT).

Facts: The MVT is a popular recreation resource and critical regional transportation connection. The trail hosts over one million pedestrians and bicyclists annually, including commuters and recreational users. In May 2020, the U.S. Department of Transportation's Volpe National Transportation Systems Center released a report titled *George Washington Memorial Parkway: Mount Vernon Trail Corridor Study*, and noted that the MVT suffers from deteriorating pavement and bridges, limited accessibility features, and outdated signage and striping. These attributes, combined with increasing usage and user behavior, contribute to risk exposure and considerable crash history. This study also outlined recommendations to alleviate these issues.

Arlington County submitted an application based on these recommendations, on behalf of NPS, for the Mount Vernon Trail North Enhancements project to SMART SCALE. The proposed project, consisting of the northern 5-mile segment of the MVT located in Arlington (3.3 miles) and Alexandria (1.7 miles) between Theodore Roosevelt Island and Tide Lock Park, will include widening the paved surface, reconstructing and widening three MVT bridges, and realigning four trail intersections and the "S" curve near Daingerfield Island (collectively, the Project). NPS and the County have requested that FHWA-EFLHD design and construct the Project.

To accomplish this Project, the NPS, FHWA-EFLHD, VDOT, and the County have prepared a MOA that establishes the roles, responsibilities, funding, and procedures for design and construction.

- The NPS administers the national park system of the United States and George Washington Memorial Parkway, a unit of the NPS, owns, maintains, and operates the 18-mile MVT, which is located in Arlington County, Virginia; the City of Alexandria, Virginia; Fairfax County, Virginia; and Washington, District of Columbia. Improvements to the portion of the MVT located within Washington, District of Columbia, will be funded and administered separately from this MOA.
- In collaboration with NPS and pursuant to Va. Code § 33.2-214.1, the County submitted an application to request funding for the Project to SMART SCALE, the Commonwealth's prioritization process.
- The Project estimate is \$32,980,424 and the County, on behalf of NPS, proposed that NPS provide a \$4,000,000 contribution of leveraged Federal Lands Transportation Program funds pursuant to the SMART SCALE application submitted by the County. The CTB has allocated \$28,980,424 in the Fiscal Year 2023-2028 Six-Year Improvement Program for the Project (UPC 119478).
- FHWA has a long-standing 1983 *Interagency Agreement Between the National Park Service and the Federal Highway Administration Relating to Park Roads and Parkways* and related administrative

procedures to support the NPS in the development of transportation projects. NPS has entered into a separate agreement with FHWA-EFL for administration of the Project.

Recommendation: VDOT recommends that the CTB approve and authorize the Commissioner of Highways, or his designee, to execute the MOA among the County, NPS, FHWA-EFLHD, and, if requested, the City of Alexandria, with such changes as the Commissioner deems necessary or appropriate.

Action Required by CTB: Subsection A of § 33.2-221 of the *Code of Virginia* requires a majority of the CTB's members to authorize the Commissioner of Highways to enter into the MOA.

Result, if Approved: The Commissioner of Highways will be authorized to enter into the MOA and the Project will proceed.

Options: Approve, Deny, or Defer.

Public Comments/Reactions: N/A