



Albemarle County

Legislation Text

File #: 17-329, **Version:** 1

AGENDA DATE: 5/3/2017

TITLE:

Transportation Priorities Work Session

SUBJECT/PROPOSAL/REQUEST: Review and direction on Albemarle Transportation Priorities

ITEM TYPE: Regular Information Item

STAFF CONTACT(S): Walker, Russel, Gast-Bray, McDermott

PRESENTER (S): Kevin McDermott

LEGAL REVIEW: Not Required

REVIEWED BY: Douglas C. Walker

BACKGROUND: This workshop is intended to present information on transportation priorities and transportation funding mechanisms. This information can be used to assist the Board in providing direction on transportation priorities and preferred funding mechanisms. With the Board's guidance provided at this work session, staff will return in July with a prioritized list of transportation projects and recommended grant applications for the fall application cycle or other appropriate funding sources. This work session will also serve to update the Board on recent applications for funding, including some lessons learned from those application cycles and the performance based prioritization process under Smart Scale. The Board will have an opportunity to determine if any projects should be added to or removed from the County Transportation Priorities List for the next cycle of grant applications as well as the Capital Needs submissions for the FY19 Capital Improvement Plan.

STRATEGIC PLAN: Infrastructure Investment: Prioritize, plan, and invest in critical infrastructure that responds to past and future changes and improves the capacity to serve community needs

DISCUSSION: The focus of discussion at this meeting will be on transportation funding obtained through Virginia's Six-Year Improvement Program (SYIP). The SYIP is the document through which Virginia allocates the majority of state transportation funding for primary roads. Virginia's Smart Scale process, developed to achieve the goals described in House Bill 2 (HB2 signed into law in 2014), requires the Commonwealth Transportation Board (CTB) to develop and use a scoring process for transportation project funding selection as part of the annual review of the SYIP. The prioritization process evaluates projects using the following criteria: congestion mitigation, economic development, accessibility, safety, environmental quality, and land use coordination.

In addition to the Smart Scale program, the state also makes funding available through Transportation Alternatives grants which focus on bicycle and pedestrian projects; the Highway Safety Improvement Program, which accepts applications for safety related improvements; and the Revenue Sharing program, which can fund any type of transportation project but requires a 50-50 match of funds between the State and the locality.

In April of 2016, the Board approved the attached County Transportation Priorities List (Attachment A) to help guide the application of funds through these State and Federal grant and funding mechanisms for Fiscal Year 2017. This resulted in applications for 11 projects under the Smart Scale program and 3 projects under the Revenue Sharing program.

The list of priorities was derived from the following sources:

- The Metropolitan Planning Organization's (MPO) 2040 Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP);
- The Thomas Jefferson Planning District Commission's (TJPDC) 2035 Rural Long Range Transportation Plan (RLRP), which includes the non-MPO area of Albemarle County;

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- The County's Comprehensive Plan, associated Master Plans and other related transportation documents;
- Other projects and services identified by the public, VDOT, and/or County staff and other public agencies

The submitted grant applications resulted in funding for 5 projects under the Smart Scale process and an additional project under the HSIP program. None of the three applications under Revenue Sharing were approved.

The Commonwealth is currently reviewing the Revenue Sharing program for changes which will likely include some reductions in funding available, both overall and individually for a project. Smart Scale is now through its second funding cycle, and there is a greater understanding on how successful projects are developed. Further, House Bill 1887 established a new transportation funding formula for the Commonwealth focusing on the High-Priority Projects Program and District Grant Program which are subject to the Smart Scale program and the State of Good Repair Program. As a result of these changes, and chronically underfunded transportation needs, the County may want to reevaluate how it prioritizes and funds transportation improvements.

Staff's assessment of the transportation funding programs and processes can be summarized by the following:

- Funding for new or extended roadways is very limited and will likely require significant contributions from the County for which a funding source would need to be identified.

- The projects most likely to get funded under Smart Scale are those that address multiple benefits that the prioritization process evaluates.
- Low cost projects have a higher likelihood of receiving funding.
- Revenue Sharing as a program may offer less potential to Albemarle County for accomplishing transportation improvements.
- The County's current method of prioritizing projects by type (Highway, Secondary, Transit, et.) may need to be reconsidered now that most funding sources do not separate projects by project type.

Most state and federal grant programs are now on a two-year application cycle with Revenue Sharing and Transportation Alternatives coming up this fall (2017) and Smart Scale coming up in fall of 2018. In order to effectively plan and prepare for the application deadlines and strategically plan for funding, it would benefit staff to know which projects are the highest priorities for the Board and to hear the Board's thoughts on potential funding sources to move those projects forward. In order to do this, staff will provide updated information on the status of projects currently on the priority list and discuss additional projects that have been identified since the 2016 review.

BUDGET IMPACT: This discussion will have no direct impact on the County budget. However, it will be used to identify potential uses for funding that have previously been earmarked for use on transportation projects through the CIP Revenue Sharing program, and may lead to projects being submitted as capital projects under the CIP program. The recommendations will also be used to identify projects to be funded through grants and other funding programs available for State and Federal funds. Specific budget impacts will be addressed in conjunction with any specific request to expend funds for one or more projects.

RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommendations on projects are listed in the attached County Transportation Priorities List. Staff is requesting that the Board provide direction on the priorities in order to evaluate the potential funding mechanisms available to each project. These which will be used to guide applications for funding through grants, CIP needs, or other identified funding sources.

ATTACHMENTS:

A - County Transportation Priorities List