



CITY OF HARRISONBURG COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

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April 4, 2022

**TO THE MEMBERS OF CITY COUNCIL
CITY OF HARRISONBURG, VIRGINIA**

SUBJECT: *Consider approving the FY 2022-2023 through 2026-2027 Capital Improvement Program*

**EXTRACT FROM MINUTES OF HARRISONBURG PLANNING COMMISSION
MEETING HELD ON:** March 9, 2022

Chair Finnegan read the request and asked staff to review.

Mr. Fletcher said the Capital Improvement Program (CIP) is a multi-year presentation of planned capital projects of \$50,000 or greater with an appropriate financing plan to fund the projects. The CIP is prepared annually to facilitate planning and to set priorities among capital improvement needs over a subsequent five-year period. The CIP is designed to identify projects for all City departments, as well as for Harrisonburg City Public Schools, for which funding has already been committed or is being sought for some time within the five-year planning period.

Planning Commission's objective is to review and evaluate the CIP and, once the document is in an acceptable format, recommend the document for approval to City Council. Remember that the CIP is not a budget and inclusion of projects in the document does not guarantee that such projects will be funded by the City or by any external sources in the year presented or at the level proposed. The actual commitment of funds by the City for any capital item comes with the approval of the annual budget for each fiscal year. However, the CIP serves as an important planning tool for formulating the capital portion of the annual budget.

As can be observed by reviewing previous CIP documents, the CIP is not a static plan. It is part of annual planning and programming, where after each passing year, another year is added to the planning period to maintain the five-year forecast. Each year costs, needs, and revenue sources are reevaluated.

Staff emailed Planning Commission draft project information sheets in December 2021. In early February the full draft of the CIP was provided to Commissioners and uploaded to the City's website. Staff requested that Commissioners submit comments and questions to staff prior to the

Planning Commission review so that responses could be prepared and provided in advance of the meeting. The questions and responses were included in the agenda packet.

Mr. Fletcher walked through some of the tables in the CIP, highlighting the various sections of the Project Request Form, explained how priorities may change over time, and how some of the projects might eventually be funded. He then offered to answer any questions.

Chair Finnegan asked if there were any questions for staff.

Chair Finnegan said I have a question about ARPA (American Rescue Plan Act) funds. We have heard about, and it has been in the headlines, there is a meeting at Simms to talk about how to best use the funds. There is an online survey. Is there overlap between those ARPA funds and could they go to pay for some of this?

Mr. Fletcher said everything that is in the CIP does not reflect ARPA, at all. We did that on purpose to reflect if ARPA did not exist, this would be our demand. ARPA funds could be utilized and, in fact, one of those projects is already known, Fire Station 5, that we are hoping to use ARPA funds for.

Councilmember Dent said I put in a request to swap the order that we are now planning to build Fire Station 5 first and refurbish or replace Fire Station 4 later. I believe your answer was that we are pretending ARPA does not exist, essentially.

Mr. Fletcher said that was the answer. I am trying to remember the date in which we were thinking that the physical construction of Fire Station 5 would begin. It is quite possible that once we allocate funding from ARPA, then we go through the request for proposals (RFP) and then the design, it might end up almost aligning with the dates that are shown. I think it was 2024 or 2025 for Fire Station 5.

Commissioner Whitten said you have to look at ARPA money just like a non-profit would look at grant money. You cannot make that part of your budget. You cannot plan on that because, hopefully, that is never going to happen again. I understand why we need to use those funds wisely, but we also need to not depend on that.

Councilmember Dent said my biggest question was, again, where is the solar? Where are the electric vehicles (EV)? We had that discussion about... I think you proposed putting something in the introduction to say that sustainability, renewable energy and so on should be considered with each City project that is brought to City Council.

Mr. Fletcher said it is an option if Planning Commission deems that detail to be warranted in the document itself.

Councilmember Dent said I would appreciate that just in the footnote. I understand that for the coming year, the CIP team is going to be embedding the Environmental and Sustainability Manager to be a part of the process of evaluating and proposing sustainability measures. I look forward to seeing that. I was starting to think, why would I even approve something that does not

even have sustainability in it for the next five years when we really need to be taking strong measures. I understand that it has been developed over time. Some of these things have been carried over, over time. There are a few things in there that already are taking steps, like the electric school busses and planning overtime for expanding that. I can reluctantly support it for now and look forward to having more sustainability throughout all the projects next year.

Mr. Fletcher asked what specific type of statement would you like in the document?

Councilmember Dent referred to her notes and read

If desired, recommend that there be a statement included in the introduction that states that solar panels and other environmental resilient and sustainable infrastructure should be considered with all City projects.

Mr. Fletcher asked does that begin at the bottom of page eight?

Councilmember Dent said it is on page nine. I consider sustainability as a strong factor in approving any City projects that come before us.

Mr. Fletcher said if you give me leeway, I will work that into the introduction where it is appropriate in the context of the paragraph.

Councilmember Dent said yes.

Chair Finnegan said obviously this will be in the public record, but I wanted to draw attention to the question that I asked about speed cushions. That is something that comes up again and again on the requests that we hear, concerns about traffic. I share those concerns. Vehicles are becoming bigger and bigger. My neighbor has a truck that I can barely see over the hood, and I am six feet two inches tall. I think the City needs to do a better job of protecting pedestrians and cyclists, and making it a safe City to walk around. It is important for us to keep in mind, the cost to the City that they said in here (CIP), Public Works responded that the cost per speed cushion is approximately \$1,500 to \$2,000. If you are a parent of a child that got hit by a car, I am sure that is a low price. We need to make sure that people are not speeding through the neighborhoods and the developments that we are approving here.

Commissioner Baugh moved to recommend approval of the CIP with the additional language proposed by Councilmember Dent.

Councilmember Dent seconded the motion.

All members voted in favor of approving the CIP as amended. The recommendation will move forward to City Council on April 12, 2022.