



City of Harrisonburg, Virginia

OFFICE OF THE PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT
320 EAST MOSBY ROAD
HARRISONBURG, VIRGINIA 22801
(540) 434-5928

STREET MAINTENANCE
TRAFFIC ENGINEERING
TRANSPORTATION PLANNING
REFUSE/ RECYCLING
CENTRAL STORES

TO: Eric D. Campbell, City Manager
FROM: Thomas Hartman, PE, Assistant Director of Public Works
DATE: April 24, 2018
RE: Transportation Project Updates

Summary: Presentation from the Public Works Department and Harrisonburg Department of Public Transportation on projects underway and being planned for grant funding through Virginia's Smart Scale Grant program.

Background:

Provided below are narratives for both projects that are currently under development and projects that are being considered for grant funding.

Projects Under Development:

Grace Street Extension at JMU – This project is a partnership between the City of Harrisonburg and James Madison University. The planned extension will connect Grace Street from the Mason Street intersection to Duke Drive on JMU's campus. This project includes 2 travel lanes from Mason St to Duke Drive, and a shared use path from Mason St to Carrier Dr. The main goals of this project are to provide a more direct transit bus route from Memorial Hall to East Campus, and the connection of the Bluestone Trail through campus. It is anticipated that this project will receive approximately \$1,070,000 from a VDOT Revenue Sharing grant, and JMU will provide the required matching funds for this grant. The current schedule is to begin construction in the spring of 2019.

Exit 245 Ramp Improvements – This project is the second VDOT Smart Scale project awarded to the City and is a partnership between VDOT, the City, and JMU. The planned ramp improvements will realign the northbound off ramp with Forest Hill Drive and close the existing off ramp. It was determined through an Interchange Alternatives Analysis performed by the MPO, that this realignment would benefit the Port Republic Road corridor. Currently, VDOT is performing the required engineering services with the City being responsible for right of way and construction administration. JMU has agreed to dedicated to VDOT and the City all required right of way and easements needed for this project. On February 28th Public Works held a Design Public Meeting where we shared the plans with citizens with 30 citizens attending. The project is currently scheduled to be advertised for construction in early 2020, however Public Works and VDOT feel that we may be able to advertise for construction in early 2019.

South Main Street and Bluestone Drive Signal Upgrade – This project is a partnership with JMU, and includes the replacement of the existing signal at this intersection. The reconstructed signal will be decorative to match other signals within the JMU and Downtown areas of the City. JMU has agreed to contribute \$100,000 for the reconstruction, and these funds are being used to upgrade to the decorative style. Public Works has awarded the construction contract to DCI Shires of Bluefield WV and construction will be completed by August of 2018.

MLK Jr. Way Bridge Maintenance – This project includes joint replacement on the existing bridge structure, as well as epoxy overlay on the sidewalks. This work was found to be necessary based on the City's biannual bridge inspections. Public Works awarded this contract to Lanford Brothers and construction will be completed by August of 2018.

Northend Greenway (NEG) Shared Use Path and Stream Restoration – This project is a PPEA between the City and Momentum Earthworks. The comprehensive agreement to authorize construction is currently being prepared for City Council consideration. This project includes the construction of the NEG from Mt Clinton Pike to Suter Street and this shared use path will be owned and maintained by the City. The stream restoration component of the project will be owned and maintained by Momentum Earthworks, but the comprehensive agreement will spell out the terms by which the City will purchase the TMDL credits produced by the restoration. The NEG is funded through a VDOT revenue sharing grant and the TMDL credit purchase funds are provided by the City's stormwater utility fund. With approval of the comprehensive agreement planned for June, construction of the project should be completed by the end of 2018.

Garbers Church Road Shared Use Path Project – This project is planned to connect Bluestone Elementary to Harrisonburg High School along Garbers Church Road, connect Garbers Church Road to Hillandale Park, and connect Hillandale Park to Thomas Harrison Middle School, by way of the Wyndham Drive neighborhood. The Public Works Department has been working towards this goal for nearly a year and a half and has 60% plans completed. A design public meeting was held in late 2017 where the plans were shared with citizens, and Public Works provided a report to Council following that meeting. As a result of the meeting and Council update the Public Works Department has received three (3) letters from property owners along the proposed path stating that they will not participate with the project. These letters limit the options available to the City for development of the path as originally envisioned. Therefore, Public Works has prepared the following options for consideration:

- Option 1 – Construct the Shared Use Path from the cul de sac on Wyndham Drive to the bike racks at Thomas Harrison Middle School, as well as providing a connection to West Market Street through the Cale property, which has already been dedicated to the City for this exact purpose. Also, this option would provide the Shared Use Path connection between Bluestone Elementary and Harrisonburg High School. This revised option would not expend all of the project funds available, and it is proposed that with this option, Public Works work closely with VDOT and move these excess funds to the Mt Clinton Pike Road Improvement project.

The City With The Planned Future

- Option 2 – Constructs paths proposed in Option 1, however include the connection from Wyndham Woods Circle to Hillandale Park Road and from Hillandale Park Road to the planned pocket park near the golf course. This option would be chosen if it is determined that surplus funds cannot be transferred to the Mt Clinton Pike Road Improvement project.

