



TOWN OF CHAPEL HILL

Town Hall
405 Martin Luther King Jr.
Boulevard
Chapel Hill, NC 27514

Legislation Text

File #: [21-0137], Version: 1

Initial Budget Public Forum on the Annual Budget, Capital Program, Use of Grants and Related Items, and Potential Legislative Requests.

Staff:

Amy Oland, Director
Matt Brinkley, Assistant Director

Department:

Business Management

Overview: This initial public forum is an opportunity for the Council to receive public comment related to the development of the FY 2021-22 Town Budget.



Recommendation(s):

That the Council receive comments from the public on the forum topics listed below; and that the Council refer comments and questions to the Town Manager to consider in the budget process.

OVERVIEW OF THE BUDGET PROCESS

Through the Town's annual budget process, the Council makes decisions on the level and types of services provided to the public with local, state and federal funds. The budget process reflects direction from the Council, beginning with the Council's 2020-22 Strategic Goals and Objectives (Attachment 1). Adopting a budget determines the level of resources available for Town services over the coming budget year.

Process for Participation by the Public

Additional public forums and hearings on the budget and related items will be held at 7:00 pm on:

- | | |
|---------|--|
| April 7 | A public forum to: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Receive comments on the preliminary plan for uses of 21-22 CDBG program funds |
| May 19 | Public Hearing on: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• the recommended budget for the service year beginning on July 1, 2021; use of public transportation grants; recommended 15-year capital program; Downtown Service District program. |

The public may also make comments to the Mayor and Council by email at mayorandcouncil@townofchapelhill.org or by letter at Town Hall, 405 Martin Luther King Jr Blvd, Chapel Hill, NC 27514 at any time in the budget process.

Staff has provided notice on the Town's website.

TOPICS FOR THE FEBRUARY 24 PUBLIC FORUM AND HEARING

- a. Annual Budget for 2021-22: preparing the budget for the service year beginning on July 1, 2021.
- b. 2022-36 Capital Program: capital improvement needs for 2022-36.
- c. Community Development Block Grant for 2021-22: use of the 2021-22 Federal Community Development Block Grant funds for eligible public service, affordable housing, and community development benefiting low-to-moderate income households in Chapel Hill (Initial Public Forum held November 4, 2020).
- d. Federal HOME Investment Partnership Program funding for 2021-22: use of the 2021-22 Federal HOME Investment Partnership Program funds for a broad range of eligible housing-related activities benefitting low-to-moderate income households in Orange County (The Orange County Board of Commissioners will hold the public hearings for the Orange County Home Consortium in April).
- e. Housing Capital Funds Program for 2021-22 use of the 2021-22 Federal Housing Capital Funds Grant for public housing improvements, renovations and services to public housing residents.
- f. Public Transportation Grant Program for 2021-22: use of 2021-22 Federal and State grants for transit capital projects, operating costs and transportation planning.
- g. Downtown Service District: receive comments and suggestions from downtown businesspeople, property owners and other interested residents regarding the needs of the service district.
- h. Potential Legislative Proposals: receive suggestions for legislation that might be sought in the 2021 session of the General Assembly.

A. Annual Budget for 2021-22

This forum is an opportunity for the public to comment on any aspect of the Town's budget and budget documents, including services that should be added, eliminated, or changed. The Town's 2021-22 budget and service year will begin on July 1, 2021 in accordance with State law.

Purpose

The annual budget includes funding for operating costs for police and fire protection, street maintenance, refuse collection, other public works services, parks and recreation, public transit, the public library, planning, building inspection, engineering, and legal and administrative services.

The annual budget includes one year's funding for cash-financed (pay-as-you-go) small capital projects such as sidewalks, greenways, street paving, and debt service payments on other capital projects.

In addition to setting Town service levels and property tax rates, the Council makes decisions on whether to adjust or adopt service fees for refuse collection, recreation programs, development review, inspections, and other services as part of the budget.

Next Steps

On May 5, the Council will receive the Manager's Recommended Budget. The Council will receive public comment at its May 19 public hearing. The Council will consider adopting a budget on June 9.

