



MCPB Date: 4/25/2024

Agenda Item #6

**MEMORANDUM**

**DATE:** April 18, 2024

**TO:** Montgomery County Planning Board

**VIA:** Jason K. Sartori, Planning Director  
Bridget Broullire, Acting Deputy Director

**FROM:** Karen Warnick, Division Chief, Management Services

**SUBJECT:** FY24 Budget Transfers for the Planning Department

**STAFF RECOMMENDATION:**

Approval of the Request for FY24 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.

**FY24 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 FY24 and is requesting to reallocate these savings. The Planning Department requests approval to adjust the FY24 divisional line-item budgets as shown below.

**DETAILS OF BUDGET TRANSFERS:**

The Planning Department is seeking the Board's approval to transfer \$810,000 from the Personnel Services category to Other Services & Charges (\$677,000) and Capital Outlay (\$133,000):

**1. Biennial Traffic Survey – \$100,000**

The Pedestrian Master Plan requires a comprehensive pedestrian and bicycle survey be conducted every two years to better understand the effects of Pedestrian Master Plan implementation. This funding was requested in the FY25 proposed budget as a major known commitment and was presented as a budget reduction to the Planning Board and Council to meet the County Executive's budget recommendation.

**2. Regional Travel Demand Model Update and Validation – \$100,000**

This tool is used by the Planning Department to conduct master plan transportation adequacy evaluations required by the County Council. This funding was requested in the FY25 proposed budget and was presented as a budget reduction to the Planning Board and Council to meet the County Executive’s budget recommendation.

**3. Climate Assessment Tool Update – \$20,000**

Bill 3-22 “Climate Assessments” requires that, at least every two years, the Office of Legislative Oversight and the Planning Board must review the climate assessment template and update the template as needed. This funding request is for a consultant with specialized expertise in greenhouse gas emissions and sequestration modeling to update the Planning Department’s quantitative tool based on staff experience using the tool for two years and identifying areas that may need to be updated. This funding was requested in the FY25 proposed budget and was presented as a budget reduction to the Planning Board and Council to meet the County Executive’s budget recommendation.

**4. Eastern Silver Spring Communities Plan – Expanded Community Engagement and Outreach – \$96,000**

The Eastern Silver Spring Communities Plan team is working with residents and stakeholders to take a comprehensive look at how people live, work, play and shop in their community. This funding is to expand community engagement and outreach, door-to-door canvassing, and temporary placemaking activities to support interactive engagement to reach the residents and business owners in this area.

**5. Glenmont Corridors Opportunity Study – \$30,000**

The Glenmont Corridors Opportunity Study is looking at the community of Glenmont, specifically the parts of Glenmont that are within an approximate one mile walk from the Glenmont Metro Station. The purpose of the study is to identify actions necessary to support *Thrive Montgomery 2050*’s principles of corridor focused growth, complete communities, and 15-minute living in the study area. The requested \$30,000 will be used to engage a professional consultant to execute the critical, multilingual community engagement through focus groups, and to create visual representations that effectively depict the potential opportunities within and surrounding the study area to ensure a thorough understanding and inclusive participation from diverse community members.

**6. Graduate Assistant – \$21,000**

Funding for one graduate student enrolled at the University of Maryland in the Urban Studies and Planning Program in the School of Architecture, Planning and Preservation to work as a research intern on projects of significant interest and usefulness to the Department. This allows the university to provide its top graduate students with practical research and work experience that is compatible with the students’ intellectual and professional interests along with financial support. Planning’s budget has funding for 2 graduate students. This would add funding for an additional graduate student.

**7. Wheaton Placemaking – \$40,000**

The Planning Department has committed to doing a placemaking initiative in Downtown Wheaton to implement recommendations that build upon the Wheaton Downtown Study and the Wheaton Streetscape standards. The effort will provide much needed improvements to streets and public spaces in the downtown and promote safety, local businesses, and walkability. The FY24 budget for placemaking is \$83,000. Planning solicited offers from consultants to assist with the implementation of this effort and we received bids for services ranging from \$104,000-\$235,160, reflecting the rising cost of materials and professional services, driven primarily by inflation. This requested funding will add \$40,000 to the budgeted amount to execute the project in an impactful manner.

**8. Strategic Plan – \$85,000**

With new leadership, a bold Equity Agenda, an ambitious updated general plan and national recognition as an innovator in smart growth planning, the Planning Department wants to reimagine its future role and vision by creating a new strategic plan to advance our mission. Not unlike our master planning efforts, the organizational strategic planning process will leverage data, staff and external stakeholder input, and best practices to create a comprehensive roadmap for our work. This effort will be facilitated by external consultants and coordinated internally by the Director’s Office. The requested \$85,000 will include consultant work on conducting interviews, questionnaires, data analysis and the delivery of a final report.

**9. Information Technology and Innovation (ITI) Division – Assessment of Server Architecture Environment and Infrastructure – \$25, 000**

This assessment will ensure that our servers are configured for industry best standards thereby improving system performance and security. The total cost for this assessment is \$50,000 which will be split 50/50 between Montgomery Parks and Montgomery Planning.

**9. ITI Division – Temp Agency Staff – \$160, 000**

The ITI Division has several hard to fill vacancies and has hired temp agency staff members to provide cyber security and desktop support until the positions are filled. This request is to move budgeted funds from the ITI Division’s personnel account to their temp agency account to cover salaries of the temp agency staff for the second six months of FY24.

**10. Upgrade Wheaton Headquarters Auditorium Audio-Visual Equipment (Capital Outlay) – \$133, 000**

The audio-visual equipment in the auditorium is four years old and has been surpassed by advancements in technology. The updated equipment will allow the broadcasts and on-demand recordings of the meetings to be of a higher quality and increase our level of transparency to the public. This upgrade would include the broadcast switcher and AV operator workstation (VMIX), the dais microphones (14), and the cameras (4). The upgrades will address the inconsistency of the volume of the dais microphones around the room, the quality of our broadcast, and create a more efficient and streamlined workflow for the technicians operating the equipment. The total cost of the upgrade will be shared between the Commissioners’ Office.

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

Approved by the Planning Board: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_