



Legislation Text

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City of Alexandria, Virginia

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MEMORANDUM

**DATE:** SEPTEMBER 21, 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 \$144,000 to support design and construction of a spot improvement project to reduce flooding?

**RECOMMENDATION:** That City Council:

- (1) Approve the attached resolution to support a FY 2021 Virginia Community Flood Preparedness Fund (CFPF) grant application of \$144,000; and
- (2) Authorize the City Manager to submit this resolution 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), managed by the Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) was established to provide support for regions and localities across Virginia to reduce the impacts of flooding, including flooding driven by climate change. The Fund 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 Fund will empower communities to complete vulnerability assessments and develop and implement action-oriented approaches to bolster flood preparedness and resilience.

Solicitations for funding will be extended multiple times each fiscal year, with money coming from the auction of carbon allowances through the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative (RGGI). For instance, there is another solicitation that closes in November and one anticipated in the January/February 2022 timeframe. Projects must be completed no later than three years from the date of an executed agreement.

This grant was originally docketed on September 14 but deferred due to inconsistencies between the submitted grant application and the docket memo. Staff has implemented internal procedural changes to improve internal coordination and ensure a similar problem does not occur again.

**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 a mix of 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 reduce flooding. These large, complex capital flooding and capacity projects address systemic issues and take longer to deliver, typically three to five years each once funding comes available.

However, to address more localized flooding and drainage issues, staff works to identify smaller spot improvement projects that can be implemented quicker, typically eight to 20 months after funding comes available. 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 current drainage network is unable to accommodate heavy discharge from multiple upstream systems in tandem and causes flooding in the area. A spot improvement project that increases the number of inlets to provide greater capacity (and potentially installing green infrastructure) near the intersections of Commonwealth Avenue/East Glebe Road and Ashby Street/East Glebe Road will help mitigate flooding associated with high intensity storm events in the immediate vicinity.

**FISCAL IMPACT:** DCR CFPF is a new grant funding program with multiple solicitations occurring during the fiscal year about every quarter. DCR requires funds to be available at the time of application. The application is for a cost share of a spot project, with the City's portion funded through the Spot Improvement program CIP.

The CFPF application cost share, if approved by DCR in early 2022, would cover 75% of the estimated spot project cost, with the remainder of the project funded through FY 2022 CIP funds. Given that DCR will make multiple solicitations at the rate of approximately every three months during the fiscal year, and that the City may apply in response to each solicitation, the City could be awarded multiple grants during the fiscal year. Given that this solicitation is for \$18 million and the November solicitation is for \$17 million, the City could likely be awarded up to or exceeding a million dollars each fiscal year.

Transportation and Environmental Services (T&ES) 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 approve this project, or directs staff to submit another project, this project would be wholly funded out of the City's Spot Improvement program.

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. The total project cost is \$192,000 with 75% of the

funding (or \$144,000) being requested from the Fund and 25% or \$48,000 being the cost share funded by the City. 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.

**ATTACHMENT:** Resolution

**STAFF:**

Emily A. Baker, Deputy City Manager

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