

The questions and comments below were submitted prior to the Planning Commission review of the CIP by Commissioner Finnegan via email on Wednesday, January 29, 2025. The referenced page numbers have been changed to reflect the current page numbers.

General Questions for the Department of Parks and Recreation

1. **Does the department collect data on how many people frequent each park facility? It would be helpful to see estimates for how many people visit each park facility each year.**

Response: Data on how many people use our park facilities is difficult to obtain and to rely on for accuracy. There are several different ways of doing this, but often we rely on our best efforts for estimations based on collective knowledge. If we find data that we are more confident with, we can consider providing this data in the future.

2. **What is the status of the Ramblewood Athletic Complex? Is it open to the public?**

Response: The Ramblewood Athletic Complex off of Ramblewood Road is open to the public.

3. **The Morrison Park sign at the corner of Chicago and 2nd Street blocks the line of sight to northbound car traffic for people traveling eastbound on 2nd. What would be the cost of relocating this sign to improve traffic safety at this intersection?**

Response: This is the first that P&R Administration is hearing of this concern. We can evaluate this situation to see if appropriate sight distances are met.

Questions for Specific Projects

1. **Page 9—Apparatus Replacement Program:** The substantial size of traditional American fire trucks dictates the width of city streets and impacts pedestrian safety, as well as the design of parking lots and where housing can be sited. Continuing to procure large trucks is essentially locking Harrisonburg into these design requirements in perpetuity. Instead of [designing our city around the size of the trucks](#), wouldn't a better approach be to [right-size the trucks](#) to allow for flexibility and agility?

Response: Urban planning takes into account a wide array of factors when determining ideal infrastructure features. The size of fire apparatus may appear at first glance to be a major contributory factor in this effort, but there are other factors that are significantly more impactful. Recently, the Harrisonburg Fire Department took delivery of two new pumper engines that are actually smaller than previously purchased apparatus. Their turning radius is dramatically smaller than older apparatus and they are shorter and more compact, without sacrificing safety or effectiveness. These two engines are serving the city at Station 1 (Maryland Ave) and Station 4 (Rock St). One of the greatest challenges facing communities in Virginia centers on the issue that Virginia is a Dillon Rule State,

which prevents localities from enacting fire codes (and building codes) that are more stringent than those adopted by the Commonwealth. As a result, the Fire Official in Harrisonburg is prevented from advocating for fire prevention codes that could dramatically and permanently improve the life safety of all Harrisonburg residents. Ironically, this is the same rule referenced in the article wherein state codes prevent localities from more specialized and tailored design features. Absent more aggressive fire prevention codes (as found in Europe), the most effective way to protect the lives and property of the Harrisonburg community is to ensure a robust, well equipped and appropriately staffed response agency. The Fire Department would welcome the opportunity to be a stakeholder and participant in any discussion that involves ensuring the long-term health of our community. We should innovate and look for ways to work collaboratively to accomplish our common goals.

2. **Page 28—Water Street Bridge:** Wasn't this bridge repaired/replaced by Norfolk Southern last year? Does it already need to be replaced again?

Response: The recent project was an emergency repair due to a condition found during a bridge inspection. This CIP project is a complete replacement of this structure.

3. **Page 38—Traffic Signal Pole Anchor Bolts UT Inspection:** These shear pins are [designed to break away if a car crashes into the pole](#). Cars are designed with many crash safety features, but pedestrians at an intersection only have these posts to protect them in the event of a crash. Is there a MUTCD-approved alternative to these breakaway bolts that would prioritize pedestrian safety?

Response: Public Works is unaware of any MUTCD alternative for traffic signal anchor bolts.

4. **Page 40—Downtown Streetscape Project:** Raised crosswalks help improve pedestrian safety. Are there plans to add more raised crosswalks downtown like the one between Finnigan's Cove and Bella Gelato?

Response: Not at this time.

5. **Page 43—Chicago Avenue and Waterman Drive Improvements:** Has Public Works explored quick build options for Chicago and Waterman? The preliminary design options displayed at the open house appear to be a good candidate for [quick build traffic calming](#), because it could be installed within the existing road space. A quick build approach could be a lower-cost, more responsive and adaptable approach to improving safety at this intersection.

Response: We are currently finalizing the corridor study and will make determination on next steps soon.

6. **Page 48—Martin Luther King Jr. Way Widening:** Where is the intersection of Ott and MLK way? Is this referring to the stairs from Ott to MLK?

