

TO: Richmond Selectboard

FROM: Ravi Venkataraman, Town Planner

CC: Richmond Transportation Committee, Richmond Planning Commission

DATE: November 12, 2021

SUBJECT: Potential projects for FY2023 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP)

Background

Recently, the Richmond Transportation Committee has been discussing possible projects to pursue as part of the FY2023 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP). The UPWP is a federally mandated annual work plan Municipal Planning Organizations (MPO)--like CCRPC—must compile for municipal and regional transportation planning projects. Federal funds are distributed to MPO based on the approved UPWP. In addition, MPO staffing resources are allocated for the entire year based on the approved UPWP.

For transportation planning projects, the required match the town must provide is 20 percent of the project cost. The FY23 budget includes an appropriation for the required match under the “Transportation Planning” line. The “Transportation Planning” line is slated to have \$20,000, all of which is specifically for UPWP transportation planning projects.

CCRPC’s UPWP includes not only transportation planning projects—as required—but also land-use planning projects, such as assisting with zoning bylaw revisions and town plans. Land use planning projects do not receive federal funds, and municipalities are required to pay in full the project cost.

The Housing Committee and Planning Commission have just started discussions on possible land-use planning projects for the FY23 UPWP. The committees have not decided on possible projects yet, and I will report back to you next month if either commission decides to pursue any projects. In the FY23 budget, I have budgeted \$5,000 under “Contract Services” for CCRPC assistance for the Planning Commission’s and Housing Committee’s work.

The application period for the FY23 UPWP will open in the coming weeks. Applications for all types projects are expected to be due on January 21, 2022.

Possible Transportation Planning Projects

In the last two years, the Town has received funding for three UPWP projects. Projects include sidewalk-installation feasibility studies (also known as scoping studies), corridor studies to improve traffic flow for all users, and town-wide master planning for paths and trails. Engineering and construction projects are not eligible for UPWP funds.

Projects the Transportation Committee has discussed include:

- An update to the 2014 Route 2 scoping study with a study of the Route 2/I-89/VT-117 intersections – The scoping study undertaken in 2014 investigated the feasibility of a shared-use path along Route 2. This study is considered near obsolete, and has to be reevaluated and updated in order to use to pursue funding for engineering and construction. In addition, the

Transportation Committee and I would like to include the Route 2/I-89 intersection into the project scope, in order to determine best methods to improve traffic flow for bicycles and pedestrians through the intersections. Estimated project cost is to be determined. I have contacted CCRPC staff for an estimated project cost.

- Converting the Walk, Bike, Trails Plan into an Official Map – This project would essentially convert the master plan we have been working on for the last two years into a regulatory map. This regulatory Official Map would force the development of infrastructure as depicted on private properties or within rights-of-way when a property is developed or redeveloped. The project would include public meetings to collect input on location and prioritization, further clarification of the connections, and drafting regulations to specify requirements. Estimated project cost is to be \$20,000, and the required match would be \$4,000.
- Revising the impact fee ordinance to collect fees to construct sidewalks – This project would be a revision to the town’s impact fee ordinance to collect a fee for every new primary structure built—such as housing units and commercial buildings—to fund the construction of a sidewalk segment. Specific calculations based on the total project cost and the cost share on applicants are required for impact fee ordinances, and these calculations are complex. Estimated project cost is to be \$15,000, and the required match would be \$3,000.
- Scoping study for a shared-use path within the I-89 ROW from the schools to the park-and-ride – This project would investigate the feasibility of installing a path from the schools to the park and ride with the I-89 ROW. This connection has been identified in phase 1 of the town-wide Walk, Bike, Trails Plan as a possible alternative to connect the village with the park-and-ride. The Transportation Committee has indicated a preference for an on-alignment path with Route 2 between the village and park-and-ride. Estimated project cost is to be determined.

Suggestions for possible transportation planning projects and recommendations on projects worth pursuing would be appreciated. The Transportation Committee will discuss potential application topics at an upcoming meeting after receiving feedback from the Selectboard and the public. Transportation Committee representatives and I will be attending the meeting to discuss potential projects further and address any questions.