



City of Harrisonburg

City Hall
409 South Main Street
Harrisonburg, VA 22801

Master

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Subject:

Final Action:

Title: FY 2020-2021 through 2024-2025 Capital Improvement Program

Internal Notes:

Sponsors:

Enactment Date:

Attachments: Memorandum, PC Memorandum, Public Hearing notice, Surrounding Property Notices

Enactment Number:

Contact:

Hearing Date:

Drafter: thanh.dang@harrisonburgva.gov

Effective Date:

Related Files:

History of Legislative File

Ver- sion:	Acting Body:	Date:	Action:	Sent To:	Due Date:	Return Date:	Result:
1	Planning Commission	03/11/2020	recommended to full council	City Council	04/14/2020		Pass
Action Text:		This Action Item was recommended to full council.to the City Council due back on 4/14/2020					
Notes:		Chair Colman read the request and asked staff to review.					

Mr. Fletcher said that 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 the setting of 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 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 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 the proposed CIP on February 25th so that they could begin reviewing the document in preparation of the review at the March 11th regular meeting. The document was uploaded to the City's website on February 26th. The Commission had a little over a week to review the document and to submit comments and questions to staff so that responses could be collected and provided to Planning Commission.

The questions below were submitted prior to the Planning Commission review of the CIP by Commissioner Finnigan via email on Friday, February 6, 2020

1. QUESTION: The repairs to East Market Street near Court Square took significantly more time and resources than originally anticipated. Do the numbers in the CIP for Public Works projects reflect the increased costs for replacing old infrastructure?

RESPONSE: Public Works does its best to predict all associated costs for CIP projects. We feel that we have done sufficient due diligence for this level of planning and have applied contingencies to these costs as well.

The East Market Street project was a project that had multiple private utility issues that were outside the City's control.

2. QUESTION: Will the city consider conducting a [value-per-acre analysis](https://www.strongtowns.org/journal/2018/10/19/value-per-acre-analysis-a-how-to-for-beginners) so that we know how much the city is getting in tax revenue to compare to what we are spending on infrastructure and services? If we had such an analysis, that could help guide decisions about where we might be able to adjust rules and restrictions regarding taxable economic activity such as home businesses in neighborhoods where the current property tax revenue does not pay for repairs that will need to be made in the next 10 to 30 years.

RESPONSE: City staff would have to investigate this tool further to better understand how it might be useful in evaluating tax revenue. If directed, we would also have to determine the amount of time and resources that are needed to complete the exercise, and then determine whether this tool would be useful

beyond current practices.

3. QUESTION: We have been adjusting regulations in zoning designations such as R-8 to conform to the needs of our current fire trucks. As we budget for new trucks and equipment, has there been any discussion or research into smaller, more nimble trucks that are being used in other cities that would allow for changes to zoning and housing density restrictions?

RESPONSE: We have looked at these smaller vehicles, but they do not fit the need of Harrisonburg. They do not have the water carrying capacity nor the storage space for the equipment that we need to carry. Much larger departments have the ability to have multiple types of fire engines and still maintain the required equipment. With only four fire staffed fire engines in the City, we could not afford for one of those engines not to have this necessary water or equipment.

I (Chief Bennett) can provide more information or would be happy to have a discussion with any of the Planning Commission members if they would like.

4. QUESTION: Aside from the \$300K bridge replacements, I don't see anything about Heritage Oaks in the CIP. Are Public Works staff hours and resources used to help maintain the course? If so, where is that accounted for?

RESPONSE: Maintenance of the golf course is included and a part of the Parks and Recreation Operating budget. We employ 5 full-time and 6-10 part-time and seasonal staff to maintain the golf course.

The FY21 budget request for the golf course maintenance division is \$649,982.

5. QUESTION: I believe the new JMU parking decks averaged out to around \$23K per parking space (when the land value and construction costs are accounted for). What is the estimated cost-per-parking space for the new downtown decks?

RESPONSE: Our estimates for the parking deck were developed with a \$23,000 - \$25,000 per space.

6. QUESTION: Has the city accounted for the any changes in acidity levels between our current and future water sources? It is my understanding that more acidic water sources can potentially increase lead levels in the water, as was the case in Flint, MI.

RESPONSE: We currently have an acidic raw water from our Dry River source in Rawley Springs. The new source at the South Fork Shenandoah River will be much more basic in comparison. Because we have treated water from Rawley Spring since 1898, we have much experience and expertise controlling corrosivity

by adjusting the plan effluent pH and alkalinity to a neutral position on the Langelier Saturation Index (LSI). Our standard practices will address this concern. For the record, Flint Michigan did not undertake this common practice because they hurried their mothballed plant back into operations without the expertise of experienced operators; thus the root cause of their problem.

