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NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release:

Carrboro residents to benefit from major investments approved by Town Council

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Carrboro residents to benefit from major investments in affordable housing, community infrastructure including bike-ped improvements, improvements to parks and economic development

Projects advance Council goals and policies; racial equity and inclusion; and environmental justice

CARRBORO, N.C. -- Carrboro residents will benefit from major investments in affordable housing, infrastructure, and bike-ped and parks projects following this month's Town Council approval of a \$6.7 million spending plan for American Rescue Plan Act (ARP) funds.

Highlights of the spending plan include improvements at parks across town including renovation of Baldwin Park; bike-ped improvements; grants to local small businesses and training for minority businesses and entrepreneurs, and investments to create new units of affordable housing and home energy efficiency renovations.

The funds were provided to the town under the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021/Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds, approved by Congress in spring 2021. The Act authorizes specific projects related to mitigating the impacts of COVID-19, addressing the negative economic impacts, replacing lost public sector revenue, and making investments in infrastructure such as water, sewer and broadband. All funds must be spent by Dec. 31, 2026.

"These are important investments in the people of Carrboro," said Mayor Damon Seils. "Many of the projects advance priorities the community has had for some time and that have become more pressing during the pandemic."

Town Manager Richard J. White III said development of the spending plan was a comprehensive effort by a staff work group to identify allowable activities for the federal funds and to align them with needs

received from interviews with Town Council members, nonprofits, BIPOC roundtables, community engagement activities, surveys and other means.

“Early on, we developed guiding principles to identify projects that advance Council goals and policies; racial equity and inclusion; and environmental justice,” White said. “We intend to put these investments to work to support people who have been most impacted and make our community better.”

Highlights of the \$6.7 million spending plan include the following:

- **Economic Development** continues to offer small business grants (\$326,000 in grants already disseminated and \$150,000 in a second round to be granted), as well as training for minority businesses and entrepreneurs. A funded study will help identify disparities related to the Town’s procurement of services and provide goals to better support minority businesses.
- **Recreation and Parks** will use funding for recreation facilities maintenance and repair including a \$227,000 renovation of Baldwin Park, and repair or replacement of park amenities such as signage, benches, picnic tables, etc. This area includes new murals, a horseshoe pit for Anderson Park, and honoraria for bands at the 2023 Carrboro Music Festival.
- **Public Safety** funds totaling \$100,000 will be used to purchase new medical equipment for Fire-Rescue, such as defibrillators, cardiac monitors, medical bags and supplies; and respirators and personal protective equipment. Funds also will be used to update public safety radio network for both Fire-Rescue and Police departments; for equipment to train officers in critical skills such as de-escalation and communication; and program implementation recommended by the Community Safety Taskforce Program. Funds will also support a Mental Health Crisis Counselor Pilot Program for Police.
- **Public Works** funds include \$475,000 to relocate and replace Underground Storage Tanks, a project to protect the environment and human health.
- **Information Technology** funds totaling \$800,000 will help extend the Town's fiber optic network on S. Merritt Mill Road to the UNC Cogeneration Facility. They will also support the hiring of consultants to develop a plan for providing broadband internet to affordable housing in Carrboro. New broadcasting equipment will be purchased for the Town Council Chambers to improve capabilities to offer hybrid (when participants are both on site and remote) meetings.
- **Planning, Zoning and Inspections** will use \$200,000 to complete improvements identified in the Carrboro Bike Plan, complete the S. Greensboro Street Sidewalk; amenities for bus shelters; and a new bike fix-it station at MLK Park. Additional funds will address the design and installation of a Rectangle Rapid Flashing Beacon on Hillsborough Street to improve access to McDougle Elementary School.
- **Housing and Community Services** will oversee \$1 million allocated to create transformational projects of new units of affordable housing. An additional allocation of \$1 million will support home energy efficiency renovations for housing preservation and weatherization and emergency housing assistance, such as rental payments, for residents most negatively affected by the pandemic. Additional funds totaling \$503,500 will support grants to impacted nonprofit agencies that provide benefits to residents most negatively affected by the pandemic. The plan also provides funds for OWASA water bill debt assistance.
- **General Administration** will receive funds for a new position of grants manager to ensure the Town meets all compliance and reporting requirements of the ARP funding plan. Additional funds in this area will support the Orange County Veteran Memorial Phase III, as well as recommendations identified by the Racial Equity Commission.

Related Documents:

- The Town Council voted unanimously to approve the ARP/SLFRF Expenditures Plan at its Oct. 11, 2022 meeting. View the complete expenditure summary and related documents at <https://carrboro.legistar.com/LegislationDetail.aspx?ID=5867575&GUID=A795481D-D351-47E7-8EF2-F60A369B05B4&Options=&Search=>
- Final ARPA Grant Project Ordinance approved Oct. 11, 2022 http://www.carrboronc.gov/DocumentCenter/View/11932/4-ARPA-Grant-Project-Ordinance-10-11-2022_approved-101122-Final
- Carrboro considers plan for use of American Rescue Plan funds - <https://www.carrboronc.gov/CivicAlerts.aspx?AID=2279>
- Additional information about the ARPA funding process for the Town of Carrboro is available at <https://www.carrboronc.gov/2583/American-Rescue-Plan>

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