



**CITY OF HARRISONBURG**  
**COMMUNITY**  
**DEVELOPMENT**

409 SOUTH MAIN STREET, HARRISONBURG, VA 22801  
OFFICE (540) 432-7700 • FAX (540) 432-7777

April 5, 2021

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

**SUBJECT:**

Consider recommendation of the FY 2021-2022 Through 2025-2026 Capital Improvement Program to City Council.

**EXTRACT FROM MINUTES OF HARRISONBURG PLANNING COMMISSION**  
**MEETING HELD ON: March 10, 2021**

Chair Finnegan read the request and asked staff to review.

Mr. Fletcher said that there is so much effort, behind the scenes, on the Capital Improvement Program (CIP). We condense it to summarize what the CIP is, it feels like we are not providing enough information. I would like to express my appreciation to the numerous City employees that work to put this information together. This project officially kicks off in July every year. We try to have it in final form by the first part of the year. There are often complex issues that delay the release, but we always communicate and coordinate. There is more that goes into this than the four CIP Committee members which includes myself, the City Manager, the Deputy City Manager, the Assistant to the City Manager and the Finance Director.

The 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.



## CITY OF HARRISONBURG COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

409 SOUTH MAIN STREET, HARRISONBURG, VA 22801

OFFICE (540) 432-7700 • FAX (540) 432-7777

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 2020 and January 2021 and requested that Commissioners submit comments and questions to staff. The full draft of the CIP was provided to Commissioners on February 25, 2021 in preparation of the review at the March 10<sup>th</sup> regular meeting. The document was uploaded to the City's website on February 26<sup>th</sup>. Commissioners had until March 3<sup>rd</sup> to submit comments and questions to staff.

Mr. Fletcher requested that the questions and responses submitted be entered into the minutes.

The questions below were submitted prior to the Planning Commission review of the CIP by Council Member Dent via email on Wednesday, March 3, 2021

1. QUESTION: Where's the solar? Given that we'll need to be putting solar panels on roofs of municipal buildings and schools, I'd like to see that factored into existing projects or added as new projects.

Examples of existing projects that need solar: Parking Decks and Lots; Parking decks especially lend themselves to having a solar roof on the top level; Elizabeth Street Deck p. 94 (Future); Downtown Parking Lot Improvement p. 95 (2022, 2023; mostly has to do with paving; why not add solar panels?); Downtown Parking Deck p. 96 (Future).

Schools – Roof Replacements; when we're replacing or repairing a school roof seems like the opportune time to add solar panels; Thomas Harrison Middle School, Roof Replacement p. 106; Spotswood and Waterman Elementary Schools, Roof; Replacement/Repairs p. 110; Not listed here, but I believe Bluestone Elementary School – roof is solar-ready; when is that happening?

### RESPONSE:

With regard to the parking decks and lots, it is anticipated that as the Environmental Action Plan (EAP) is further developed these types of improvements will be considered for inclusion with CIP projects.



## CITY OF HARRISONBURG COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

409 SOUTH MAIN STREET, HARRISONBURG, VA 22801

OFFICE (540) 432-7700 • FAX (540) 432-7777

With regard to school projects, the CIP is developed and approved by the School Board. The School Board is very supportive of installing solar panels at the division's buildings. Currently the plan is to first install solar panels on Bluestone Elementary School using a grant provided by HEC. We have begun the process and are in the planning stage to install PV's at BES.

The roof replacements in the CIP are placeholders since these roofs are nearing the end of their predicted lives. With that being said, we have a roof maintenance plan which has lengthened the lifespan of our roofs. Currently none of our roofs need a complete replacement. When a complete replacement is needed at any of our buildings, we presume the School Board would investigate the installation of PV's.

2. QUESTION:

Bridge maintenance, p. 19; MLK bridge, p. 19.  
Anything "green" to do?

RESPONSE:

No.

3. QUESTION:

HHS2 Road improvements, p. 64 – timing? To coincide with actual building of HHS2 (timeline unknown as of now)?

RESPONSE:

The project will only occur with the construction of HHS2, so its schedule is dependent on the HHS2 schedule.

4. QUESTION:

Purcell Park Phase 1a, p. 73. Wonder about the timing; can some be postponed for budgetary constraints? (Also Phase 1b, p. 84, for later. I've seen the plan and it looks great.)

RESPONSE:

The priority at Purcell Park is reconstruction of the playground, due to safety concerns. Funding for Phase 1a, which addresses the playground reconstruction, is



## CITY OF HARRISONBURG COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

409 SOUTH MAIN STREET, HARRISONBURG, VA 22801

OFFICE (540) 432-7700 • FAX (540) 432-7777

split over two fiscal years. The total cost for Phase 1a is assuming all work is being completed by an outside contractor. However, we know that there will be opportunity to lower this overall cost if some of the reconstruction work can be completed by City work crews. When funding is allocated to proceed with the project and we begin the process to complete construction drawings, we will determine which tasks of Phase 1a can be completed internally.

