

## **City has high hopes for stimulus plan**

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**ATTLEBORO** - Mayor Kevin Dumas and the Attleboro Redevelopment Authority hope President Barack Obama's proposed \$800 billion-plus economic stimulus plan can turn red ink black for the city's cash-strapped industrial business park project.

Two roads for the 189-acre park off County Street are on the list of 13 projects the city submitted for funding under the president's plan that's working its way through Congress, Dumas said Thursday.

The president's multi-billion dollar proposal was approved by the House, but still needs an OK from the Senate.

Under the legislation, projects must be ready for construction within 180 days.

Finding funds for IBP roads has spawned a fractious political battle between Dumas and the ARA over leadership of the project that's bleeding red ink to the tune of at least \$3.2 million. Dumas claims ARA leadership led to the big debt.

But with communities in every state in the nation submitting similar lists, no one knows if the projects will get any money, said Dumas, who served on the state's task force to come up with a list of municipal projects.

More than 4,000 projects have been submitted by cities and towns throughout Massachusetts, alone, he said.

The city also wants money for its ongoing streetscape project, improvements to the South Attleboro Veterans Memorial and Tilda Stone parks, an addition to the police station, new roofs for Hyman Fine and Hill-Roberts schools, restoration of the standpipe at Oakhill, a water line on Highland Avenue, a sewer line on Oakhill Avenue, new windows and electrical and heating and ventilation systems for the high school, and a new animal shelter and public works yard.

Cost estimates weren't required for the submissions, and the mayor didn't have a total immediately available.

Meanwhile, local highway and transit officials are making a list of their own.

The Southeastern Massachusetts Metropolitan Planning Organization gave its preliminary stamp to more than \$76 million in highway stimulus spending and another \$13 million for mass transit-related projects and equipment.

Most of the money would come from an estimated \$500 million that would be allocated to the state for highway projects under the proposed stimulus plan.

The proposed spending includes \$6.3 million for the Greater Attleboro Taunton Regional Transit Authority that would pay for the renovation of the rail passenger station and the construction of a passenger platform and walkway in Attleboro, along with several new buses and vans to replace aging GATRA equipment, agency Administrator Frank Gay said.

It would also pay for new vehicles and an upgrade of the authority's Taunton bus facility.

Road projects endorsed by the planning organization Thursday include \$66.8 million to construct a new interchange for Route 24 in Freetown and \$9.6 million to resurface parts of Route 6 in Swansea and Westport.