



Memorandum

TO: City Council

FROM: Alfred Lott, City Manager

SUBJECT: Approval of Letter to Prince George's County Council in Reference to their FY 2023 Proposed Budget & Capital Improvement Program

DATE: 04/28/2022

ATTACHMENTS: 1. 20220502 - County Budget Letter - FY 2023

May 2, 2022

The Honorable Calvin S. Hawkins, II, Chair
Prince George's County Council
14741 Governor Oden Bowie Drive
Upper Marlboro, Maryland 20772

RE: Prince George's County FY 2023 Proposed Budget & Capital Improvement Program

Dear Chair Hawkins:

The Bowie City Council respectfully offers the following comments regarding the FY 2023 Proposed Operating Budget and FY 2023-2028 Capital Improvement Program. Comments on the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission Budget are offered in a separate letter. Thank you for your review and consideration of these issues of importance to the City of Bowie and its residents.

TRANSPORTATION

Chestnut Avenue Bridge Replacement

This project replaces the Chestnut Avenue bridge over Newstop Branch and reconstructs the approach roadways. The existing 19-foot span steel and reinforced concrete bridge is experiencing deterioration and is in need of structural replacement. The City is pleased that funding has been increased for this \$6.8 million project, with planning, land acquisition and construction funding programmed in Year 1 and an additional \$2 million in construction funding programmed in Year 2. The City looks forward to completion of this needed rehabilitation project in FY 2023, as Chestnut Avenue is a key north-south route serving the Old Town Bowie, Northridge and Highbridge neighborhoods. Any traffic detour plans should be coordinated with the City's Public Works Department, Police Department and Emergency Management office as soon as possible.

Church Road

Improvements will include intersection improvements, local realignment of the roadway, and the addition of shoulders and roadside drainage where necessary. The horizontal and vertical alignment of the roadway will be improved. Improvements are needed to enhance safety along the roadway and eliminate the S-curve and narrow roadway south of Woodmore Road. Unfortunately, the \$9.6 million in County funding shown in the proposed CIP appears in the "Beyond Six Years" category, representing no real effort to move this critical project toward fruition.

Church Road is a major road serving a large portion of the Prince George's County's estate-home community. Redevelopment of Freeway Airport and other new developments in the area justify moving ahead with this \$10 million project as soon as possible. The City owns the majority of land needed for straightening the dangerous S-curves, south of Tall Oaks Vocational School, and we are willing to partner with Prince George's County by providing the land needed for a roadway realignment at this location. Please have your Department of Public Works & Transportation leaders contact the City regarding this opportunity for collaboration.

Race Track Road

The City Council requests that you continue funding for the upgrading of Race Track Road in the County CIP. The plans are approximately 65% complete and will be put out for public review. The City continues to support the use of “complete street” principles in this design.

Mitchellville Road

The lack of any sidewalks at some locations on Mitchellville Road, south of Mount Oak Road, makes access by pedestrians very difficult and unsafe. Construction of a 2-lane urban section roadway, including on-road bike lanes, will provide needed refuge for pedestrians, allow for safer bicycle access and improve drainage conditions. The City asks for your cooperation by including some level of funding in the FY 2023 CIP to begin planning for an upgrade of Mitchellville Road, south of Mount Oak Road. The construction of 187 townhouse units at Amber Ridge is going to impact local streets, including Mitchellville Road. The City is willing to assist with neighborhood meetings to get this critical project started.

Old Town Bowie Pedestrian Improvements

New sidewalks and crosswalks on Chestnut Avenue, Maple Avenue, Duckettown Road and Old Laurel Bowie Road would greatly improve pedestrian safety on these County roads, which are the major transportation links to Old Town Bowie. Adding these facilities is consistent with the County’s commitment to “Complete Streets”.

Old Stage Road

Traveling this road is extremely dangerous, especially in the narrow, 800-foot long segment near Old Stage Road’s intersection with Church Road. The City Council again requests that funding be allocated for land acquisition and roadway expansion of Old Stage Road at its intersection with Church Road.

