



Legislation Text

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City of Alexandria, Virginia

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MEMORANDUM

**DATE:** SEPTEMBER 7, 2021

**TO:** THE HONORABLE MAYOR AND MEMBERS OF CITY COUNCIL

**FROM:** MARK B. JINKS, CITY MANAGER /s/

**DOCKET TITLE:**

Consideration of a Resolution to Support a Grant Application to the Virginia Community Flood Preparedness Fund Program. [ROLL-CALL VOTE]

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**ISSUE:** Should the City submit a grant application to the Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) for a matching grant of up to \$5.46 million to support design of the top two prioritized flood mitigation capacity projects in the City?

**RECOMMENDATION:** That City Council:

- (1) Approve the attached resolution to ratify a FY 2021 Virginia Community Flood Preparedness Fund (CFPF) grant application submitted to the State on September 3; and
- (2) Authorize the City Manager to submit this application and enter into any agreements that may be required to receive these funds should the requested allocation be approved.

**BACKGROUND:** The Virginia Community Flood Preparedness Fund (CFPF) was established to provide support for regions and localities across Virginia to reduce the impacts of flooding, including flooding driven by climate change. The CFPF will prioritize projects that are in concert with local, state, and federal floodplain management standards, local resilience plans, and the Virginia Coastal Resilience Master Plan. The CFPF will provide funding for communities to complete vulnerability assessments and develop and implement action-oriented approaches to bolster flood preparedness and resilience.

**DISCUSSION:** Recently, the City has been experiencing widespread flooding due to the increase in high intensity precipitation events associated with climate change and the City's inherent low-lying nature. The City's 2016 City of Alexandria Storm Sewer Capacity Analysis (CASSCA) provided a model of potential storm

sewer system areas that may experience capacity issues which could be mitigated through projects focusing on conveyance, storage, and/or green infrastructure. In addition to the identification of potential problems in the CASSCA study, service requests received through Alex311 during large storm events, and subsequent field investigations have identified segments and junctions of the storm sewer system which could be improved to better convey storm flows and help to reduce flooding.

In the Four Mile Run Watershed, a series of smaller storm sewer systems converge at the intersections of Commonwealth Avenue and East Glebe Road, and Ashby Street and East Glebe Road. During high intensity storm events, the drainage network is unable to accommodate heavy discharge from multiple upstream systems in tandem and causes flooding in the area. Increasing the storm sewer capacity at the intersections of Commonwealth Avenue and East Glebe Road, and Ashby Street and East Glebe Road will help mitigate flooding associated with high intensity storm events in the immediate vicinity as well as areas upstream.

The funding schedule for the City's top 11 prioritized capacity projects was included in the City's FY 2022 to FY 2031 Capital Improvement Program (CIP). Funding for the design of the top two prioritized projects at Commonwealth Avenue & E. Glebe Road and Ashby Street & E. Glebe Road were included in the FY 2022 CIP budget.

It is important to note that the CFPF program awards matching grants based on the degree to which a completed project is comprised of a nature-based solution. "Hybrid solutions" are projects with grey and nature-based components that "achieve an outcome that is primarily nature-based." Eligible projects may be awarded a 60/40 funding to match breakdown. All other eligible projects may be awarded at a 50/50 funding to match breakdown. Given that the projects have yet to be designed, it is likely that these projects would fall under the latter scenario. Therefore, since the total design costs for these two projects are estimated at \$9.1M, if awarded, the City would receive between \$4.55 million to \$5.46 million for the combined design of the two capacity projects. The total available funding for the FY 2021 CFPF program is \$18 million statewide. The net effect of the amount of grant funds that the City may receive will be the offset of a similar amount of City funds. This offset amount would then be allocated as part of the FY 2023 CIP planning to another stormwater project after consultation with the Stormwater Ad Hoc Advisory Group.

It should be noted that subject to City Council approval, the City will be applying for waterfront flood protection grant funds from the State in an upcoming flood protection grant cycle later this fall.

**FISCAL IMPACT:** DCR CFPF requires funds to be available at the time of application. Because of this limitation, this application is for a portion of design costs that are funded in FY 2022. The design of these projects is currently accounted for in FY 2022 in the existing Storm Sewer Capacity Projects Capital Improvement Program (CIP). The CFPF application cost share, if approved by DCR in early 2022, would cover 50% to 60% of the combined project design, with the remainder of the design funded through FY 2022 CIP funds.

Transportation and Environmental Services (T&ES) has worked with the Department of Project Implementation (DPI) to submit initial application materials by the State's September 3, 2021 deadline. If Council does not ratify this grant application, or directs staff to submit another project, these projects and the other nine flood mitigation capacity projects will move forward per the funding scheduled in the 10-year CIP.

**ATTACHMENTS:**

1. Resolution
2. Storm Sewer Capacity Projects
3. Location Map: Top Two Capacity Projects

4. Presentation

**STAFF:**

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