B. 2022-36 Capital Program

The purpose of this forum is to receive suggestions and comments from the public regarding capital projects proposed for the next 15 years.

2022-36 Capital Program

A summary of the current capital program and long-range projections as adopted by the Council with the FY 2021 budget for 2021-35 is attached as background information (Attachment 2). The 15-year CIP is a comprehensive list of capital projects, based on needs identified by Town departments for planning purposes only. Capital projects are brought to Town Council for consideration when funding sources have been identified.

Purpose

A capital improvements program is a plan for major projects and purchases including:

- Buying land for parks, open space, or other Town services;
- Sidewalks;
- Streetscape;
- Bikeways;
- Greenways;
- Park improvements;
- Construction, renovation, expansion, and capital maintenance of Town buildings; and
- Road, bridge, and related improvements.

The Town's capital programs have typically included a list of capital projects with cost estimates, a potential schedule, and priorities for 15 years, and existing or potential future funding methods for each project.

Identified funding sources may include current general revenues, money previously reserved for capital projects, grants, gifts, and bond issues.

Many projects in the first year of the capital program normally are funded as part of the annual budget. Projects in the second through fifteenth years are normally not funded in the budget for the next year, although some may be financed through bond issues, installment purchase contracts and other sources. Funding for most projects in the second through fifteenth years will be considered in future annual processes.

Planning Process

Each year, the Town Council, residents, boards and commissions, and staff consider the Town's capital project needs and possible funding sources for needed projects. This process results in decisions by the Town Council regarding capital improvements that the Town may undertake as funding becomes available and is appropriated.

2021-22 Funding

We have not yet estimated how much funding may be allocated in the upcoming proposed annual

budget for capital projects. In the current 2020-21 budget year, there was no funding allocated to pay-go capital projects.

Next Steps

We will submit a preliminary recommendation for the capital program to the Council as a part of the budget process. The capital program will be presented as part of the Manager's Recommended Budget on May 5 and a public hearing on the recommended budget will be held on May 19.

C. Community Development Block Grant Program for 2021-22

The initial public forum for the Community Development Block Grant Program was held [November 4, 2020 <https://chapelhill.legistar.com/MeetingDetail.aspx?ID=802592&GUID=0C22E8A2-E048-4E53-B9BA-985186167918&Options=info|&Search=>](https://chapelhill.legistar.com/MeetingDetail.aspx?ID=802592&GUID=0C22E8A2-E048-4E53-B9BA-985186167918&Options=info|&Search=>).

Next Steps:

- The deadline for submitting applications was January 14, 2021.
- The CDBG Application Review Committee will review applications and draft funding recommendations in February 2021.
- On April 7, 2021, the Town Council will hold a second public forum to receive comments on the preliminary plan for uses of 2021-22 CDBG program funds.
- On May 5, 2021, the Council will receive the recommended 2021-22 CDBG Program Plan.
- The 2021-22 Annual Action Plan and 5-Year Consolidated Plan will be submitted to HUD on or before May 15, 2021.

D. Federal HOME Investment Partnership Program for 2021-22

Federal HOME Program funding is allocated to the Orange County HOME Consortium (Chapel Hill, Carrboro, Hillsborough, and Orange County). Orange County serves as the lead entity for administering the HOME Program. The Orange County Board of Commissioners will hold the public hearings for the Orange County Home Consortium in April.

Next Steps:

- HOME funding is awarded through a joint application process. The deadline for completing applications is February 26, 2021.
- The HOME Program Review Committee will review applications and make recommendations to local elected officials in April 2021.
- The 2021-22 Annual Action Plan and 5-Year Consolidated Plan will be submitted to Housing and Urban Development on or before May 15, 2021.

E. Housing Capital Fund Grant Program for 2021-22

The purpose of this forum is to receive public comments on the use of the federal 2021-22 Housing Capital Fund grant.

Purpose

The Town may use the annual Housing Capital Fund grant for comprehensive renovation and improvements to public housing neighborhoods.

Federal rules give priority to work needed to meet statutory requirements such as:

- Testing for and removing or otherwise controlling lead-based paint;
- Testing for and removing or otherwise controlling asbestos; and
- Renovations to meet the needs of disabled residents.

