

**INTERGOVERNMENTAL RELATIONS
COUNCIL COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES
WEDNESDAY, JUNE 9, 2021
10:00 AM
VIDEOCONFERENCE**

Members Present:	Councilmember Manny Pelaez, <i>Co-Chair, District 8</i> Commissioner Justin Rodriguez, <i>Co-Chair, Bexar County Commissioner’s Court, Precinct 2</i> Councilmember Rebecca Viagran, <i>District 3</i> Councilmember Adriana Rocha Garcia, <i>District 4</i> Councilmember Clayton Perry, <i>District 10</i> Commissioner Trish DeBerry, <i>Bexar County Commissioner’s Court, Precinct 3</i>
Staff Present:	Jeff Coyle, <i>Assistant City Manager</i> ; Shreya Shah, <i>Assistant City Attorney</i> ; Tomika Monterville, <i>Director, Transportation Department</i> ; Gen. Juan Ayala, <i>Director, Military & Veteran Affairs</i> ; Razi Hosseini, <i>Director, Public Works</i> ; Sally Basurto, <i>Assistant Director, Government & Public Affairs</i> ; Christine Wright, <i>State Relations Manager, Government & Public Affairs</i> ; Nancy Cano, <i>Office of the City Clerk</i>
Others Present:	Jeff Boothe, <i>President, Boothe Transit Consulting, LLC</i> ; Kevin Kelly, <i>Lead Attorney, Government & Regulatory Affairs Group, Clark Hill, PC</i> Lauren Lipin, <i>Attorney, Government & Regulatory Affairs Group, Clark Hill, PC</i> ; Baltazar R. (“Walter”) Serna, Jr. <i>Attorney, Serna & Serna, San Antonio</i> ; Ron Eritano, <i>The Normandy Group</i>

Call to Order

Co-Chairman Pelaez called the meeting to order.

1. Approval of the minutes from the May 12, 2021 meeting of the Intergovernmental Relations Committee.

Councilmember Rocha Garcia moved to approve the minutes from the May 12, 2021 meeting of the Intergovernmental Relations Committee. Councilmember Perry seconded the motion. The motion prevailed unanimously by those present.

2. RAISE grant program and federal infrastructure funding discussions.

Tomika Monterville stated that the U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) released a Notice of Funding Opportunity for the RAISE Grant Program to make available \$1 billion in FY 2021 for transportation projects with a focus on creating jobs, improving safety, protecting the environment, and generating equitable economic opportunities. She noted that applications were due by July 12, 2021. She explained that RAISE was a highly competitive grant and the Transportation Department had engaged Boothe Transit Consulting, LLC to submit a proposal that aligned with the City’s priorities.

Commissioner DeBerry entered the meeting at this time.

Jeff Boothe reported that it was important to select the most competitive project based on the criteria and a benefit-cost analysis (CBA). He highlighted the most important RAISE Grant criteria, as follows:

- Use of Environmental Justice Mapping and Screening Tool - EPA EJSCREEN
- Use of the SA Climate Ready: Climate Action and Adaptation Plan (CAAP)
- Coordination with all regional partners to unite behind the project
- Local hire, union jobs, and Project Labor Agreement (PLA)

Mr. Boothe emphasized that regional coordination was key and it was important to identify all project stakeholders that would advocate for regional support. He highlighted the most important RAISE Evaluation criteria, as follows: Safety, Environmental Sustainability, Quality of Life, Economic Competitiveness, and State of Good Repair. He noted that partnerships and innovation were secondary selection criteria.

Mr. Boothe stated that the RAISE Grant criteria would examine how the communities would be served by the project with respect to the development, implementation, and enforcement of environmental laws, regulations and policies. He added that there were six equity-based demographic Environmental Justice indicators: Low income (%); People of color (%); Less than high school education; linguistic isolation; individuals under age 5; and individuals over 64.

