

Information Item

Date: November 12, 2019

To: Mayor, Mayor Pro Tempore, and Members of the City Council

From: Evan Raleigh, Assistant City Manager

Subject:

Information on Potential Partnership with the Winston-Salem/Forsyth County School System in the Construction of a Job Training Facility on the Easton Elementary School Campus

Strategic Focus Area: Economic Vitality and Diversity

Strategic Objective: Enhance Skills of Workforce and Increase Employability

Strategic Plan Action Item: N/A

Key Work Item: N/A



The Winston-Salem/Forsyth County School System is currently in the planning stages of a significant renovation project at Easton Elementary School. The scope of the project includes a number of enhancements to the current facility including the elimination of several mobile units on the school's campus. At the request of Council Member Taylor, City staff has engaged representatives from the school system regarding the potential of incorporating the construction of a facility that would adjoin the renovated school that could be used to host activities such as small business development trainings, job skills enhancement courses, GED attainment and other community and economic development-related activities.

As envisioned, the facility would be appended to the school with the ability to be accessed separately. As the idea is purely conceptual at this juncture, neither detailed specifications for the facility nor a plan for supporting operations at the facility have been devised, however, the proposed source of funding for the project has been identified. Given the proposed use of the facility, staff would recommend using 2018 economic development bond funds; specifically a portion of the \$3 million in bond funds that were set aside to support economic development activities in the Southeast Ward.

After consulting with the City's bond counsel regarding the concept, it has been determined that the City would need to own the portion of land on which the facility resides in order to remain in accordance with the provisions of the 2014 economic development bond order. Should the Mayor and City Council desire to proceed with the exploration of the concept as described, the City would need to take steps to acquire a portion of the school's land which would require approval from the Forsyth County Board of Commissioners.

Based upon direction from the Committee, staff can continue conversations with the school system, develop a set of proposed specifications for the facility and an operational plan and bring back an item for action at a future meeting.