



Albemarle County

Legislation Text

File #: 20-432, **Version:** 1

AGENDA DATE: 8/19/2020

TITLE:

Albemarle County 2020 Smart Scale Application: Rio Road Corridor

SUBJECT/PROPOSAL/REQUEST: Resolution in Support of the Smart Scale Project Application for the Rio Road Corridor in Albemarle County

ITEM TYPE: Regular Action Item

STAFF CONTACT(S): Richardson, Walker, Kamptner, Herrick, Filardo, Rapp, McDermott

PRESENTER (S): Kevin McDermott

LEGAL REVIEW: Yes

REVIEWED BY: Jeffrey B. Richardson

BACKGROUND: The Smart Scale grant program is the primary method for funding large-scale transportation projects in the State. The Program provides State and Federal funds for the design/engineering, right-of-way, and construction of transportation projects and runs on a biennial cycle. The application due date for the FY21 cycle was recently extended to August 17. A requirement of the Smart Scale application is a Resolution of Support for each application from the local governing body. Resolutions are now due on October 30, 2020. At its June 17, 2020 meeting, the Board reviewed the proposed applications and adopted a Resolution for the projects that the County wished to pursue, including the following:

Submitted by Albemarle County:

1. Old Lynchburg Road/5th Street Extended/County Office Building Intersection Improvements
2. US 250 Pantops Corridor Improvements - Route 20 to Hansen Road
3. Route 20/Route 53 Intersection Improvements

Submitted by the Thomas Jefferson Planning District Commission:

4. Route 29 Shared Use Path - Carrsbrook Drive to Riverside Center
5. 5th Street Bicycle and Pedestrian Hub and Trails
6. I-64 Exit 107 Park and Ride Lot
7. Frays Mill Road/US 29 Intersection Improvement

Submitted by the Charlottesville-Albemarle Metropolitan Planning District Commission:

8. US 29/Hydraulic Road Intersection Improvement Package
9. Fontaine Avenue/US 29 Bypass Interchange Improvement

Additionally, at its meeting in June, the Board of Supervisors expressed its desire to contribute local funds through the Transportation Leveraging Program CIP Line Item in order to buy down the project cost and improve the scoring of the following projects:

Suggested Local Fund Contributions:

- Old Lynchburg Road/5th Street Extended/County Office Building Intersection Improvements - \$2 million
- US 250 Pantops Corridor Improvements - Route 20 to Hansen Road - \$2 million
- Route 20/Route 53 Intersection Improvements - \$1 million

This local funding was based on project priority, project cost estimate, and assumptions of potential scores through the Smart Scale program. Smart Scale applications will include a notation that the County's CIP is not finalized at this time and will be considered in the fall due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Board also expressed interest in moving forward with the improvements at certain intersections in the Rio Road Corridor, but requested additional information on the project. The following discussion focuses on that project.

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 Rio Road options presented on June 17 were:

1. Apply for a Roundabout at the Rio Road/John Warner Parkway (JWP) intersection - ~\$8.1MM
2. Apply for an R-cut at Rio Road/Belvedere intersection - ~\$2.4MM
3. Combine both projects into one application- ~\$10.5MM

Now that the County is moving forward with the Rio Corridor Study and based on continued conversations on this project, staff's recommendation for this application is to apply only for the roundabout at the Rio Road/John Warner Parkway intersection, with a contribution of \$2MM in local funding to improve the scoring for that project. This recommendation is based on the following factors:

- Currently, the JWP intersection is more problematic from both operational and safety perspectives than the Belvedere intersection. This conclusion is based on longer average queue and delay, overall intersection level of service; and crash data over the past 7 years (43 crashes at JWP vs 18 crashes at the Belvedere intersection).
- Staff is more confident in the roundabout as the right solution for the JWP intersection than in the R-cut as the solution for the Belvedere intersection. This opinion has been supported by both the VDOT study and other separate studies. No such studies support the R-cut at Belvedere.
- The Corridor study will identify the correct solution for the Belvedere intersection. Discussions with the consultant scoping that study have led to the conclusion that the roundabout would likely be the likely best option for the JWP intersection. No such conclusion has yet been reached about the best option for the Belvedere intersection.
- The VDOT study showed that the R-cut would work best if done in coordination with the roundabout, while the roundabout works perfectly well as a standalone project.
- The cost of improvements at the JWP is more prohibitive for the County to undertake through any other funding scenario except Smart Scale, but many potential improvements to the Belvedere intersection could be done with local funding or through Revenue Sharing, both with a shorter time to completion. If the R-cut were done as a local project, the County could reduce the cost significantly from the current estimate.
- The proposed Parkway Place development, which is likely to return, may present opportunities if there is confidence that it is the right solution moving forward.

The one drawback to this approach is that the public has been more vocal in its concern regarding the Belvedere intersection than the JWP intersection.

BUDGET IMPACT: This application is for State funding to implement a project. No County match is required with the application. However, staff is recommending the addition of local funds from the Transportation

Leveraging Program CIP Line Item. If the project were selected for funding, the County would be responsible for providing those local funds in order to receive the State funds. Funding schedules would be developed following project selection. Local funds would not be necessary until FY23 or beyond. VDOT has expressed willingness to work with the County to develop a mutually agreeable funding schedule within the Six-Year Plan timeframe. If approved, VDOT would administer these projects and maintain these facilities. Therefore, no County funds would be necessary to support future maintenance or operations of the projects.

RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends that the Board of Supervisors adopt the attached Resolution in support of the Rio Rd/John Warner Parkway improvements Smart Scale application in Albemarle County (Attachment A).

Staff further recommends that the Board of Supervisors approve the inclusion of the \$2MM recommended local funding contribution as outlined above in the Smart Scale application.

ATTACHMENTS:

Attachment A: Proposed Resolution of Support of a Smart Scale Application in Albemarle County

Attachment B: Rio Road/John Warner Parkway Improvement Project Summary