The questions below were submitted prior to the Planning Commission review of the CIP by Commissioner Finks via email on Saturday, February 7, 2020.

1. QUESTION:

Network Replacement

Code: IT-NSP05

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This reads to me as a potentially serious issue. Can you expand on exactly what sorts of areas would be affected if the network cores were to completely break?

RESPONSE: We have 2 Core switches located at 409 S Main and 101 N Main St. Every major department has dark fiber running to each location. All servers reside in the data centers at these locations, so should both switches fail, all e-mail, web, phone, and application traffic would halt. This would not disrupt the water treatment plant, since their application workstations are in house.

2. QUESTION:

Renovation of old municipal building

Code: MGR3

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We don't appear to have a clear plan on how this building would be used. What is the justification for this project being labeled Priority 2 instead of Priority 3?

RESPONSE: The City is currently contracting with an architect to deliver a space study to best inform maximizing the spaces for the Public Safety Building, Municipal Building and City Hall. Available space in the Public Safety Building for the Police Department, H-R ECC and Fire Administration is growing scarce. In addition, departments within City Hall are reaching their seven year growth expectations and will also need space to grow moving forward. This study will inform how best to utilize the Municipal Building for the growth of these departments as we plan for both the immediate future and longer term plans of City offices and personnel.

3. QUESTION:

Liberty Street and Acorn Dr. New Traffic Signal

Code: PWTELN02

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In the presented alternative plan it suggests considering a roundabout, wouldn't a roundabout be considerably more expensive than a new traffic signal? If we would not be deciding to update the light because of financial concerns, what would be an alternative reason to consider a roundabout in this intersection?

RESPONSE: With the growing costs of traffic signal installations, due to increased design costs, availability of signal equipment, and steel; alternative intersections are becoming more utilized throughout the state. A roundabout was considered in this location due to the existing large footprint, because of the existing size of this intersection, and that the roundabout does not carry with it the same long term maintenance costs as signals. Also, the traffic volumes in each direction are similar, which is well suited for a roundabout.

4. QUESTION:

Riven Rock Restrooms // Ralph Sampson Park Splashpad

Code: P&R 22-1, P&R 23-1

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Based on my perspective, it seems like Ralph Sampson Park is more utilized than Riven Rock park by Harrisonburg residents. Considering the economic makeup of the residents who use each of these parks, I would think there is a greater need to improve Ralph Sampson park since the amenities available to the residents who use this park would likely be limited.

RESPONSE: During the season (April-September), Riven Rock is heavily used for fishing, swimming and picnicking. The only "restroom" facility is old, deteriorating out-houses. These out-houses have no lights (so completely dark when the door is closed) do not have running water to wash hands and most critical, they do not meet any standard of the ADA. The proposal is to install vault-style, flushable toilets that are ADA Accessible, have lights and have running water.

Both parks are heavily used, however, we have placed the priority on providing an adequate sanitation facility over the installation of the splash pad. In the meantime, we are developing a plan to provide a transportation service directly from Ralph Sampson Park/Simms Education Center to the Westover Pool and Splashpad so that the youth and families can enjoy this wonderful amenity during the hot, summer months.

Chair Colman said that questions two and three by Commissioner Finnegan relate to zoning. As we are reviewing the Zoning Ordinance, these things should be considered. For density we should consider using smaller vehicles in certain areas. I think it is a good question. There is not always a connection between the CIP and what the Fire Department proposes that ties back to zoning. We deal with that on a regular basis, as we plan for

neighborhoods, and work with the Fire Department to make sure that their vehicles can be accommodated. I think we need to look at it the other way, also. How can we change the Fire Department approach to allow for more compact or more dense developments? I am on board with this and I think that we should consider it.

Commissioner Finnegan said that he realizes that some of the questions he asked were a little outside of the lines of the CIP, but they were all CIP adjacent.

Commissioner Finks expressed his appreciation for the effort involved in answering his questions.

Mr. Fletcher said that the commissioners are doing their due diligence. I appreciate that we are focusing on these questions because it is a significant program that has many impacts, not just in the current budget, but in years to come.

Commissioner Finnegan clarified that question one, regarding the increased cost of replacing old infrastructure, and question two regarding value per acre in terms of revenue, are things that we need to keep an eye on. If those costs go out of control, what are we going to do to get the revenue to pay for those costs?

Chair Colman said that the commissioners should be reviewing the CIP in terms of the goals and objectives of the various departments. We can then associate the CIP with the Comprehensive Plan.

Commissioner Whitten asked how much over-budget was the East Market Street project?

Mr. Fletcher said that he does not know but will find out.

Vice Mayor Romero said that the water main break could have increased the costs, as well.