Option 1 provides more community benefits with regards to the original intent of the funds to provide safe transportation connections where they are needed to serve a large number of pedestrians. However, if VDOT will not allow the transfer of funds to another project, it would be most beneficial to use the funds on the parts of the original project that are able to be built now, knowing that the full connection from Garbers Church Road to Hillandale Park is likely to come to fruition in the future. Additionally, if progress can be made with the property owners that would again make the full shared use path possible in the future, Public Works will work to obtain funding for the unbuilt sections of path.

Projects for Grant Consideration: All the projects listed below are currently under consideration for submission to the Smart Scale grant. With the revised Smart Scale guidelines, the City is limited to four (4) applications per application cycle (2-year cycle), and HDPT is allowed an additional four (4) applications, as a transit agency. As listed below the City will submit its limit of applications and HDPT is currently planning to submit one application for this cycle. It should be noted that for this cycle of Smart Scale applications, VDOT is only funding the last two (2) years of the Six Year Improvement Plan. This means that any awarded funds would not become available for use until 2023.

Mt Clinton Pike Road Improvement – This project is currently on-hold due to a lack of funding for construction. Presently, the plans are at the 60% level and Public Works is ready to begin right of way acquisition for this project. However, Public Works does not want to begin this process until construction funds are identified. Revenue Sharing funds have been used to develop this project to its current status, and a balance is still available for further use. Public Works plans to submit this project for a VDOT Smart Scale grant application this summer, seeking the needed funds to allow it to move forward. Public Works submitted this project in the last round of Smart Scale applications, and it was the City’s highest scoring project, but it did not score high enough to receive funding. As mentioned above, it is envisioned that surplus funds could be reallocated to this project from the Garbers Church Road Shared Use Path project under option 1. With those additional funds, this project becomes even more competitive for Smart Scale funding, as it will improve the cost to benefit score.

Erickson Avenue Phase IV – This is the final leg of the City’s Erickson Avenue / Stone Spring Road project. It will extend the roadway improvements from a point just west of High St to a point west of Garbers Church Road. Right of way has already been obtained for this project, and the plans are at the 60% level. Public Works intends to submit a VDOT Smart Scale grant application for this project.

Carlton Street Improvements – This project would improve Carlton Street between East Market Street and Reservoir Street, and these improvements are shown in both the City’s Street Improvement Plan as well as the Harrisonburg Rockingham Metropolitan Planning Organization’s Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP). The improvements include the addition of a center turn lane, sidewalks, utility relocations,

The City With The Planned Future

drainage improvements, and intersection improvements. Public Works plans to submit a VDOT Smart Scale grant application for this project.

University Blvd and Evelyn Byrd Avenue Improvements – This project would improve sections of University Blvd between East Market Street and Reservoir St, and Evelyn Byrd Ave between East Market St and Reservoir St. The improvements include constructing sidewalks along both roadways and providing side street connections of sidewalk where appropriate. In addition to the sidewalks Public Works plans to determine if road diets are viable for both street segments. Road diets are safety improvements that convert a 4-lane facility to a 2-lane facility with center turn lane. Per the Federal Highway Administrations (FHWA) road diet guidance, both street segments are ideal candidates for this safety improvement, however, an engineering study is required by VDOT in order for these changes to be made without affecting maintenance funding. Public Works staff will prepare this study and provide a final recommendation prior to grant submission.

MLK Jr. Way Extension, Transit Center, and Park & Ride Project – This project is a partnership between Public Works and Harrisonburg Transit Department, and involves the extension of MLK Jr. Way between East Market Street and Country Club Road, the construction of a new Transit Transfer Center, and park & ride lot. Public Works and Transit partnered in late 2017 and early 2018 to develop a feasibility study for this project, and that study is attached to this report. The study looked at all aspects of this project and provides a preferred alternative design that best meets the goals of this project. Included in this study are roadway and site layouts, floor plans, different park & ride lot configurations, as well as planning level cost estimates.

The roadway is planned to be a 2-lane roadway with center turn lane and traffic signal at the new intersection of MLK Jr. Way and Country Club Road. The road improvements will also include sidewalks and shared use path parallel to the MLK Jr. Way extension. The Transit Transfer Center is planned to provide births for 16 buses and a 2,500 SF Transfer Center. The park & ride lot has varied levels of capacity, based on selected layout, that range between 150 and 180 spaces.

HDPT plans to submit a Smart Scale application for this project, and that submittal will include all of the project components mentioned above.

Key Issues: Selection of preferred option for Garbers Church Road Shared Use Path is needed in order for Public Works to move forward with development of the project.

Environmental Impact: Various and to be determined per project.

Fiscal Impact: Projects currently under development have already secured funding, and all proposed Smart Scale grant projects would be 100% state and federally funded.

Prior Actions: None.

The City With The Planned Future

Alternatives: None.

Community Engagement: Public meetings and Council updates as noted above.

Recommendation: Staff recommends pursuing option 1 for the Garbers Church Road Shared Use Path project.

Attachments: Council presentation, project site locations, MLK Jr. Way Extension, Transit Center, and Park & Ride Feasibility Study.

Review:

The initiating Department Director will place in Legistar, in sequence of transmittal, the names of each department that must initial their review in order for this item to be placed on the City Council agenda. The completion of review only addresses the readiness of the issue for Council consideration. This does not address the recommendation for approval or denial of the issue.

###