



AGENDA MEMORANDUM

Action Item for the City Council Meeting October 11, 2022

DATE: September 26, 2022
TO: Peter Zaroni, City Manager
FROM: Daniel McGinn, Director of Planning
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Authorization to submit a grant application for a U.S. Department of Transportation Reconnecting Communities Pilot Planning Grant.

CAPTION:

Resolution authorizing the submission of a grant application for planning services through the use of funding under the U.S. Department of Transportation Reconnecting Communities Pilot (RCP) Grant Program in an amount of up to \$2,000,000 and a City cash match of up to \$400,000.

SUMMARY:

The RCP program is dedicated to reconnecting communities previously cut off from economic opportunities by transportation infrastructure. The City's RCP planning grant application focuses on preliminary engineering design work, construction costs estimates, and prioritization of projects that will reconnect the Washington-Coles neighborhood with the downtown districts.

BACKGROUND AND FINDINGS:

The Reconnecting Communities Pilot Grant Program is the first-ever Federal program dedicated to reconnecting communities that were previously cut off from economic opportunities by transportation infrastructure. RCP Program's goal is to advance community-supported projects with a priority of economically disadvantaged communities to improve access to daily destinations such as jobs, schools, healthcare, grocery stores, and recreation.

Funding supports planning grants, capital construction grants, and technical assistance to restore community connectivity through the removal, retrofit, mitigation, or replacement of eligible transportation infrastructure facilities. Eligible facilities include highways, including a road, street, or parkway or other transportation facilities that creates a barrier to community connectivity.

Planning grants may be used to study the feasibility and impacts of removing, retrofitting, or mitigating an existing eligible facility or to conduct planning activities necessary to design a project to remove, retrofit, or mitigate an existing eligible facility. Eligible planning activities

include:

- Planning studies of: current traffic patterns on the eligible facility proposed for removal, retrofit, or mitigation and the surrounding street network; transportation network capacity; alternative roadway designs or other uses for the right-of-way; impacts to the mobility of freight and people; impacts to the safety of the traveling public; cost; anticipated economic impacts and environmental impacts both human and natural.
- Public engagement activities to provide the public opportunities to provide input into a plan to remove and convert an eligible facility.
- Other transportation planning activities required in advance of a project to remove, retrofit, or mitigate an existing eligible facility to restore community connectivity, as determined by DOT.

In addition, DOT will prioritize technical assistance to economically disadvantaged communities. The Department anticipates focusing its technical assistance on recipients that demonstrate need as underserved, overburdened, and disadvantaged communities. Technical assistance is for building organizational or community capacity to engage in transportation planning and to identify innovative solutions to infrastructure challenges, including reconnecting communities that are bifurcated by eligible facilities or lack safe, reliable, and affordable transportation options.

The removal of the existing Harbor Bridge and re-alignment of US Highway (US) 181 presents a significant opportunity to lessen the barriers cutting off access to the Washington-Coles neighborhood from other downtown districts.

PROJECT TIMELINE:

The Reconnecting Communities Pilot Grant Program selection awards announcement will be based on how many applications are received but are expected to be announced in early 2023.

ALTERNATIVES:

The alternative is not to submit the grant application and find other funding sources for the planning and design of Staples Street.

FISCAL IMPACT:

Match funding up to \$400,000 will be required.

FUNDING DETAIL:

Fund: N/A
Organization/Activity: N/A
Mission Element: N/A
Project # (CIP Only): N/A
Account: N/A

RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends authorizing submittal of the grant application as presented.

LIST OF SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS:

Resolution