Estimated Grant for 2021-22

The 2020-21 grant amount was \$891,521. HUD has not yet notified Town with the amount for the 2021-22 Capital Fund Grant. The proposed uses will be based on the amount received last year. If the amount awarded is different from the anticipated amount, we will adjust the Public Housing renovations program accordingly.

PRELIMINARY 2021-22 CAPITAL FUND PROGRAM

Proposed Sources of Funds

Capital Fund Program	\$ 891,521
TOTAL	\$891,521

Proposed Uses of Funds

Electrical Upgrades	\$185,000
Concrete Repair & Replacement	\$135,000
Furnace Replacement	\$114,000
Asbestos removal	\$110,000
Administrative Costs	\$ 89,000
Appliance Replacement	\$ 85,000
Parking Lot Resurfacing	\$ 58,000
Professional Services	\$ 50,000
Water Heater Replacement	\$ 45,000
<u>Training & Development</u>	<u>\$ 20,521</u>
TOTAL	\$891,521

Many of the proposed activities of 2020-21 were stalled due to COVID-19 and the ability to obtain contractors and materials to complete the project. We propose resuming many of those projects as well as adding other long overdue building improvement projects.

- 1. Electrical Upgrades AMP II (\$185,000)**
Several of the neighborhoods have experienced degradation of their electrical systems due to age and use. We plan to repair what we can and upgrade as many as we are able.
- 2. Concrete replacement/Repair AMP I (\$135,000)**
Several of our neighborhoods are experience degradation of the concrete in their stairs and walkways due to time and wear and tear.
- 3. Furnace Replacement (\$114,000)**
As part of our annual replacement schedule.

- 4. Asbestos removal/remediation (\$110,000)**
Several communities still have asbestos in the tile and glue in their homes. The plan is to totally remove / remediate any remaining asbestos remaining.
- 5. Administrative Costs (\$89,000)**
Administrative costs are those indirect costs associated with the performance of a sponsored activity (such as a grant or a contract or other similar agreement with an external funding source). This activity includes the administrative cost for coordinating, tracking and implementing the Capital Fund activities.
- 6. Appliance Upgrade / Replacement (\$85,000)**
Consistent with our Master Plan of 2019 and regularly scheduled replacement schedule. Appliances will be replaced with energy efficient models.
- 7. Parking Lot resurfacing (\$58,000)**
After a series of patching and make-do, many neighborhoods need to have the primary access road resurfaced to avoid damage to resident and guest vehicles.
- 8. Professional Services (\$50,000)**
Continued professional contracts to assist our efforts to review and select development partners for proposed RAD conversion of Trinity Court
- 9. Water Heater Replacement/Upgrade (\$45,000)**
Consistent with projections from the Master Plan of 2019 and aligned with our replacement schedule.
- 10. Training and Development (\$20,521)**
Since November 2019, Public Housing has added three key personnel to its staff and experienced the retirement of an employee with excess of 30 years of experience. Training provided by our professional Organizations and HUD are essential to our continued growth and success as a department.

Next Steps

Comments received will be taken into consideration in preparing a recommended plan for the 2021-22 Capital Fund grant.

F. Public Transportation Grant Program for 2021-22

The forum tonight is an opportunity for the public to comment on transit services and projects in 2021-22 including the use of Federal and State grants for transit operations, capital projects and transportation planning.

Purpose

Transportation services, projects and planning activities are intended to provide alternatives to

the use of single-occupant vehicles, reduce traffic congestion, reduce air pollution, and assist people with disabilities affecting their mobility.

Estimated Funding

For 2020-2021, Federal funding for transit service operations through the 5307 Urbanized Area Funds is estimated to be \$2 million while State funding has been reduced to \$0 due to NCDOT fiscal challenges. Because of the changes at the Federal level, it is difficult to predict when this funding will be received.

In addition, we received approximately \$5.3 million in CARES Act money through a Federal Transit Administration grant, which was used to offset lost State revenue, revenue losses due to COVID and COVID-related expenses. We expect a similar \$5.3 million for 2021-2022 but cannot speculate about any additional funds moving beyond those dates, or when those funds might be available.