Response: Yes. It is also at the entrance to JMU's Wine Price Building and 2nd level of the old RMH parking deck.

7. **Page 49—Neff Avenue Bicycle and Pedestrian Improvements:** Project #2 should be a very high priority. The crosswalk on Neff is extremely dangerous, and discourages walking and biking as a safe mode of transportation from high-density student housing to JMU campus. How many bike and pedestrian crash incidents have occurred at this crosswalk in the last 10 years?

Response: We only have data back to 2019. Between 2019-2023 there were 2 visible injury bike crashes and no reported pedestrian crashes. Our reporting system only tracks reportable crashes and there may be non-reportable or close calls that are not represented.

8. **Page 54—Reservoir Street Sidewalk:** Has there been any conversation with the landowner of the Harrisonburg Crossing about finding a way to construct a safer, paved version of the footpath leading from Reservoir, over the guardrail, down the hill to Walmart? If the sidewalk goes from the overpass all the way to the light, that's a very long way for pedestrians walking to Walmart to go out of their way. There should be a way to get from the bridge to the Walmart parking lot without walking the long way round.

Response: The currently funded Smart Scale project that will install sidewalks from Harrisonburg Crossing to Dutch Mill Court, includes a stair connection between Reservoir St and the Harrisonburg Crossing parking lot.

9. **Page 61—Solar Implementation Plan:** It would be helpful if estimated cost savings from generating solar power could be included in the Operating Impacts section in future CIPs.

Response: Calculating long-term cost savings involves several variables that can significantly impact projections. These include if the project installation was financed with loans or leases, the availability of tax credits through elective pay or grants, the assumed utility inflation rate over 20-30 years, the degradation rate of photovoltaic panels, ongoing maintenance costs (such as inverter replacements), if revenue is generated from selling solar renewable energy credits (SRECs) and under what terms and rates, and if decommissioning costs at the end of the system's life are included. A more practical and understandable estimate would be to provide the expected percentage of the total building load that the solar system is projected to supply in the project description.

10. **Pages 92, 93, and 94—Elizabeth Street Parking Deck, Water Street Parking Deck, and Public Safety Building Parking Deck:** It appears the calculation/formula for these downtown parking deck projects is \$30,000 per car parking stall, is that correct?

Response: Yes.

11. **Page 131—Solar Panel Installation at Rocktown High School:** It would be helpful if estimated cost savings from generating solar power could be included in the Operating Impacts section in future CIPs.

Response: Calculating long-term cost savings involves several variables that can significantly impact projections. These include if the project installation was financed with loans or leases, the availability of tax credits through elective pay or grants, the assumed utility inflation rate over 20-30 years, the degradation rate of photovoltaic panels, ongoing maintenance costs (such as inverter replacements), if revenue is generated from selling solar renewable energy credits (SRECs) and under what terms and rates, and if decommissioning costs at the end of the system's life are included. A more practical and understandable estimate would be to provide the expected percentage of the total building load that the solar system is projected to supply in the project description.

12. **Page 140—Management of Water Treatment Assets:** Is Harrisonburg's water treatment system at risk of the type of non-potable water disaster we saw in Richmond last month?

Response: HPU's inventory of assets is nearly one billion dollars in current day replacement value. Every asset has risk, including the water treatment plant. Risk is a function of consequence of failure and likelihood of failure. Preventing, mitigating, and recovering from risk are the goals of our department asset management plan. Providing CIP funds for replacement of the asset is an activity in the final stage in the asset management cycle.

The Richmond event was caused by a power failure, which was not mitigated due to shortfalls in having and executing the appropriate phase of the asset management plan. At Harrisonburg, we have experienced several power failures over the years; however, with proper mitigation. Our plant, like all assets, is subject to risk. Our facility is a singular (no duplication) high consequence of failure asset; we are susceptible to many threats in addition to power outage. Our best counter measure is a highly effective asset management plan, which includes funding for asset replacement as requested in the CIP.

13. **Page 166—City Landfill Closure & Monitoring:** In terms of percentage, how full is the landfill? At the current rate, how soon until we would need to find a new landfill location?

Response: The City landfill is closed and does not accept any solid waste. Public Works disposes of all collected solid waste at the Rockingham County landfill, and we are unaware of remaining capacity.

The questions and comments below were submitted prior to the Planning Commission review of the CIP by Council Member Dent via email on Wednesday, January 29, 2025. The referenced page numbers have been changed to reflect the current page numbers.