Mr. Fletcher said that there were private utilities that were in unexpected places. There was a Verizon telephone vault in a location that conflicted with the planned location of the replaced water line. There was a lot of timing and coordination to get Verizon to remove the vault and move it to a better location. There was also rock. I will find out what the increased costs were.

Mr. Fletcher also noted that there was a replacement sheet for pages 39 and 40. The dates were incorrect. Replace the sheet in your CIP copy.

Chair Colman asked if there were any further questions for staff.

Vice Mayor Romero asked for clarification of the CIP process.

Mr. Fletcher said that the Code of Virginia requires a CIP. The Planning Commission reviews the CIP to ensure that it aligns with planning principles. It is a financial planning document, but it has significant impact on development because of the large capital expenses. The Planning Commission reviews it and, if it is acceptable, moves it on to City Council for final adoption.

Vice Mayor Romero said that he has the benefit of more time to read the document and to ask further questions prior to voting on it at City Council.

Commissioner Whitten said that while it is a quick turnaround to review and approve, it is not usually this quick.

Mr. Fletcher read some statements from the Code of Virginia Section 15.2-2239. Among other things from the Code, he noted that City Council can instruct the Planning Commission to hold a public hearing, but we historically have not. However, City Council does hold a public hearing.

The document was finished in November, but there was a lot of coordination with the School Board. The schools were delayed due to their focus on the new Harrisonburg High School project. It did affect the scheduling.

The CIP project begins in July. Departments start planning their expenditures from July through August. The projects are presented to the CIP Committee in September. The Committee includes the Finance Director, City Manager, Deputy City Manager, Assistant to the City Manager and the Director of Community Development. We examine the submittals, exploring the issues, alternatives, prioritization, justification, etc. It is evaluated to ensure that it is written and put together properly. In October, we conduct the final draft reviews. The Finance Director then gives projections for revenues. This year, due to the delay, he was able to give updated revenues. Usually you would see the CIP in November. This year, we had to wait for the School Board.

Chair Colman said that it would be good to have it earlier, even if it is a draft. Based on the things that we are seeing within the City we can make recommendations to the departments. They can evaluate those recommendations or simply update the CIP. Otherwise, we are simply looking at it, but have very little leverage on what to do with it other than to say it meets or does not meet.

Mr. Fletcher said that if we run into this situation again, I can give you a draft. You would not see the final numbers or summary sheets, but you would have the projects in hand. If not, I will give you the whole thing.

Chair Colman said that he has seen CIPs before, so he is familiar with it. I can tell if it seems consistent and goes along with things that we have seen before. For newer commissioners, it is a new document. Those of us who have seen it before might not look at

it as much as we should. If we had more time, we could strategize as to how to review it. We could look at the goals and the needs within the City and see how the CIP is aligning with them. The departments know much better than we do, but some of the concerns raised in these questions that we have are valid and useful as we move forward in planning.

Vice Mayor Romero said that he agrees. City Council looks at the Planning Commission as an advisory council. City Council considers that the Planning Commission has thoroughly looked at the CIP and discussed it, and that we are voting on it because we are in full support of it. As a commissioner, I would have a hard time today because I have not had enough time to look at the document in full. I will be able to do that as a council member because I will have it for an additional two weeks. I wanted to make sure that I understood that it is not always this tight. If it is, then what can we do differently. There is a lot of value in looking at the document with more time to reflect upon it. It is hard for me to vote on something that I am not fully knowledgeable about. If it is one of those one-time things, I am okay with that.

Chair Colman said that we trust our departments and planners. They know what they are doing. We also have a job to do and we need to make sure that we do it right.

Mr. Fletcher said that the department directors, the people who are the representatives, like receiving the questions because, after all the effort that they put into it, people are reading it and responding to it. They appreciate the questions.

Chair Colman said that the process of submitting questions and receiving answers works well. I think that it would be interesting to consider what the best way to review the CIP is so that we can be fully supportive, instead of a cursory review.

Commissioner Finnegan said that we are not reviewing a budget or recommending a budget. We are signing off on the fact that we have read the needs. It is not a budget.

Mr. Fletcher said that if you look closely at the numbers, you will see that a lot of the projects are priority two. Priority one projects are essentially mandated. You have to do them by law. When you compare all the priority one and priority two projects, you need \$1.8 million for the priority one projects. That is a good thing because there is very little that is mandated that we have to do. Priority two projects are all highly desirable projects.

Commissioner Finks made a motion to recommend approval of the CIP, as presented.

Commissioner Finnegan seconded the motion.

All members voted in favor of recommending approval of the CIP (6-0). The recommendation will move forward to City Council on April 14, 2020.