Similar to the [CARES Act <https://www.transit.dot.gov/cares-act>](https://www.transit.dot.gov/cares-act), the supplemental funding will be provided at 100-percent federal share, with no local match required and will be available to support capital, operating, and other expenses generally eligible under those programs to prevent, prepare for, and respond to COVID-19. Although the Act directs recipients to prioritize payroll and operational needs, Congress shared that the intent of this funding and the law is to ensure the safe continuation of transit services, as well as protecting the transportation workforce from massive layoffs and operational disruptions.

Chapel Hill Transit also secured \$5.6 million in FY 2020 for the purchase of battery-electric buses to replace the oldest diesel buses in our aging fleet. Given COVID-19 delays and long production schedules, these funds may not be expended, and these buses may not arrive for another 24+ months, by which time our fleet will have continued to age and increased our need for more capital replacement funding.

Sharing of Local Costs

The University and the Towns of Carrboro and Chapel Hill have agreed to share the local operating and capital cost for transit services. The cost-sharing formulas are set forth in separate contracts with the University and Carrboro. The partners have also adopted a capital plan that requires annual investments to maintain the transit fleet.

2021-22 Services

Chapel Hill Transit provides:

- Fixed route and express bus service throughout Chapel Hill, Carrboro and the University of North Carolina;
- E-Z Rider service for customers with mobility challenges.

Next Steps

Staff will present the budget to the Public Transit Committee no later than April 2021. The public will have an opportunity to comment on the transit budget and grants again at the Public Hearing on May 19, 2021.

G. Downtown Service District

The purpose of this forum is to receive comments and suggestions from downtown

businesspeople, property owners, and other interested residents regarding:

- the needs of the service district;
- the use of Downtown Service District taxes in 2021-22; and
- the scope of projects and programs in the service plan for the Downtown District.

Purpose

In 1989, the Council established a Downtown Service District in response to requests from several downtown businesses and property owners. State law allows the Council to establish this service district and to apply a supplemental property tax to promote the economic vitality of downtown, enhance Town services in the downtown district and other related activities. Most of the property in the downtown is in the zoning districts Town Center 1, 2 or Town Center 3.

Estimated Funding in 2021-22

The Downtown Service District is funded by a dedicated property tax of 7.0 cents on the properties within the District. The Town will not have revaluation numbers until late March. Using the rate of property tax growth from the last several years (1.5%), we have estimated that the Downtown Service District collections in 2021-22 will be about \$388,000, an increase of \$6,000 over 2020-21.

Downtown District Services

Currently, downtown district funds are allocated to the Chapel Hill Downtown Partnership, a grounds maintenance employee for the downtown, maintenance costs for public areas of 140 West, and other Downtown economic development projects.

Legislation was enacted that imposed new requirements for municipal service districts to procure contractual services. To comply with these requirements, in 2016 the Town held a competitive process for selection of a vendor to provide services in the Downtown. The Downtown Partnership was selected and the Town entered into a 5-year contract for the Partnership to provide services.

The Council normally adopts the downtown district tax rate in June with the overall budget.

H. Potential Legislative Proposals

Tonight's forum is also an opportunity to identify potential local legislative requests for the 2021 session of the North Carolina General Assembly. Any proposal offered by the public this evening can be considered by Council at a later meeting as Council develops further requests for local legislation.

The Town Council met with the Town's Legislative Delegation on January 25, 2021 to discuss the 2021 session of the General Assembly and legislative issues of interest to the Town. The General Assembly convened for the session on February 1, 2021.

Information from the General Assembly currently indicates the following:

All local bills must be submitted to the Legislative Drafting Division by Tuesday, March 3, 2021 and must be introduced not later than on Tuesday, March 25, 2021.



Attachments:

- Draft Staff Presentation
- Attachment 1 - FY2020-22 Strategic Goals and Objectives
- Attachment 2 - FY2021-35 Capital Project Listing

The Agenda will reflect the text below and/or the motion text will be used during the meeting.

PRESENTER: Matt Brinkley, Assistant Director Business Management

RECOMMENDATION: That the Council receive comments from the public on the forum; and that the Council refer comments and questions to the Town Manager for consideration in the budget process.