Additionally, I recently spoke to our representative at the VA Department of Conservation and Recreation. They anticipate development funds being available through the LWCF competitive grant process sometime this calendar year. Details have not yet been released.

5. QUESTION:

Downtown Park, p. 93. Yes, yaay. Only Future though? Any sooner possible?

RESPONSE:

This project was submitted within the full list of project priorities of the Harrisonburg Parks and Recreation Department. We have approximately \$12M in CIP requests for projects through FY27 based on our priorities to complete the needed improvements to our existing facilities and begin implementation of the master plans for Purcell Park, Ralph Sampson Park and Smithland Athletic Complex.

6. QUESTION:

Transit Buses, p. 140. What energy source are we planning to use when we replace the buses? Solar panels on buses?

RESPONSE:

Long term we are looking at electric buses for both Transit and School buses. For transit buses, we are looking at updating our transit development plan with a strategic plan (in Fiscal Year 23/24). The idea is to have a plan in place to start replacing some of our diesel buses with electric buses while taking into consideration infrastructure needs associated with the change to electric power. Our Transit bus provider has an electric bus that is going through Altoona testing in Pennsylvania.



## CITY OF HARRISONBURG COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

409 SOUTH MAIN STREET, HARRISONBURG, VA 22801

OFFICE (540) 432-7700 • FAX (540) 432-7777

The Larson Transportation Institute's Bus Research and Testing Center, located in Altoona, Pennsylvania tests buses for **maintainability, reliability, safety, performance, structural integrity and durability, fuel/energy economy, noise, and emissions**. In accordance with the 1991 Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act, the Center **tests brake performance, bus emissions, and buses using alternative fuels**. Once the Gillig electric bus passes the test the Harrisonburg Department of Public Transportation (HDPT) in line with our strategic plan will consider replacing some of our diesel buses with electric buses. Grants for the purchase of electric buses and related infrastructure needs will be pursued as they become available.

Electric School buses will be also be considered strategically and long term as grants for purchase of buses and related infrastructure needs become available.

7. QUESTION:

What about charging stations for electric vehicles? Not in the plan at the moment; needs to be added.

RESPONSE:

We are currently working on a feasibility study for a Transit/Transfer station and a park and ride lot in the City of Harrisonburg. If funded, the plan is/will include charging stations for electric vehicles and other multi-modal forms of transportation in the transit/transfer center and park and ride. Additionally, as we transition to an electric fleet per our strategic plan, we will consider costs related to having charging stations at HDPT and other suitable locations in the City while consulting with the Harrisonburg Electric Commission (HEC).

The questions below were submitted prior to the Planning Commission review of the CIP by Commissioner Finnegan via email on Wednesday, March 3, 2021.

### General Fund Projects

8. QUESTION:

General question about public works project funding: is the property tax revenue from residential neighborhoods enough to pay for the construction and maintenance costs for roads, curb and gutter, and stormwater and sewer projects in those neighborhoods?



**CITY OF HARRISONBURG**  
**COMMUNITY**  
**DEVELOPMENT**

409 SOUTH MAIN STREET, HARRISONBURG, VA 22801

OFFICE (540) 432-7700 • FAX (540) 432-7777

RESPONSE:

No. VDOT funds a majority of the maintenance activities on City streets. We receive funding based on the number of moving lanes miles of arterial and local/collector streets within the City. The City supplements those funds in order to maintain our roadways at the current level of service. Stormwater (specially items related to Water Quality) are funded through the Stormwater Utility fee.

9. QUESTION:

Pg. 30: How much more expensive are the "decorative black powder" poles than the regular ones?

RESPONSE:

It increases the cost of construction between \$50,000 and \$75,000 per intersection.

10. QUESTION:

Pg. 55: Curb and gutter was recently redone (in 2020) on that stretch of Virginia Ave. Is that part of this project, or will that have to be re-done again when this is implemented? If so, why not wait to re-do that curb and gutter?

RESPONSE:

The maintenance replacement of curb and gutter throughout the City is driven by our Annual Paving program. Yearly, we evaluate all City pavement and develop a 5-year replacement schedule. Once that list is created, we then review all of the curb & gutter and sidewalk along these streets to assess its condition. If it is found that the curb and gutter or sidewalk are in need of replacement, we schedule this replacement in advance of the paving.

