



Review of County Executive's Recommended Amendments to FY13 Capital Budget and FY13-18 Capital Improvement Program



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Description

The County Executive has released an amended Fiscal Year 2013-2018 Capital Improvements Program (CIP) to accompany his recommended Capital Budget for FY2014. The Executive's amendments have two objectives: providing sufficient funding for shorter-term, safety-related projects, some of which may be unanticipated, and providing funding for projects critical to the county's economic recovery. Short term projects include funds for bridge replacement and renovation, as well as replacement of aging and unsafe buses. Projects related to economic vitality include concept planning for bus rapid transit along MD 355 US 29 and Randolph Road.

The Planning Board provides comments to the Executive at this stage of the CIP process, just as it recommends capital projects at the beginning of each six-year CIP phase for inclusion in the program and comments on the Executive's initial recommended CIP. Board recommendations for capital projects and comments on the Executive's CIP are part of an ongoing effort to insure that capital projects reflect planning priorities and implement master or sector plans to the greatest possible extent.

Summary and Recommendations

Planning Department staff requests that the following recommendations be transmitted to the Executive and County Council. The Rapid Transit System, as noted above, is a newly-added CIP project. The other projects were evaluated by the Board in February 2012.

1. **Rapid Transit System (P501318):** Delete the Randolph Road corridor from the project and include New Hampshire Avenue, which is likely to have higher ridership and will support the new MetroExtra K9 bus service.
2. **White Flint:** Include master planned public facilities projects in the current CIP.
3. **Clarksburg Library:** Restore funding for design and construction in the current CIP.
4. **Wheaton Library and Recreation Center:** Include construction funds in the current CIP.

5. **North Potomac Community Recreation Center (P720102):** Support addition of this project to the CIP.
6. **Bethesda South Metro Station Entrance (P500929):** Support retention of this project in the CIP on a schedule concurrent with Purple Line construction.
7. **Capital Crescent Trail (P501316):** Support retention of this project in the CIP on a schedule concurrent with Purple Line construction.
8. **Metropolitan Branch Trail (P501110):** Support retention of this project in the CIP.
9. **Revolving fund for planning developer-built projects:** Include a project in the CIP for Facility Planning for developer-built projects and consider establishing a revolving fund to construct these projects and accept developer contributions as they move forward in the development process.

Discussion

As noted above, the Executive has added funding for projects he believes will accelerate the county's economic recovery. Planning staff has these observations about the capital project for rapid transit:

Rapid Transit System (P501318): \$8.6 million in funding is requested for FY13-FY18, including \$1 million for FY13; the County Council recently took action on the supplemental funding request for the FY13 and approved only \$450,000. This project would provide planning, design and supervision for three of the corridors identified in Phase 1 of the Transit Task Force's report:

- MD355 from the Bethesda Metro Station to the Lakeforest Mall Transit Center (12.1 miles)
- US29 from the Silver Spring Transit Center to the Burtonsville Park and Ride Lot (10.7 miles)
- Randolph Road between MD355 and the Prince George's County Line (12.5 miles)

While staff anticipates that all three corridors will be included in the Staff Draft of the Countywide Transit Corridors Functional Master Plan, which the Planning Board is scheduled to review on March 18, 2013, much of Randolph Road has fairly low ridership in the 2040 forecast year. The New Hampshire Avenue corridor has higher existing bus ridership and advancing the planning on this roadway would expedite WMATA's K9 MetroExtra route, whose service south of US29 began recently.

Recommendation: Delete Randolph Road from this project but include New Hampshire Avenue between the DC line and the Colesville Park and Ride lot, excluding the segment in Prince George's County.

The Executive has also added funding for the following projects. This memorandum includes them for the Board's information.

Silver Spring Transit Center (P509974): The project cost has increased by \$7.5 million because of construction problems and the opening will be delayed until fall 2013. The construction of Gene Lynch Park will occur in FY14-15.

Ride On Bus Fleet (P500821): The cost has increased by \$14 million to expedite the replacement of Champion buses that have had fire safety problems.

Elmhirst Parkway Bridge (Bridge No. M-0353) (P501420): This bridge in Rock Creek Park is structurally deficient and would be replaced at a cost of \$2 million. The Department of Parks is coordinating the staff review of this project.

Storm Drain Culvert Replacement (P501470): This new project would provide emergency storm drain pipe replacements at a cost of \$6.3 million.

The following paragraphs update the status of project recommendations transmitted by the Board to the Council as part of its review of the Recommended FY13-18 CIP.

In **White Flint**, several CIP projects will fund transportation improvements on the east and west sides of Rockville Pike that are needed to meet Stage 1 development requirements and enable infrastructure improvements to be timed to match development proposals. Funds for public facilities projects—a recreation center, the civic green and a library—will accelerate creation of a vibrant and well-functioning mixed use community.

In **Clarksburg**, staff recommends that funding be restored for the Clarksburg Library—a Planning Board priority.

In **Wheaton**, the staff recommends that the Executive consider beginning construction of the Wheaton Library and Recreation Center (361202) during the life of the current CIP.

In **Bethesda**, several ongoing projects are needed to complete the vision of relevant master and sector plans:

The **Bethesda South Metro Station Entrance (P500929)** has been reinstated to the CIP, as recommended last year by the Planning Board.

Platt Ridge Drive Extended (P501200): The construction funding for this project is recommended to be shifted from FY14 to FY15 due to delays in Facility Planning. This project is not a Master Plan facility but the new road through North Chevy Chase Local Park is intended to provide permanent safer access to the Chevy Chase Valley community if the temporary traffic signal at Jones Bridge Road and Spring Valley Road is determined to be adequately safe. (The Planning Board recommended last year that the project's construction be delayed to FY15 to allow a greater length of time to evaluate the operation of the signal.) The Board's consent to transfer the park property needed to construct the road is necessary for the project to be built, but no studies that assess that signal's safety record have yet been provided to staff for review.

In **Silver Spring**, there are several relevant transportation projects:

Silver Spring Transit Center (P509974): The project cost has increased by \$7.5 million because of construction problems and the opening will be delayed until fall 2013. The construction of Gene Lynch Park will occur in FY14-15.

Capital Crescent Trail (P501316): This project was added last year to the CIP, as recommended by the Board in its comments on the Purple Line. A delay of six months is recommended due to fiscal capacity. While the PDF states that that there should be no impact on the schedule due to the lack of state construction funding for the Purple Line, the latter may change in the current legislative session and the Council will have to consider how these projects are best coordinated.

Metropolitan Branch Trail (P501110): The Council considers this project a priority for completion before FY18. Construction completion has been delayed by one year to FY17.

In **Potomac**, the Executive has added the **North Potomac Community Recreation Center (P720102)** to the CIP, as the Board recommended in its 2012 comments. Fiscal constraints will delay the start of construction until at least the fall of 2013, with most construction occurring during FY14 and FY15.

These projects, outside the county's developing centers, have also been amended by the Executive:

Goshen Road South (P501107): \$1 million in funding of this \$128 million project is recommended to be moved from Beyond 6 Years to FY18 to reflect inclusion of this project in the Subdivision Staging Policy. This is only a very slight shift of funds that reflects the fiscal constraints on the 6-year CIP.

Colesville Depot (P500709): The project is recommended to be delayed one year due to fiscal capacity.