

POTENTIAL POLICIES FOR FORMING STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS

One of the CA President's goals for FY 2012 is to "continue exploration of alternative funding sources." Related to that goal and this year's budget process, Phil Nelson sent the CA Board a memorandum on September 14 asking the Board for policy guidance on the income elements of the budget, including "partnerships with agencies, corporations, and individuals" as a way to "reduce the financial burdens on Columbia residents."

Given the need to provide policy guidance in the budget for certain CA services that lend themselves to potential partnerships, the following is an initial set of potential policy options for encouraging strategic partnerships with governmental entities, private agencies or non-profits in order to reduce CA's operating and capital expenses:

Watershed Management – In subsequent years, CA will be responsible for obtaining funds for watershed improvements that are entirely on CA property, and CA will be responsible for obtaining funds to pay for its proportional share of the total cost of watershed improvements that are partially on CA, County, and/or private properties.

Justification:

From a budgeting standpoint, CA should consider whether it would be useful to have a general policy on its responsibilities for funding watershed improvements that are located either entirely or partially on CA properties in Columbia.

The results of the 2009 Columbia Marketing & Communications Survey indicated that Columbia residents gave "Open Space" a high funding priority.

The tabulation in the most recent CA "derrick" of funding priorities showed that CA Board members placed "Watershed Projects" in the high funding priority category

Volunteer Center Serving Howard County – In subsequent years, CA will provide a subsidy for this County-wide program at one of the following levels:

Option 1 - No more than \$56,000 (the actual subsidy level that existed in 2001 for CA's volunteer services, which was assumed to continue in subsequent fiscal years, according to a Memorandum of Understanding signed in 2001), with the balance funded through a partnership by the County and other non-profit organizations.

Option 2 - No more than \$100,000, with the balance funded through a partnership by the County and other non-profit organizations.

Option 3 - No more than \$133,000 (the actual subsidy level in FY 2011), with the balance funded through a partnership by the County and other non-profit organizations.

Option 4 - No more than 35% of the cost of the program (the percentage of the Howard County population living in Columbia), with the balance funded through a partnership by the County and other non-profit organizations.

Option 5 - No more than 50% of the cost of the program, with the balance funded through a partnership by the County and other non-profit organizations.

Option 6 - Open-ended unlimited subsidy, regardless of any partnership with the County and other non-profit organizations.

Justification:

CA's subsidy for this County-wide program is now considerably higher, and funding from the County and other sources are considerably lower, than when the program was initiated. For example, in FY 2003, CA's subsidy was \$31,000 while the funding from the County and other sources was \$79,000. Whereas, in FY 2011, CA's subsidy grew to \$133,000 while funding from the County and others fell to \$63,000. CA should consider whether there ought to be a strategic policy going forward regarding the level of CA's subsidy that is fair, given that this is a service for the entire County.

The results of the 2009 Columbia Marketing & Communications Survey indicated that Columbia residents gave "Volunteer Services" a moderate funding priority.

The tabulation in the most recent CA "derrick" of funding priorities showed that CA Board members placed "Volunteer Center" in the low funding priority category

Columbia Community Exchange (The Time Banking Program) – In subsequent years, CA will subsidize the cost of this program in accordance with the following framework:

Option 1 – No more than \$40,000, with any additional costs funded through administrative fees for participants and/or a partnership with the County and/or Chamber of Commerce and other non-profit organizations.

Option 2 - No more than \$60,000, with any additional costs funded through administrative fees for participants and/or a partnership with the County and/or Chamber of Commerce and other non-profit organizations.

Option 3 - No more than \$82,000 (the actual level in FY 2011), with any additional costs funded through administrative fees for participants and/or a partnership with the County and/or Chamber of Commerce and other non-profit organizations.

Option 4 – Reduce administrative costs by folding this program in with the Volunteer Center Serving Howard County and having one administrator for both programs.

Option 5 - Open-ended unlimited subsidy, with no increases in administrative fees and regardless of any partnership with the County and other non-profit organizations.

Justification:

As of August 2009, there were only 106 active members of this program, and since this program serves residents in the rest of the County as well, CA should consider whether it makes sense to enter into a partnership with the County and other organizations to help fund the program. There is also the possibility of charging a modest administrative fee for participants. In addition, since a full-time administrator may not be warranted for so few active participants, there is an opportunity to combine this program with the Volunteer Center Serving Howard County and to have one administrator handle both programs.

The tabulation in the most recent CA "derrick" of funding priorities showed that CA Board members placed "Time Banking" in the low funding priority category.

International Exchange and Multi-Cultural Program (Sister Cities Program) – In subsequent years, CA will subsidize the cost of this program, whether it is expanded or not, in accordance with the following framework:

Option 1 – No more than \$75,000, with any additional costs funded through increased administrative fees for participants and/or a partnership with the County and/or Chamber of Commerce and other non-profit organizations.

Option 2 - No more than \$100,000, with any additional costs funded through increased administrative fees for participants and/or a partnership with the County and/or Chamber of Commerce and other non-profit organizations.

Option 3 - No more than \$113,000 (the actual level in FY 2011), with any additional costs funded through increased administrative fees for participants and/or a partnership with the County and/or Chamber of Commerce and other non-profit organizations.

Option 4 - Open-ended unlimited subsidy, with no increases in administrative fees and regardless of any partnership with the County and other non-profit organizations.

Justification:

Since almost as many non-residents (77) have registered and benefited from this program as residents (109) for the period between FY 2005 and FY 2009, CA should consider if it should continue to essentially subsidize the entire operation of a County-wide service without a partnership with the County and other organizations.

The CA subsidy for this program was \$66,000 in FY 2002, and most recently was \$113,000 in FY 2011. The CA subsidy could accelerate, especially if more countries are added to the Sister Cities exchange program and the program's operating costs increase further.

The results of the 2009 Columbia Marketing & Communications Survey indicated that Columbia residents gave "Multi-Cultural Programs" a low funding priority.

The tabulation in the most recent CA "derrick" of funding priorities showed that CA Board members placed "International Exchange & Multi-Cultural Programs" in the low funding priority category.

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