General Questions for Parking Lots and Decks

1. **Are we considering pervious pavement for lots?**

Response: To date this has not been a consideration, however, when projects that include parking lots are developed these could be considered to assist with Stormwater Management requirements.

2. **Are we considering solar panels on lots and decks?**

Response: At this time our Solar Implementation plan is focusing on usable building roof space.

Questions and Comments for Specific Projects

1. **Page 11—Fire Station 2 Replacement/Relocation:** Could the 2-3 minute delay jeopardize our improved ISO rating that we intend to achieve by Fire Station 5? Noted as “Future” – should it be higher priority, and sooner?

Response: The proposed location for the replacement fire station would maintain the response district for Fire Station 2 without jeopardizing our ISO rating. It would reduce response times to that part of the district where Engine 2 responds most frequently without adversely affecting fire protection in the entire district. The determination of its priority in the replacement schedule should be equally valued with other important projects.

2. **Page 57—Port Republic Road – Forest Hill Road:** Isn't this being addressed sooner than “Future” through Smart Scale and other funding? and coordinated with University Ave extension/straightening?

Response: Public Works submitted for Smart Scale funding for this project with the current round. However, if awarded the funding would not be available until “Future” in our CIP. Projects awarded through the Smart Scale process are placed in the last 2 years of the VDOT Six Year Improvement Plan, which for this round of Smart Scale would be FY 30 or 31 at the earliest.

3. **Page 61—Solar Implementation Plan:** In addition to Vice Chair Finnegan’s question on Operating Cost savings, please include projected greenhouse gas emission reduction for solar projects in future CIPs.

Response: Noted.

4. **Page 82—Simms HVAC Replacement:** Are we considering electric heat pumps powered by solar for GHG reduction?

Response: We are open minded to any type of replacement for the Simms Center HVAC replacement. For this quote, it does not include solar powered heat pumps at this time. The purpose of this quote was to simply provide an efficient system to fix the current HVAC challenges at the Simms Center, and to do so as cost effective as possible, without sacrificing quality. Most of the energy savings through this replacement seems to come through variable speed motors and more modern, and energy efficient, equipment.

5. **Page 99 and following—School Roof Repairs:** Good to consider solar at the time of roof repair.

Response: Comment acknowledged.

6. **Page 106—Purchase Land for 7th Elementary School:** Good to see addition of Alternatives. The sooner reasonable alternatives are proposed (such as expanding existing schools) the more likely such alternatives are to be implemented.

Response: Comment acknowledged.

7. **Page 131—Solar Panel Installation at Rocktown High School:** Excellent! Requested for 2026.

Response: Comment acknowledged.

8. **Page 146—Raw Water Supply Drought Sources:** Good to consider Quarry reservoir in conjunction with recently approved Quarry Heights development (among other options).

Response: To clarify, the quarry would not provide any additional water supply as the quarry fill rate is too small to be significant to our system. The quarry may allow us to store water from our existing sources during drought.

Our investments into water supply will yield us more than 30 million gallons a day maximum; however, due to stream conditions and environmental regulations, this availability reduces to 11.6 MGD during drought.

The quarry is a unique project that could allow us to store water during high stream flows and then to use the stored water when our supply is limited.

9. **Page 166—City Landfill Closure & Monitoring:** 30-year period ends approximately 2031? Good timing to build a solar array.

Response: Comment acknowledged.

10. **Page 170—Waterman Drive Drainage and Water Quality Improvement:** Approved Quarry Heights development proposes to mitigate drainage onto Waterman and redirect flow into the Quarry itself.

Response: Comment acknowledged.

The questions and comments below were submitted prior to the Planning Commission review of the CIP by Commissioner Alsindi via email on Thursday, January 30, 2025. The referenced page numbers have been changed to reflect the current page numbers.

1. **Page 20—Feedstone Radio Tower Power:** I couldn't find the Goals and Objectives for the [identified project].

Response: This was an error of omission. We have corrected the project sheet.

2. **Some goals have a relatively higher number of projects compared to others in the Comprehensive Plan. For example, G7, G12, G13, and G14. The same applies to Objectives, such as 13.1 and 13.2. Is there a specific methodology followed in developing the anticipated projects to align with the goals and objectives outlined in the Comprehensive Plan?**

Response: There is no specific methodology. By recognizing that projects work toward specific identified goals or objectives of the Comprehensive Plan demonstrates the bigger planning picture that completing certain projects or implementing programs helps achieve the needs and desires of the community.