



WHEREAS, the Safe and Healthy Streets Commission was founded in 1966 to formulate a transportation safety program for the City of Richmond and to conduct quarterly reviews of the operation and effect of such a program;

WHEREAS, the Council believes that it is in the best interests of the residents of the City of Richmond that the Council continue to support the efforts of the Commission;

WHEREAS, the annual average for daily trips by bicycle grew 37% nationwide, 75% in the Richmond metro area, and 72% in the Norfolk area between 2019-2022, indicating a significant shift in how people are utilizing transportation networks;

WHEREAS, the City of Richmond has diligently applied for transportation funding through the Commonwealth of Virginia's Smart Scale application process in effort to leverage all available funding resources to advance an equitable, multi-modal transportation system providing for safe walking, biking, transit, and vehicular travel;

WHEREAS, proposed changes to the current application process could harm the City of Richmond's ability to successfully obtain key funding to further much needed infrastructure improvements;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Commission recommends to Council to formally advise the Commonwealth Transportation Board of the following concerns regarding proposed Smart Scale application process changes:

- A. **Expand High Priority Projects (HPP) program list:** The proposed list of eligible projects should not be narrowly focused on vehicular travel projects. Improving pedestrian networks, bikeways, and transit corridors contribute multiple benefits including positive economic impact, strengthening multi-modal systems, mitigating climate change impacts, and improved population health, all of which are worthy and necessary benefits of a successful transportation system.
- B. **Recognize ADA compliance as "new build" and eligible for Smart Scale funding:** Like many localities across the Commonwealth, the City of Richmond has miles of non-ADA compliant sidewalk infrastructure that was installed prior to the passage of the 1990 Americans with Disabilities Act. Retrofitting a jurisdiction's sidewalk network to access transit and services is a significant and high priority project. The installation of accessible sidewalk clear width and ramps at sidewalk intersections should be considered as "new build" and thereby be eligible for Smart Scale consideration. The safe, just, and dignified movement of persons with disabilities across our transportation network is undeniably important.
- C. **Retain the existing cap on applications at 4 and 10 applications:** Major projects are often broken up into phases and submitted over time. Capping the number of applications allowed to be submitted may negatively impact the City's ability to organize funding in a successful manner. It limits the amount of Smart Scale funding that may be leveraged. It would also significantly impact pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure projects laid out in the approved Richmond Bicycle Master Plan, Richmond 300 Master Plan, Connect RVA 2045 regional transportation plan, and developing Richmond Connects Multimodal Plan.
- D. **Smart Scale Projects should be selected based upon merit:** When a jurisdiction is successful over 5 rounds of Smart Scale, there is a tremendous effort needed to deliver these important projects. The City of Richmond should not be penalized for successfully obtaining Smart Scale funding for its transportation needs. Each Smart



Scale application should be compared to all other applications in a particular round and funded based upon its merits and not the Smart Scale funding that a jurisdiction has available and is in the process of delivering.

- E. **Modify Staff’s Recommended Approach to Round 6:** If all of the proposed staff changes were adopted, the Round 5 analysis revealed that both of the City of Richmond’s transit improvement projects - a section of the Fall Line trail and the Gillies Creek Greenway - would not have received Smart Scale funding, resulting a net loss of \$33M. High frequency transit and multimodal connections are a priority within the City of Richmond transportation network and should be supported by the state funding process, not be discounted or formulaically removed from future funding consideration. These are the right kind of transportation projects to be selected for a future with dense, sustainable land use growth. Removing Step 2 removed the transit improvement projects along corridors that are zoned for dense mixed land use. Our supported development with a grid pattern is much more environmentally friendly and has the least impacts when compared to other development patterns. Multimodal approaches to support dense land use on grid patterns are more resilient and improve travel time reliability for people not just vehicle movements;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that people who walk, bike, or use transit deserve additional emphasis in the City’s and Commonwealth’s transportation budget because they are vulnerable users when compared to those with vehicular occupant protection.