



Legislation Text

File #: 1465-2018, **Version:** 1

Background: The Capital Crossroads Special Improvement District of Columbus (Capital Crossroads SID) has developed a transit pass program called the Downtown C-Pass Program (the Program) for eligible employers and employees in downtown Columbus in partnership with the Central Ohio Transit Authority (COTA) and the Mid-Ohio Regional Planning Commission (MORPC). Beginning June 1, 2018, 45,000 eligible Downtown Columbus workers, including City of Columbus employees, will be able to benefit from unlimited access to the entire COTA transportation system through the Program. The Capital Crossroads SID will serve as the overall program administrator and MORPC will develop and manage a secure website and database for the Program utilizing the Gohio Commute platform in association with Smart Columbus. The Program will last for 31 months from June 1, 2018 through December 31, 2020.

The goal of the Program is to proactively address parking shortages in the Capital Crossroads SID that threaten the further development of Downtown Columbus. By shifting commuters from personal vehicles to public transportation, thousands of parking spaces could be opened that would encourage higher commercial office occupancy rates, provide cost-effective transportation to employees, improve air quality, and reduce roadway congestion. The Program is the largest of its kind in the nation and could become a model for other cities to follow to sustainably address transportation challenges by encouraging more transit use instead of continuing to build expensive parking garages that take up developable land.

Three years ago, downtown property owners feared a parking shortage would stall development. That is when the Capital Crossroads SID, MORPC and COTA joined forces to pilot a study to see if downtown workers would change commuting habits with a transit incentive. Transit ridership nearly doubled when employees were offered a bus pass at no cost to them.

Based on the success of this pilot study, the property owners of the Capital Crossroads SID sought to authorize a Transit Services Plan (the Plan) that would provide unlimited access to COTA transit services to the employees that work within the Capital Crossroads SID. The Plan would be funded by an annual property assessment to begin in 2018 and last through 2021.

This Council authorized the City to execute the Petition and Transit Services Plan and to include the real property owned by the City within the Capital Crossroads SID in the Transit Services Plan by Ordinance No. 0767-2017, passed March 27, 2017. The City approved the Transit Services Plan by Resolution No. 0072X-2017, passed April 3, 2017. The City approved Ordinance 1945-2017 to proceed with the Transit Services Plan of the Capital Crossroads SID and levying special assessments on the parcels of real property within the Capital Crossroads SID specially benefited by the Transit Services Plan. It also approves the report of the Assessment Equalization Board, established pursuant to Ordinance No. 1605-2017, which recommended approval of the resolution reached by the SID and the objecting property owner.

Concurrently, the Transportation Policy Committee of MORPC approved MORPC Resolution T-14-17 on November 3, 2017 that authorized the Executive Director to execute a memorandum of understanding with the Capital Crossroads SID and COTA to support the implementation of the Downtown C-Pass Program.

The anticipated cost of the Program to serve an estimated 45,000 Downtown workers will be \$4.56 million over two and half years. Property assessments within the Capital Crossroads SID will cover \$1.29 million of the cost. MORPC will cover up to \$2.84 million. To assist with the remaining Program obligations, organizations such as the City will provide

additional funds through sponsorships and assessments. The Agreement with the Capital Crossroads SID will outline employee eligibility, how employees can access the C-Pass, how the City will maintain an eligibility database, and the financial obligations of the City for the Program.

The City will commit \$80,000 annually for the next three years to sponsor the Program. Additionally, since some City employees work in buildings that are within the Capital Crossroads SID boundaries but do not pay SID assessments, the City will pay \$40.50 per eligible employee in the following City buildings: 77 North Front Street, 345 South High Street, 373 South High Street, 375 South High Street, and 120 Marconi Buildings.

Emergency action is requested in order to ensure immediate delivery of the program benefits.

FISCAL IMPACT: The funding for this agreement (\$112,845) is fully budgeted within Funds 1000, 2265, 2240, and 4481 accordingly.

To authorize the Director of the Department of Development to enter into an agreement with The Capital Crossroads Special Improvement District of Columbus (Capital Crossroads SID) to participate in the Downtown C-Pass Program; to authorize the appropriation of funds within the capital south fund; to authorize the expenditure of \$112,845 within the general fund, the street construction maintenance and repair fund, the development services fund, and the capital south fund; and to declare an emergency. (\$112,845.00)

WHEREAS, the Capital Crossroads Special Improvement District of Columbus (Capital Crossroads SID) has developed a transit pass program called the Downtown C-Pass Program (the Program) for eligible employers and employees in downtown Columbus in partnership with the Central Ohio Transit Authority (COTA) and the Mid-Ohio Regional Planning Commission (MORPC); and

WHEREAS, under the Program, COTA will provide access to all of its transit services to eligible downtown employees; and

WHEREAS, the Capital Crossroads SID will serve as the overall program administrator and MORPC will develop and manage a secure website and database for the Program utilizing the Gohio Commute platform in association with Smart Columbus; and

WHEREAS, the Downtown C-Pass program will last for 31 months from June 1, 2018 through December 2020; and

WHEREAS, the goal of this program is to proactively address parking shortages in the Capital Crossroads SID that threaten the further development of Downtown Columbus; and

WHEREAS, the anticipated cost of the Program to serve an estimated 45,000 Downtown workers will be \$4.56 million over two and half years; and

WHEREAS, property assessments within the Capital Crossroads SID will cover \$1.29 million of the cost and MORPC will cover up to \$2.84 million; and

WHEREAS, to assist with the remaining Program obligations, organizations such as the City will commit to \$80,000 per year over the next three years to provide additional funds through sponsorships and employee assessments of \$40.50 per employee; and

WHEREAS, the Agreement with the Capital Crossroads SID will outline the eligibility of City employees, how employees can access the C-Pass, how the City will maintain an eligibility database, and the financial obligations of the City for the Downtown C-Pass Program; and

WHEREAS, an emergency exists in the usual daily operation of the Department of Development in that it is immediately necessary to enter into contract with The Capital Crossroads Special Improvement District of Columbus in order to administer the Downtown C-Pass Program, such immediate action being necessary for the preservation of the public health, peace, property and safety; **NOW, THEREFORE**,

BE IT ORDAINED BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF COLUMBUS:

SECTION 1. That the Director of the Department of Development is authorized to enter into an agreement with The Capital Crossroads Special Improvement District of Columbus (the Capital Crossroads SID) to participate in the Downtown C-Pass Program.

SECTION 2. That from the unappropriated monies in Fund No. 4481, and from all monies estimated to come into said fund from any and all sources and unappropriated for any other purpose during the fiscal year ending December 31, 2018, the sum of \$52,845.00 is appropriated per the accounting codes attachment to this legislation.

SECTION 3. That for the purpose stated in Section 1, the expenditure of \$112,845 or so much thereof as may be needed, is hereby authorized in Funds 1000, 2265, 2240, and 4481 in Object Class 03 Contractual Services per the accounting codes in the attachment to this ordinance.

SECTION 4. That this contract is awarded in accordance with the relevant provisions of City Code Chapter 329 relating to not-for-profit service contracts.

SECTION 5. That the funds necessary to carry out the purpose of this ordinance are hereby deemed appropriated, and the City Auditor shall establish such accounting codes as necessary.

SECTION 6. For the reasons stated in the preamble hereto, which is hereby made a part hereof, this Ordinance is hereby declared to be an emergency measure and shall take effect and be in force from and after its passage and approval by the Mayor or ten days after the passage if the Mayor neither approves nor vetoes the same.