

9. CONSIDERATION OF A JOINT APPLICATION WITH THE CITY OF FRANKLIN FOR A REGIONAL PROJECT PLANNING GRANT

Our Shared Services Committee (Supervisors Porter and West) has continued meeting regularly with their counterparts in the City of Franklin (Mayor Johnson-Ashburn and Vice Mayor Cheatham) since executing the MOU last November, most recently on January 16, 2013. Among other things, our latest discussion included one of the more promising areas of future collaboration — public utilities; particularly as it relates to wastewater treatment.

As you are aware, in 2010, the County invested more than \$30 million in constructing a new, state-of-the-art wastewater treatment plant and related infrastructure in the environs of Courtland, which currently has substantial capacity and an ability to further expand in the future as needs dictate. The City of Franklin indicates that its wastewater treatment plant is currently approaching operational capacity, and an opportunity exists for both communities to achieve substantial savings by interconnecting their wastewater collection systems.

The Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development (VDHCD) administers a Regional Project Planning Grant Program with grants available up to \$40,000 for needs analysis and strategy development activities in preparation for a future Community Improvement Grant (construction) proposal. One of the specifically-listed eligible activities is development of cost estimates and preliminary engineering reports (PERs).

At our meeting on January 16, it was the consensus of the Shared Services Committee to recommend to both governing bodies that they authorize the County Administrator and City Manager to prepare a joint letter of interest to the VDHCD for a planning grant to study the following four areas:

1. An **Infrastructure Inventory and Asset Analysis** to evaluate what we currently have, what we will need to effectively interconnect our wastewater systems and the capital and operational costs of any required improvements;
2. A **Governance Evaluation** to identify future business relationship options available to us (Service Provider/Customer, Partners, Regional Authority, etc.) and evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of each;
3. A **Financial Evaluation** to evaluate the fiscal impact of interconnecting the two systems on our current utility customers, and the size and scope of any respective financial subsidies that may be required from sources other than customer fees; and
4. An **Implementation Plan** identifying the sequence of events to interconnect the systems.

Following submittal of the letter of interest, VDHCD will review it for eligibility and local readiness, and if deemed promising, will invite us to submit a full proposal in accordance with their program guidelines. It is my understanding that the grant, if awarded, will require a 20% local match.

MOTION REQUIRED:

If the Board is so inclined, a motion is required to authorize submittal of a joint letter of interest as outlined hereinabove.

[Home Community Development & Revitalization](#) CDBG Planning Grants

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CDBG Planning Grants

The Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development's (DHCD) Community Development Building Grant (CDBG) Planning Grant program is designed to aid localities with the greatest community development needs in creating clearly articulated strategies for addressing their needs. Throughout the planning process, significant participation from citizens is expected.

Planning Grant assistance is available to [Virginia Community Development Block Grant Eligible Localities](#). \$500,000 is available for Planning Grants and requests for assistance are accepted January through September of each year, or until all funding is obligated.

There are six categories of Planning Grants:

- Project Planning Grants**

Project Planning Grants of up to \$25,000 are available for needs analysis and prioritization, preliminary design, and strategy development activities in preparation for a future [Community Improvement Grant](#) proposal. Planning Grant activities should be oriented toward the development of products which directly relate to a future [Community Improvement Grant](#) project. These products should detail community development problems and present realistic solutions for treatment of these problems. All Project Planning Grant recipients must submit complete Community Improvement Grant proposals following completion of all planning activities, unless otherwise negotiated with DHCD.

- Business District Revitalization – Project Planning Grants**

Because thorough preparation for Building District Revitalization (BDR) construction projects is necessary to ensure the desired community outcome of improved overall economic vitality, DHCD offers a tiered grant process for this project type. It often takes a number of years of appropriate planning and development efforts for these projects to be successful, and the following grant levels are designed to recognize and accommodate this.

- Community Needs Assessment/Economic Assessment Planning Grants**

Community or Economic Assessment Planning Grants are available for a locality to conduct a single objective general needs analysis, and prioritization of community or economic conditions and future direction.

- Regional Project Planning Grants**

Project Planning Grants of up to \$40,000 are available for a *regional effort* of more than one locality for needs analysis and strategy development activities, in preparation for a future [Community Improvement Grant](#)

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(construction) proposal. Regional projects that demonstrate a clear and significant economic impact are eligible for up to \$50,000 in planning grant funds. These projects will require a 20 percent local match.

5. **Telecommunication Planning Grants**

Telecommunication planning grants are available for future system development and support or implementation efforts. Funds may be utilized to:

- Assist in promoting awareness of potential CDBG eligible activities and gauging stakeholder interest;
- Create a management team of potential user groups to oversee the creation of a Telecommunications Plan;
- Conduct surveying efforts to document the eligibility of future telecommunication planning and implementation efforts for CDBG funding;
- Conduct informational and training programs; and
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In order to access CDBG funds for telecommunication implementation, a locality must have completed a community-based telecommunications plan. Up to \$25,000 per project is available for Telecommunications Planning Grants.

6. **Community Organizing Planning Grants**

Community Organizing Planning Grants are available for activation and organization of community residents to develop strategies for future social and physical improvements.

Citizen participation is the central purpose of these Planning Grants and should result in an organized, informed community which has reached consensus on a practical vision of the future, and has the capacity and options available for future community improvement.

More information can be found in the [Planning Grant](#). Localities interested in CDBG Planning Grant assistance should be aware that there is a two step process to obtaining a funding award.

Step One: Interested localities must submit a response to the VCDBG Planning Grant Prospectus. DHCD will review this response and notify the locality of specific actions that must be taken to secure an award of Planning Grant funding.

Step Two: DHCD will *invite* localities that have provided adequate evidence of local readiness and capacity and project eligibility to submit a proposal in accordance with the VCDBG Planning Grant Proposal Format. No unsolicited proposals will be accepted by DHCD.

For further information concerning the above program, refer to the [VCDBG Program Design](#), or contact pmo@dhcd.virginia.gov or (804) 371-7061.

Related Links

- [CDBG Eligible Localities](#)

Forms

- [VCDBG Program Design](#)
- [Planning Grant](#)
- [Section 8 Income Limits](#)

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