

CITY OF CHARLOTTESVILLE, VIRGINIA
CITY COUNCIL AGENDA



Agenda Date:	December 6, 2021
Action Required:	Appropriation of Grant Funds
Presenter:	Amanda Poncy, Bicycle and Pedestrian Coordinator, Public Works
Staff Contacts:	Amanda Poncy, Bicycle and Pedestrian Coordinator, Public Works Tony Edwards, Development Services Manager, Public Works
Title:	VDOT BPSP Grant for bicycle and pedestrian improvements Preston Avenue and Harris Street \$245,725

Background:

On September 6, 2016, City Council approved a Resolution of Support to apply for Pedestrian Safety Improvements Funding under the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) Bicycle and Pedestrian Safety Program (BPSP). The purpose of the BPSP is to evaluate proposals addressing non-motorized crashes and risks in Virginia. Proposals target the reduction in the number and severity, or the risk of and exposure to crashes. The intent of the BPSP is to promote proposals that address a known safety or accommodation issue, are smaller in scale, and can be completed quickly.

In June 2017, the City received notice that a number of intersection projects that were submitted received funding in FY22/23. The intersection of Preston Avenue and Harris Street is one of the intersections that was identified for pedestrian crossing improvements. New pedestrian curb ramps, median refuges, and revised pedestrian crossings will reduce pedestrian crossings widths, increase visibility of pedestrians, reduce pedestrian time within the roadway, and minimize out of distance pedestrian travel. VDOT has granted the city \$245,725 for these improvements.

Discussion:

The projects that were submitted for BPSP funding in 2016 were identified based on the results of the Timmons Group ADA Pedestrian Signal study and the Streets that Work Plan recommendations. Each intersection will be reconstructed with ADA compliant curb ramps, pedestrian pushbuttons, and crosswalk and bicycle pavement marking improvements.

In June 2017, staff was notified that the following intersections were awarded for FY20-23:

- a. Monticello/Ridge (also SIA) - \$209,500
- b. Monticello/2nd Street (also SIA) - \$338,230
- c. Cherry/Ridge - \$265,230
- d. Preston/Harris - \$245,725**
- e. Grady/10th - \$291,000

The City of Charlottesville selected the intersection of Preston Avenue at Harris Street as a candidate for pedestrian improvements. Citizen issues were combined with City planner's knowledge to identify the intersection as a candidate that would provide benefit to the community. The intersection has been in its current geometric configuration since the 1990's (20+ years). The pedestrian crossings from north to south across Preston Avenue are long (near 100 feet in length) and although they do pass through a median area, there is no pedestrian curb ramp access or surface to leave the roadway. Foliage and bridge structures within the median introduce sight distance issues that reduce the ability for vehicles to see pedestrians. High speeds on Preston Avenue increase severity of potential crashes. Commercial land uses occupies the 4 corners of the intersection.

The pedestrian crossing across Preston Avenue is long and does not provide any safe haven for the pedestrian/bicyclists. Due to the commercial nature of the eastbound approach and the multiple commercial entrances near the intersection, sight distance is reduced for drivers approaching the intersection and introduces additional risk for the pedestrians/bicyclists during turning maneuvers.

As such, two pedestrian accidents have occurred at the intersection during the review period. Both involved vehicles making a right turn on red maneuver and striking a pedestrian/bicyclist that was crossing the roadway and had the right-of-way.

The project involves the installation of new pedestrian curb ramps on all 4 corners of the intersection in order to meet ADA compliance and align properly with pedestrian crosswalks. The existing pavement markings for pedestrians within the intersection will need to be removed/replaced. New pavement markings for relocated pedestrian crosswalks and stop bars are included. The project also involves installing pedestrian curb ramps and sidewalk within the median of Preston Avenue to provide a safe haven for crossing pedestrians/bicycles. The median sidewalk will increase visibility of pedestrians, reduce pedestrian crossing widths, and minimize out of distance pedestrian travel.

Alignment with City Council's Vision and Strategic Plan:

This initiative supports Council's Vision to be a "Connected Community" ("the City of Charlottesville is part of a comprehensive, regional transportation system that enables citizens of all ages and incomes to easily navigate our community") and "America's Healthiest City" ("we have a community-wide commitment to personal fitness and wellness, and all residents enjoy our outstanding recreational facilities, walking trails, and safe routes to schools").

In addition, the project contributes to Goals 1 and 3 of the Strategic Plan, to be an inclusive, self-sufficient community and a healthy and safe city.

The initiative further implements recommendations within the ADA Transition Plan (2013), Comprehensive Plan (2013), Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan (2015), Streets that Work Plan (2016) and supports the City's Healthy Eating Active Living (HEAL) Resolution.

Community Engagement:

The BPSF projects draw heavily from the recommendations included in the Streets that Work Plan, which had extensive community outreach. A full account of the public engagement process is available at www.charlottesville.org/streetsthatwork under the Streets That Work Community

Process tab. Community members will continue to be engaged throughout the design and construction process.

Budgetary Impact:

No additional City funding needs to be appropriated as the BPSP funding does not require a local match.

Recommendation:

Staff recommends approval and appropriation of VDOT grant.

Alternatives:

If grant funds are not appropriated, the project will not be implemented.

Attachments:

Appropriation Resolution

RESOLUTION APPROPRIATING FUNDS for
Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) Bicycle and
Pedestrian Safety Program (BPSP)
Preston Ave/Harris Street \$245,725

WHEREAS, the Bicycle and Pedestrian Safety Program (BPSP), provides Federal funding for intersection improvements that target the reduction in the number and severity, or the risk of and exposure to crashes, and has awarded the City of Charlottesville \$245,725 for such improvements;

WHEREAS, the BPSP program is a 100% reimbursement program requiring the City to meet all federal guidelines to qualify,

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Council of the City of Charlottesville, Virginia that the following is hereby appropriated in the following manner:

Revenues

\$245,725	Fund: 426	WBS: P-01069	G/L Account: 430120
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Expenses

\$245,725	Fund: 426	WBS: P-01069	G/L Account: 519999
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