This section of Virginia Avenue is in the CIP, but it does not have any funding dedicated to it as of yet, but the pavement along this segment is in need of repaving, which led to the curb and gutter replacement last summer. Any future project will potentially remove portions of this curb and gutter, however, since there is not a funding pathway established yet, we feel comfortable we will get as much of the useful life out of this new curb and gutter as possible.

11. QUESTION:



## CITY OF HARRISONBURG COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

409 SOUTH MAIN STREET, HARRISONBURG, VA 22801

OFFICE (540) 432-7700 • FAX (540) 432-7777

Pg. 61: I'm disappointed to see the Reservoir sidewalk moved to "Beyond" status. There are people without cars that live in the Holly Court and Dutch Mill Court neighborhood, and that guardrail creates a serious hazard for pedestrian safety. Has there ever been an attempt to count how many pedestrians use that area to walk? If so, what were the findings?

### RESPONSE:

The primary reason for this project being moved to "Beyond" is funding. This is a very complex project when you consider the large retaining walls, railroad crossing, and very narrow existing right-of-way along the corridor. As a result, the cost is at the level that the City needs to seek grant funding; however, due to the various grant opportunities available to the City, none of them align perfectly with this project. Public Works continues to explore all avenues, but at this time, none exist.

### 12. QUESTION:

Pg. 63: I see grants listed in 2025 and 2026 for the University Blvd. relocation. Is JMU contributing to the funding of this project? Is this considered part of the same project to change the I-81 exit on Port?

### RESPONSE:

The funding for this project is provided by both JMU and VDOT.

### 13. QUESTION:

Pg. 64: Is the timeline of this project impacted by the delays in the construction of the second high school?

### RESPONSE:

Yes.

### Water Fund Projects

### 14. QUESTION:

Pg. 112: Has the need for this been impacted by extension of city water hookups into county developments, or would this have been needed based on water use within the city alone? Are there additional measures the city can take to reduce city water consumption that are not currently being utilized?

### RESPONSE:



## CITY OF HARRISONBURG COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

409 SOUTH MAIN STREET, HARRISONBURG, VA 22801

OFFICE (540) 432-7700 • FAX (540) 432-7777

The CIP fund 910161-48621 on pages 112-113 is for water mains and appurtenances within the City boundaries. It has an R&R component---assets that need to be retired. It also has an expansion component---this is for new asset installation to expand service area within the City boundaries.

The CIP fund 910161-48670 on pages 116-117 pertains to assets located outside the City Boundaries. This fund is highly R&R driven and very little expansion due to connections. Because our water system began with water from Dry River, infrastructure developed from Riven Rock to the City as early as 1898. Outside City customers (Rural) are generally along this infrastructure.

### Transportation

#### 15. QUESTION:

Pg. 140: What is the source of the enterprise revenue listed under funding sources?

#### RESPONSE:

Source of the enterprise revenue is City funds and/or commonly referred to as a local match. **The Federal government pays 80% for a transit bus, the State of Virginia pays/contributes 16% and the City pays 4% of the cost of a transit bus.**



Chair Finnegan asked if there were any questions for staff.

Councilmember Dent thanked staff for answering her questions.

Mr. Fletcher said that the departments like the questions because it shows that someone is looking through the information and that their efforts are for a good cause.

Chair Finnegan said that we are not voting on a budget. This is a budgeting tool. We do not have to agree with everything that is in here. These items reflect the needs and provide the numbers. I have registered in my email some of my questions and objections or disappointment that some things were downgraded to a lower priority.

Mr. Fletcher said that it is entirely within the PC ability to express your preferences in your recommendation to City Council. It is not out of your authority. They may not agree with you, but it is not out of the question for you to emphasize particular projects or give recommendation to move projects up. Your comment was on point about your concern that it was not given an opportunity to have a higher priority or to happen more quickly.

Commissioner Whitten said that especially this year, in these times, when we hear about cities whose water facilities are not functioning at all or are in demise with no real plan, it makes me happy to see the way our City does get things done. It is amazing that the money that comes in and that goes out is very well allocated. I know that is the hard work of the people who run the departments and the people who are doing their jobs within those departments. I appreciate that.

Commissioner Whitten moved to approve the CIP, as submitted.

Commissioner Baugh seconded the motion.

Chair Finnegan called for a roll call vote.

|                      |     |
|----------------------|-----|
| Commissioner Byrd    | Aye |
| Councilmember Dent   | Aye |
| Commissioner Hull    | Aye |
| Commissioner Orndoff | Aye |
| Commissioner Whitten | Aye |
| Commissioner Baugh   | Aye |
| Chair Finnegan       | Aye |

The motion to recommend approval of the CIP passed (7-0). The recommendation will move forward to City Council on April 13, 2021.