

June 1, 2023

To: Annapolis City Council

From: Planning Commission

Re: Findings for Ordinance O-14-23: Capital Improvement Plan FY2024

SUMMARY

This legislation includes the annual proposed City Budget, which is comprised of the Annual Operating Budget for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2024, the Capital Budget for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2024, the Capital Improvement Program for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2025, June 30, 2026, June 30, 2027, June 30, 2028, and June 30, 2029; appropriating funds for all expenditures for the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2023, and ending June 30, 2024; levying and imposing a property tax for the use of the City of Annapolis for the taxable year beginning July 1, 2023, and ending June 30, 2024; and fixing the rate of the City property tax for the taxable year.

The Capital Budget for FY24 includes:

- Thirty-seven General Fund projects totaling \$46,688,140 and;
- Ten Enterprise Fund projects totaling \$10,467,000.

New projects this year include:

- **Acton Cove Park.** This project aims to improve a frequently visited waterfront park in Annapolis that currently suffers from water accumulation issues after rain events, restricting access to the waterfront. The project's initial phase will identify the cause of the water accumulation and propose landscape modifications such as moving or replacing the current storm grate, adjusting the slope of a brick path, and creating areas with better stormwater absorption. Once the drainage issue is resolved, the project will expand to enhance the dock area by increasing space for boat tie-ups, improving access to water taxi services, and installing a paddle launch.
- **Annapolis Solar Park Pollinator Garden.** This project will establish a pollinator-friendly garden at the solar park, requiring annual mowing, aeration, and seed application for about three years. Ground-mounted solar power arrays offer an excellent opportunity to provide safe habitats for pollinators. By planting pollinator-friendly flora at solar sites, the garden will offer food and habitats for insects like bees and butterflies and birds and mammals. These phased plantings can significantly reduce wind and surface water erosion and the need for fertilizers, herbicides, and pesticides. They can also improve soil quality and the aesthetics of the solar facility. The proportion of pollinator garden to grass will increase each year for these three years as the garden establishes itself.
- **Citywide Public Water Access Improvements:** The City of Annapolis aims to expand public water access, as highlighted in its first-ever Public Water Access Plan, which identifies gaps in its water access network that need further planning. For FY24, the focus will be on Tolson Street Park and Northwest Street Park. Tolson Street Park, a new street end park on Weems Creek in West Annapolis, only has one public water access location. Its current usage is limited due to a need for more infrastructure and overgrown vegetation.

Initial work will involve a boundary and topographic survey and the creation of a concept plan for improvements. Northwest Street Park, located near the Clay Street community on College Creek, also has limited public water access. It's a small street-end plaza without water access. Preliminary work will include designing a floating dock to facilitate paddle access.

- **College Creek Connector Trail.** This project, located at a crucial entry point to Annapolis, aims to connect King George Street and Calvert Street along the College Creek shoreline. This trail passes essential cultural sites like St. John's College and St. Anne's Cemetery. It includes an elevated boardwalk near St. John's College, offering a distinctive walking and biking experience while preserving the riparian habitat. The trail also links to another significant State-led project, aiming to connect the B&A Trail to downtown Annapolis, thus bringing substantial transit and recreational tourism benefits. The funding for this project was previously allocated to the Trail Connections project.
- **Duke of Gloucester Street Floating Pier.** The project involves installing a floating pier at the base of the Spa Creek Bridge, a site eligible for a Department of Natural Resources State Waterway Improvement Grant. To ensure accessibility, a ramp will also be installed near the intersection of Duke of Gloucester Street and Compromise Street.
- **General Existing Waterfront Access Infrastructure.** This project involves repairing or replacing existing city waterfront access infrastructure, including bulkheads, docks, boat ramps, and shorelines. A new regular maintenance program will be developed based on a comprehensive assessment of the city-owned waterfront infrastructure scheduled for FY2024.
- **Gibraltar Avenue.** Currently, the City of Annapolis does not possess ownership of Gibraltar Avenue. Therefore, legal research is necessary to identify the current owner, enabling the City to procure the property. This project allocates funds for legal research, design, and partial construction expenses.
- **Parks Maintenance Facility.** This project will establish a new storage facility, offices, and garage for the Parks division of the Department of Recreation & Parks. This facility will provide insulated storage for vehicles, materials, and equipment. In addition, a new office for the Parks division will be established, replacing the existing office trailer, which will facilitate enhancements to the neighboring parking area.
- **Spa Road Sidewalk.** This project will construct a new sidewalk on Spa Road between Forest Drive and Hilltop Lane. As part of the project, right-of-way, and environmental issues, among other concerns, will be assessed and addressed.
- **Traffic Safety Improvements.** This project aims to set up a continuous program that facilitates the planning, designing, and constructing of traffic safety enhancements along city-managed arterial and major collector roads. The project's initial stage involves assessing the current conditions and creating a prioritized list of locations for safety upgrades, considering factors like traffic and pedestrian flow, past accident records, and ADA accessibility. Traffic safety enhancements will be designed and implemented consistently over time.
- **Parking Garage and Lot Improvements.** This project will allocate funds for yearly capital maintenance of the city-owned parking garages and lots, encompassing building, asphalt, and concrete repairs. The facilities involved in this project include Gotts Court Garage, Knighton Garage, and the Larkin Street surface lot.
- **Transportation Charging Infrastructure.** The Transportation Department's bus parking area will have a charging infrastructure. Two electric buses have already been ordered, and more are planned for future

purchases. Multiple charging stations will be set up, complete with the necessary software and infrastructure.

Mr. Leshinsky presented the critical aspects of the plan and project details while providing insight into the strategic prioritization of each project. The Commission appreciated the thoroughness of the CIP presentation, and the inclusion of supporting documentation was provided for additional details and context.

The Commission was pleased with the new initiatives, particularly the variety and type of projects presented in the CIP, including an emphasis on long-awaited water access, maintenance, and facility improvement projects. The CIP has an inclusive approach to community development, ensuring that the benefits of these investments will reach all corners of our City. In addition, the proposed CIP effectively balances a commitment to ongoing maintenance needs with strategic investments that promote long-term growth and connectivity in a detailed, prudent, and forward-thinking approach to allocating capital resources over the next five years.

The Planning Commission has closely examined the CIP, and we are satisfied that it meets the expectations and standards set forth by our City's strategic objectives and fiscal policies while offering a comprehensive strategy to optimize our City's growth, foster resilience, and advance the wellbeing of all our residents.

RECOMMENDATION

On May 4 and May 18, 2023, the Planning Commission held a public hearing on O-14-23 and subsequently moved to recommend that the City Council adopt the FY2025-2029 Capital Improvement Program by a vote of 5-0 (Ms. Butler abstained, and Mr. Sale was absent).

Adopted this 1st day of June 2023

Approved and submitted on behalf of the Planning Commission

Alex Pline, Chair

Teresa Pico, Vice-chair

Ben Sale, Member

David Iams, Member

Diane Butler, Member

Robert Waldman, Member

Thomas Sfaykanudis, Member