



Waynesboro City Council Agenda Briefing

Meeting Date:	June 28, 2022	Staff/Council Member(s): Luke Juday, Director of Community Development
Agenda Item #	8	
Resolution#		
Department:	City Manager’s Office/Planning Department	
Subject:	VDOT SMART-SCALE Grant Applications	

BACKGROUND

The Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) in accordance with a 2014 VA General Assembly Transportation Bill (§33.2-214.1), established the SMART SCALE Program (formally known as HB2) as a means for funding the right transportation projects with limited funds. The SMART SCALE program is intended to create objective criteria for reviewing local applications for Six-Year Improvement Plan (SYIP) funding and provide full funding for projects to successful applicants. In the past, projects were often included in VDOT’s Six-Year Improvement Plan without complete funding at their outset. Some projects, consequently, took more than six years to complete or were never fully funded.

The SMART SCALE criteria for funding include: Safety Improvement, Congestion Mitigation, Accessibility, Environmental Quality, and Economic Development Potential. A cost/benefit analysis is also utilized to grade proposed projects. The program does not require a local match, although alternative funding sources may help the cost/benefit scoring by decreasing the state’s contribution.

In 2016, the City received a \$13.5 million VDOT SMART SCALE award to complete the “Southern Corridor”, an extension of Shenandoah Village Drive to South Delphine Avenue. The City’s contribution to the project is about \$2.5 million. The project is still in progress after suffering delays from regulatory issues around rail and wetland crossings. In 2018, the City received a \$2.2 million award for the East Main Streetscape and Multi-Use Path, which will reconfigure East Main Street from the Main Street Bridge all the way to the eastern city limits, with street trees, sidewalks, and a new separated multi-use path replacing the on-street bike lanes. The City also received \$550,000 for the 13th and Rosser roundabout. Both projects are scheduled to begin around 2023-2024. In 2020, the City received awards for three of the four submitted applications. \$845,775 for the Rosser Avenue (US 340) improvements that would apply the remaining recommendations from the Kimley-Horn study conducted in 2018 including reconfiguring intersections and upgrading signal hardware. The City also received \$5,200,000 for the West Main Street corridor improvements that would implement the STARS study recommendations including improved pedestrian accommodations and replacing the center turn lane with a raised median. Finally, the City received \$2,305,000 for the Broad

Street streetscape project that would improve pedestrian accommodations, add street trees, and replace the center turn lane with a series of raised medians to permit left turns.

The SMART SCALE program allows each locality to submit four projects, though there is generally not enough funding to make four applications worthwhile unless a locality has numerous high-scoring projects with sufficient preliminary engineering work to support an application. This year, Waynesboro is using three of its slots. The City has been very successful in getting most of its priority projects funded, and again in need of a planning phase to determine new transportation improvement projects for future SMART SCALE rounds. This year the City is again applying for funding for the Crozet Tunnel Trail. This application was unsuccessful in the 2020 round of SMART SCALE. The second project is a single-lane roundabout at the intersection of Rosser Avenue, Broad Street, and Main Street to improve traffic flow and pedestrian safety. The third project is for off-ramp improvements for the I-64, Exit 94 off ramp to improve traffic flow.

2022 SMART SCALE Applications

Westbound I-64, Exit 94 Off-Ramp Improvements

This project is a second submittal of a project that the Staunton-Augusta-Waynesboro MPO submitted during the 2018 round of SMART SCALE. Traffic exiting off of I-64 at Exit 94 has been steadily increasing due to increase residential and shopping traffic causing periodic back up onto I-64, particularly during the evening rush hour. This project should alleviate that congestion.

The project would add a new 550-foot right turn lane with a 400-foot taper to the Exit 94 off-ramp and modify the existing ramp signals to accommodate the off-ramp approach improvements. This would create dual right turn lanes and help to reduce stacking that occurs on the interstate itself.

Rosser Avenue (US 340), Main Street (US 340), and Broad Street (US 250) Roundabout

In early 2020, the City requested VDOT analysis the City's central intersection of Rosser Avenue, Main Street, and Broad Street to see what options there were for improving the safety and congestion of the intersection including the consideration of a roundabout. This intersection received a rank of 29 in the Staunton District for VDOT's Potential for Safety Improvements 2016-2020 data and 37 crashes occurred during this time period. It is now the most dangerous intersection in the City that does not have an ongoing safety improvement project or study underway.

VDOT's analysis recommended a single lane roundabout due to the geometry and traffic in the intersection. Roundabouts are a proven tool for reducing crashes at intersections by 60% and reducing deaths and serious injuries even more. This project would construct a single-lane roundabout at this intersection replacing the current signalized intersection. The project would also significantly improve pedestrian accommodations by adding crosswalks at the traffic

splitter islands. The project would tie into the Broad Street streetscape improvement project by providing safe pedestrian accommodations across West Main Street, which the intersection currently lacks. The proposed project would significantly reduce the number and severity of crashes, provide safer pedestrian accommodations, and improve traffic flow.

Crozet Tunnel Trail

The Crozet Tunnel Trail, also known as the Crozet Tunnel Phase IV project, is a paved multi-use trail from the terminus of the currently funded East Main Street Multi-Use Path to the Blue Ridge Tunnel (or Crozet Tunnel) that opened to the public in November 2020. This would be a significant quality of life amenity for the City and would allow pedestrians and bicyclists to travel off-street from Afton in Nelson County all the way to businesses on East Main Street and into downtown Waynesboro.

The project is supported by a planning study and a significant amount of preliminary engineering work. Its high cost is due in large part to the need to tunnel under a live railroad track while complying with all Federal accessibility requirements. The high price tag disqualifies it from many smaller grants, such as the Transportation Alternatives or Recreational Trails programs. The City has submitted the project twice, unsuccessfully, for the Federal BUILD grant program and once for the SMART SCALE program. However, because of these prior applications, all of the necessary materials for a grant application are already close at hand.

City Manager's Recommendation: The SMART SCALE program offers a tremendous opportunity for Virginia localities to complete important transportation projects. The potential to receive VDOT funding for this project should be pursued.

Suggested Motion(s): Separate motions should be made to adopt the following proposed resolutions of support for SMART SCALE applications:

- 1) A resolution of support for the Rosser Avenue (US 340), Main Street (US 340), and Broad Street (US 250) roundabout SMART SCALE grant application;
- 2) A resolution of support for the westbound I-64 Exit 94 off-ramp improvements SMART SCALE grant application;
- 3) A resolution of support for the Crozet Tunnel Trail SMART SCALE grant application.

Attachments: Resolutions