Transit

The City Council is very happy to see the initiation of the PGC Link paratransit service in part of our city. This is a positive first step; however, the City again requests that Prince George’s County begin planning to establish a fixed downtown circulator route (TheBus) serving the Bowie Center, including Covington and Melford, so that a route can be implemented over the next two to three years. The multi-family apartment sections of Melford have obtained site plan approval and are now under construction. Covington is one of the City’s highest density neighborhoods, yet it is not served by transit. In addition, a concept plan was approved for a new mixed-use development at the site of the former Sears store in the Bowie Town Center. The addition of County bus service will compensate for limited, fixed route, WMATA service and will provide a practical alternative to linking jobs, housing and shopping within the Bowie Center recognized in Plan Prince George’s 2035. We urge you to include funding in the DPW&T operating budget for the first steps toward making this new circulator route for TheBus a reality.

FIRE DEPARTMENT

Annapolis Road Fire Station (Bowie Fire/EMS #839)

This improvement project remains in the “Beyond Six Years” category, again, in the FY 2023 CIP. The project will provide \$3.6 million in funding to complete a major renovation of the existing facility constructed in 1957. This key facility serves the central portion of our City and currently houses a basic

life support ambulance, engine, ladder truck and tanker. We believe the current conditions at the station merit a more aggressive timetable for improvements and we urge your support for moving the project into the first few years of the CIP.

Beechtree Fire/EMS Station

This project identifies funding in the out years for a new, \$9.3 million, 3-bay Fire/EMS station. Construction of this station will improve response time in the US 301 corridor between Bowie and Upper Marlboro. Some planning, land acquisition, construction and other funding will be expended through FY 2022. However, the remaining construction funding remains in the “Beyond 6 Years” category.

A look at the development pipeline provides compelling evidence for immediate funding of this new fire station. These projects include the large amount of continuing development (such as the communities of Oak Creek Club and Beechtree) in the vicinity, as well as the future projects of South Lake (380,000 square feet of retail use, 220,000 square feet of office use, two hotels and 1,360 dwelling units, including 325 multi-family apartment units, 126 multi-family condominium units, 567 townhouse units and 342 single-family detached units), National Capital Business Park (about three million square feet in 15 buildings, generating 3,000-4,000 jobs), additional thousands of square feet of light industrial and office development, such as Amazon Services and the NASA Federal Credit Union office complex, in the Collington Center Employment Park, Locust Hill (706 residential units) and the planned multi-sport, tournament complex known as Liberty Sports Park located off of US 301 in the Collington Center, which is expected to host 350,000 visitors annually between tournaments and daily league activity. It is very likely that the new commercial developments would fail the four-minute travel test from the closest Prince George’s County Fire/EMS Station when applying the national standard.

Woodmore Fire/EMS Station

This project provides funding for a new station in the general area of Mount Oak Road and Church Road. The design will be a 3-bay drive-through design. However, all of the \$8.6 million project remains in the “Beyond Six Years” category of the CIP, with no project completion date identified. Like the City’s recommendation for improvements to Church Road noted above, the City Council urges consideration of accelerating this project to an earlier fiscal year to keep pace with new development occurring in the Church Road corridor.

CENTRAL SERVICES

Collington Athletic Complex (aka Liberty Sports Park)

The City Council supports the full funding of this \$19.2 million, multi-field sports facility complex on a 76-acre, County owned property through the CIP. The City Council sees this project as critical to the long-term success of the proposed South Lake (Karrington) development.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Business Incubation and Acceleration

A county wide business incubation system needs to be created from existing incubators (e.g. Bowie BIC, Maryland TAP, PGC EDC’s expanded incubator) with dedicated funding that will support the expansion of incubation and acceleration services to all parts of the County. Annual funding of at least \$175,000 per incubator needs to be provided.

We appreciate the opportunity to comment on these matters of importance to the City of Bowie. Many thanks to you and your colleagues for your efforts and hard work on behalf of the residents of Prince George's County.

Sincerely,

Bowie City Council
Timothy J. Adams
Mayor

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