

MCPB Date:5/25/2023
Agenda Item #5

MEMORANDUM

DATE: May 11, 2023

TO: Montgomery County Planning Board

VIA: Tanya Stern, Acting Planning Director *TS*

FROM: Karen Warnick, Chief, Management Services *KW*
Anjali Sood, Budget Manager, Management Services *AS*

SUBJECT: FY23 Budget Transfers for the Planning Department

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Approval of the Request for FY23 Budget Transfers for the Planning Department.

BACKGROUND:

The Land Use Article, Section 18-109, provides for budget transfers as long as the transfer does not exceed 110% of the available approved budget amounts or result in a change in the work program. Accordingly, Commission Practice 3-60, Budget Adjustments (Amendments and Transfers), allows budget transfers when they do not increase the budget by more than 10%, and such transfers are approved by the Planning Board when they exceed \$100,000. The Planning Board has authority to transfer appropriations between the major object codes (personnel, supplies, services, capital outlay) and between divisions if they meet those conditions.

FY23 BUDGET TRANSFERS REQUESTED FOR THE PLANNING DEPARTMENT:

The Planning Department's recommended transfers below **do not exceed 10% in any division and do not change the work program**. The Planning Department estimates it will have personnel savings in FY23 and is requesting to reallocate these savings. The Planning Department requests approval to adjust the FY23 divisional line-item budgets as shown below.

DETAILS OF BUDGET TRANSFERS:

The Planning Department is seeking the Board's approval to transfer \$150,000 from the Personnel Services category to Other Services & Charges:

The Great Seneca Plan – Urban Design Guidelines and Streetscape Standards - \$25,000

This initiative will help the work program in FY24. Montgomery Planning is currently working on the Great Seneca Plan: Connecting Life and Science. The purpose of the Urban Design Guidelines is to supplement the Plan and assist in the implementation of the Plan's recommendations. Preparation of

the Urban Design Guidelines is scheduled to begin following approval and adoption of the Plan. The Urban Design Guidelines will be ultimately reviewed and approved by the Planning Board as an accompanying document to the adopted Great Seneca Plan.

Life Sciences Market Study to Support the Great Seneca Plan: Connecting Life and Science - \$20,000

As part of the Great Seneca Plan’s market assessment, the Research and Strategic Projects (RSP) Division and Midcounty Planning determined a need to analyze the real estate needs of the life sciences industry and compatibility with residential uses. The FY23 budget included consultant funding of \$75,000 (combined from Midcounty and RSP funding allocated for Economics On-call Consulting Services). The bids came in higher than anticipated and an additional \$20,000 is requested for this project.

Transportation Data Asset Management Strategy and Growth and Infrastructure Policy Update - \$50,000

Both of these projects are in department’s existing work program. Synergies between the two projects, with a focus on how applicable data are collected, maintained and monitored, led the Planning Department to pursue a combined consultant contract. The combined FY23 budget included consultant funding of \$140,000. Multiple bids were received through a Request for Proposals (RFP) process, but all bids came in higher than anticipated and an additional \$50,000 is requested for this effort.

Silver Spring Downtown and Adjacent Communities Sector Plan – Streetscape Standards - \$15,000

Streetscape Standards set the technical and construction requirements for the installation of streetscape in our downtowns. Planning staff routinely updates these standards to reflect current best practices in street tree planting, paving and furnishings, as was done for the current standards which the Planning Board approved in 2019. In June 2022, the Planning Board and County Council approved a new sector plan for downtown Silver Spring, which called for implementing “Cool Streets” strategies to mitigate climate change impacts in the form of elevated urban heat island temperatures on downtown streets and sidewalks. This new approach requires an update to the current standards. This funding is for a consultant to perform technical research support.

Partnership for Action Learning in Sustainability (PALS) - \$40,000

The Partnership for Action Learning in Sustainability (PALS) is a campus-wide program that leverages the expertise and ingenuity of University of Maryland students and faculty to tackle specific, sustainability-related issues facing Maryland’s diverse communities. The PALS mission is to provide high quality, low-cost assistance to local governments while creating an active and valuable real-world learning experience for UMD students.

The Planning Department is requesting a budget transfer of a **total cost of \$40,000** to partner with the University of Maryland for the following four PALS projects at \$10,000 each that would support the Planning Department’s current work program.

1. University Boulevard Corridor Plan: Montgomery Planning requests assistance from the University of Maryland PALS Program during the Fall 2023 semester to explore challenges, opportunities, and possible strategies to achieve infill growth on institutional properties along University Boulevard.

Assistance could include researching case studies of infill housing on institutional sites as well as co-location of housing and places of worship. Assistance could also include an examination of considerations or best practices for infill development and co-location, as well as development of conceptual designs for to-be-determined sites along the corridor.

2. Silver Spring Communities East Plan: Engage the PALS Program to assist the Downcounty Planning Team in conducting existing conditions and community engagement work during the Fall 2023 semester for an upcoming master plan expected to focus on the East Silver Spring communities inside the Beltway, including Equity Focus Areas. The goal is to better understand important elements of community life and identity from the residents' perspective. Spanish-speaking participants are required.
3. Emory Grove: The Emory Grove United Methodist Church, in partnership with the Housing Opportunities Commission (HOC) through the Heritage Emory Grove Community Development Corporation, has plans for a significant development between Midcounty Highway and Johnson's Local Park. HOC is starting to advance components of this development, including the disposition of land last summer and the submission of a recent abandonment application for portions of the right-of-way of Washington Grove Lane. It is anticipated that HOC will submit a concept plan to the Montgomery County Planning Department in 2023.

Given the timing of the concept plan and other potential regulatory planning processes, the PALS program will assist with developing a placemaking framework in partnership with the Midcounty Planning Division, the community and the Heritage Emory Grove Community Development Corporation. This placemaking framework will outline how current and future public spaces in the area can celebrate community assets as the heart of the community, and can promote people's health, happiness and well-being in the current and future public spaces.

4. Reforest Montgomery & Forest Mitigation Banking Program: The Planning Department's Intake and Regulatory Coordination Division coordinates the Reforest Montgomery programs and the Forest Mitigation Banking program. The Department currently does not have a program that provides an incentive for private property owners to preserve their existing forest. The Planning Department's Forest Conservation Programs team would like to develop a system to connect property owners who want to preserve their existing forest under easement and developers who need the credit to meet their forest conservation requirements. In order to do this, the team needs to develop a webpage/portal that includes an application form and guide, so that property owners with existing forest can apply to be considered, and a list of approved property owners so developers can contact them. The PALS team will develop this system and also identify potential property owners by using the department's GIS layers/Aerial images, contact potential property owners to notify them about the program, and begin the program by securing applications to be considered.

The Planning Board's approval of this transfer is requested.

Approved by the Planning Board: _____ Date: _____