

City of Falls Church

Meeting Date: 10-28-19	Title: (TR19-34) RESOLUTION TO CREATE A STORMWATER TASK FORCE	Agenda No.: 10 (b) (3)	
Proposed Motion: MOVE to adopt (TR19-34).			
Originating Dept. Head: Wyatt Shields, City Manager	Lead Staff:	Disposition by Council:	
City Manager: Wyatt Shields 703.248.5004 FWS 10-24-19	City Attorney: Carol McCoskrie 703.248.5010 CWM 10-24-2019	CFO: Kiran Bawa 703.248.5092 KB 10-24-19	City Clerk: Celeste Heath 703.248.5014

REQUEST: Staff requests that Council establish a Stormwater Task Force to work with staff in updating the list of priority projects for stormwater improvements in the adopted Watershed Management Plan. Appointment of the membership to this task force will be by separate action.

RECOMMENDATION: Staff recommends adoption of (TR19-34).

BACKGROUND: The City Council adopted the City's Watershed Management Plan in February 2012 (<http://www.fallschurchva.gov/DocumentCenter/View/771/Final-Watershed-Management-Plan>). This Plan sets out citywide goals and policies with respect to streams, groundwater, and the stormwater system. Section 5 of this Plan prioritizes stormwater improvement projects to mitigate flood damage, repair and replace stormwater infrastructure, and comply with federal mandates to improve water quality that flows into City streams and ultimately the Chesapeake Bay.

The City now seeks to update the list of priority projects for stormwater improvements that is contained in Section 5 of the Plan. In the past two years, the City has experienced heavy rains that resulted in extensive flooding and damage to property. There is a consensus amongst scientists that a warmer climate will over time result in more frequent extreme weather events, including heavy rainfall. As a result of the recurring flooding the City has experienced, and due to the fact that several of the top priority projects listed in 2012 have been completed, it is appropriate to take a fresh look at the project list, and update and reprioritize projects for current conditions.

The original Watershed Management Plan was developed with the assistance of a citizen task force. The proposed action would create a new citizen task force, whose purpose is to work with staff to update Section 5 of the Plan. The task is a difficult one, as the City experiences flooding in many separate areas of its two main watersheds that flow into Tripps Run and Four Mile Run. Prioritizing projects is necessary, as the City stormwater system and streams touch every corner of the City and it is not possible to make improvements everywhere at once, due to the extreme cost that would entail.

35 Improvements that are made must be made with the advice of engineering and
36 hydrologic expertise, to ensure that solutions in one part of the watershed do not simply
37 cause greater damage downstream.
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39 What is envisioned with this task force is a rigorous, yet transparent set of criteria that
40 will be used to grade projects. The mindset of the members of the task force must be to
41 help the City as a whole grapple with the problems of flooding. The end result should
42 be a ranking of projects in order of the most cost effective stormwater improvements
43 that will protect the most people.
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45 This project ranking will ultimately be presented to the City Council in March 2020 as
46 part of the FY2021 Capital Improvements Program. The City Council will have the
47 final say on funding the improvements called for in the plan. Stormwater projects are
48 expensive and these funding decisions will be difficult. Staff anticipates that in order to
49 proceed with projects identified by the task force, bonds will need to be issued by the
50 City. The debt service on these bonds would be covered by an increase to the
51 Stormwater Utility Fee. These important financing decisions will be made in the context
52 of budget adoption in April 2020.
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54 Before getting to the question of financing, the Stormwater Task Force needs to identify
55 the range of possible solutions and prioritize specific areas of the City experiencing the
56 most severe and frequent flooding. As an initial plan of action, what is proposed below
57 is a four meeting engagement with the Task Force:
58

59 **Meeting 1:**

60 Organizational Matters: Review the Task Force Charter which sets out the purpose and
61 term of the Task Force.
62 Review data available about the City stormwater system and past flooding events.
63 Review and concur with the identified focus areas of study for flood mitigation.
64 Review and find consensus on the proposed approach and work plan for the Task Force.
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66 **Meeting 2:**

67 Establish a set of weighted criteria for grading proposed future stormwater projects.
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69 **Meeting 3:**

70 Review the data provided by the City Engineer for each of the study areas. This will
71 include options for stormwater improvements and the resulting flooding profiles for the
72 2 year and 10 year rain event; cost estimates for these options; and other data required
73 for the project scoring.
74 Conduct the project scoring based on the criteria developed in Meeting 2.
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76 **Meeting 4:**

77 Review and analyze the results of the project scoring.
78 Finalize recommendations on project scoring.
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80 Staff recommends a task force of no larger than seven members. It will be important
81 that members attend every meeting of the task force where data and background
82 information is presented, so that the ranking process is conducted from a shared factual
83 basis. A larger group makes this continuity of meeting attendance very difficult.
84 Appointments to the Task Force should ideally be spread across the City
85 geographically. The Task Force will sunset upon completion of its work, or July 1,
86 2020, unless extended by the City Council.

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88 It is anticipated that the focus of this Stormwater Task Force will be on stormwater
89 improvements. Issues with respect to sanitary sewer backflows, while related to heavy
90 rain events, are not identified in the scope of work for this Task Force.

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92 **FISCAL IMPACT:** No direct fiscal impact. The engineering work to support the work
93 of the task force will be funded through the Stormwater Utility fee.

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95 **TIMING:** Routine.

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(TR19-34)

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RESOLUTION TO CREATE A STORMWATER TASK FORCE

WHEREAS, the City of Falls Church adopted the Watershed Management Plan in February 2012, which sets City policy and guides City investments in stormwater and water quality improvements; and

WHEREAS, the City has experienced flooding in recent years that has damaged property and endangered the public with the extreme rain event on July 8, 2019 and the Labor Day Weekend Storms of 2018 being two notable examples; and

WHEREAS, the City's two main watercourses of Tripps Run and Four Mile Run and their tributaries comprise a complex and dynamic system with unique problems including aging stormwater infrastructure, poor water quality and erosion in its natural streams; and undersized stormwater conveyance and inadequate stormwater detention that results in flooding; and

WHEREAS, the fully developed and urban nature of the Falls Church landmass constrain and complicate possible solutions; and

WHEREAS, improvements to mitigate the frequency and severity of flooding in the City are expensive, and the identification and prioritization of such projects must be backed by both sound engineering and community support;

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, by the City Council of the City of Falls Church, Virginia that a Stormwater Task Force comprised of seven citizens representing a broad cross section of the City; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that this Task Force will work with City staff to identify and prioritize the stormwater projects needed in the City; update Section 5 of the Watershed Management Plan to guide City investments in flood mitigation and water quality improvement projects over time; and present its recommendations for City Council consideration and action in the month of March 2020; and

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED that the term of the Stormwater Task Force will end upon the completion of its recommendations to the City Council, or July 1, 2020, whichever occurs first, unless such term should be extended by a vote of the City Council.

Reading:
Adoption:
(TR19-34)