

Note: The following text is intended to replace the existing text in Section 8b of the Technical Report. This new text was created based on staff's discussions with John McDonald of the Financial and Management Services Department, and reflects his guidance and direction, as requested by the Steering Committee.

8b. Public Facilities Master Planning

James City County Capital Planning

Each of the departments and divisions of James City County is responsible for addressing its own capital budget needs, which can look very different from entity to entity. For example, some divisions, such as the school system or the Fire Department are very capital intensive, and require regularly occurring large capital expenditures. Other divisions, such as the Williamsburg Regional Library or the divisions that make up the general County government, generally require fewer, smaller-scaled capital expenditures. To manage their capital budget needs, most departments and divisions that require more frequent capital expenditure prepare service plans, which detail needed land acquisitions, new facilities and buildings, new vehicles, major software and equipment upgrades, and other similar items. The service plans include justification for the needed expenditures, and include estimations of cost and appropriate timetables for completion.

When they are created or updated, service plans are typically guided by the goals, strategies, and actions, as well as the Service and Facility Guidelines, of the Comprehensive Plan. This helps to ensure that the direction of public facilities planning in James City County is following a pre-established course. Over time, new projects are introduced into the service plans as the need dictates. At the beginning of each fiscal year, each department and division submits capital projects identified in their service plans for funding consideration. The County reviews these applications in its Capital Improvement Program (CIP) to determine which existing, ongoing projects require additional funding and which new projects should be considered for funding. Finally, when the Board of Supervisors adopts the budget, those projects deemed to be the most critical and necessary are funded.

Capital funding through the County's CIP process is an established and effective process. It is often supported with the use of other tools, such as adequate public facilities policies, cash proffers, and grant funding. Overall, the James City County capital planning process is used to ensure that the recurring and future needs of the County's citizens are adequately met in an efficient and cost-effective manner.

Public Facilities Master Plan: Definition and Discussion

A Public Facilities Master Plan (PFMP) is a guidance document, or set of documents, that may be created to tie all of a locality's public facilities together in an effort to better manage them. Conceptually, it lists those physical assets that the locality must purchase, build, or maintain in order to provide services to its citizens. At a minimum, a PFMP would include all of the elements found in the departmental service plans employed in James City County. Like the capital funding methodology that the County currently uses, a PFMP could be used in conjunction with other tools, such as an adequate public facilities policy or cash proffers. Depending on the desires of the locality, however, a PFMP may become substantially more detailed and complex, as is seen in the PFMP model used by Chesterfield County (discussed in

further detail in Appendix VIII). In this model, the PFMP becomes an overarching, all-inclusive document. The question has been raised as to whether a PFMP fashioned after the Chesterfield model would be a useful tool in the ongoing management of the County's public facilities. Staff cautions against investing in an expensive and laborious "reinvention of the wheel" to achieve the goals that have been identified in the ongoing PFMP discussion. These goals are defined as:

- 1) Improve the public transparency of the long-term capital budget planning process;
- 2) Improve the interagency coordination of the County's public facility and service providers with respect to eliminating duplication of facilities and services (as they relate to facility needs) and to taking advantage of shared-use and/or shared-funding opportunities; and
- 3) Provide a series of guidelines for use in reviewing CIP project funding applications.

Public Facilities Master Planning: Recommendations

Staff recommends that an appropriate series of "fixes" be implemented and used to enhance the James City County capital planning process that is currently in place, rather than creating a PFMP to attempt to achieve the goals listed above. These fixes could include such things as:

- Standardizing the information and data provided (such as inventories of land, buildings, vehicles, etc.) by the various County public facility and service providers in their individual long-term planning, budget, and CIP documents, with an emphasis on buildings, other improvements to property and/or equipment with a value that exceeds \$200,000, and land and/or easements of an acre or more in size;
- Improving the justifications provided for each new expenditure introduced to the CIP by the facility/service provider to assist with the review of CIP project funding applications; and
- Bringing all of the long-term planning, budget, and CIP documents together in one place (perhaps linking them all to a single webpage on the County's website, for example), which would make it easier to coordinate the various planning, budget, and CIP efforts internally, while also increasing the level of transparency of these documents for the general public and other external reviewers.