Mr. Boothe set out the City's proposed RAISE Grant Strategy, as follows:

- Regional partners united behind a single project that best addresses the Biden Administration priorities
- Identify local match – While funding is up to 80/20, overmatch helps
- Project Readiness – Project must be completed by 2026; ideally in the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) and/or fast integration into the AAMPO TIP
- Projects that have been evaluated using the EJSCREEN and/or CAAP to make the case for the project
- Populations served by the project- Low income, minority, areas of persistent poverty
- Assemble local support from local governments, stakeholders and impacted populations
- Plan on meeting with USDOT in September 2021 to make case for the project

Mr. Boothe provided a RAISE Grant timeline:

- June 2021: Regional coordination and development
- July 12, 2021: RAISE Application due
- July 12, 2021 – September 6, 2021: Projects evaluated and receive initial ranking, then moved to Secretary's Office
- September 6, 2021 – November 2021: Engage the Secretary of Transportation's Office; highest priority projects identified and decisions announced

Mr. Boothe stressed the importance of mobilizing participating Congressional Delegates for a meeting with the Secretary of Transportation to express their support in person and also to engage in a phone call campaign.

Ms. Monterville stated that the Transportation Department and project partners identified three projects with the potential to be a competitive capital project for the RAISE Grant:

PROPOSED CAPITAL PROJECTS FOR THE RAISE GRANT:	
	RAISE Evaluation Criteria met:
Howard W. Peak Greenway Trails System Plan (Westside)	Sustainability; persistent poverty; equity
Brooks: S. New Braunfels Roadway	Job creation; economic development; supports Town Center at Brooks
VIA: East-West Advance Rapid Transit (ART)	Sustainability; persistent poverty; equity; multi-modal connectivity

Sally Basurto provided an outlook on the Infrastructure and Surface Transportation Bill and reported that President Biden proposed a \$1.7 trillion (over five years) package and Senate Republicans counteroffered with a \$928 billion package (over eight years). She noted that both sides remained far apart on the infrastructure and length of the Bill. She reported that negotiations would begin again with a different bipartisan group of Senators.

Ms. Basurto reported that the Senate Environment and Public Works (EPW) passed the Surface Transportation Act of 2021, which would provide \$304 billion over five years for roads, bridges, and highways. She added that the House Transportation and Infrastructure (T&I) introduced the INVEST in America Act Surface Transportation Bill that would provide \$547 billion in funding over five years. She reported that Congressman Castro’s Community Project was included in the House Transportation & Infrastructure Bill and would provide \$15 million in infrastructure investment to complete the Zaramora Overpass and improve quality of life on the Westside of San Antonio.

Commissioner Rodriguez asked of next steps and which proposed capital project(s) would be submitted. Assistant City Manager Jeff Coyle reported that the project partners were leaning towards the Howard W. Peak Greenway Trails System Plan (Westside) Project, as the Brooks Project had been previously submitted to the Alamo Area Metropolitan Planning Organization (AAMPO) for funding, and the VIA Project had previously received a RAISE Grant.

Commissioner Rodriguez voiced his support for the Howard W. Peak Greenway Trails System Plan (Westside) Project and noted that the Project was already on the Biden Administration’s radar and met RAISE evaluation criteria for the CAAP, multi-modal connectivity, healthy communities, sustainability, persistent poverty, and was equity-based. He requested that it be designated as a high priority project for the region.

Councilmember Viagran asked of the total cost of the entire Creek Trail System. She asked if the EPA EJSCREEN tool could be utilized to address or offset the after effects of property appraisal increases for legacy homeowners in the area. She asked if future Federal funding could be inserted to prepare impacted residents. Walter Serna noted that Creek Trail System was approximately \$240

million, and the Westside Creek System was approximately \$62 million. Ms. Monterville stated that the purpose of the EPA EJSCREEN tool was to address the inequities that affected marginalized communities, and did not apply to potential gentrification issues. She added that the RAISE Grant program focused only on funding capital projects and the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and US. Housing & Urban Development Department had programs that provided resources to communities. She observed that residents that lived in generational homes were unaware of the resources available in their community and needed to be provided with information, education, and resources before the start of a capital development project. Ms. Monterville recommended that the Howard W. Peak Greenway Trails System Plan (Westside) Project be submitted in a multi-phased approach for the continued reinvestment and refurbishment of the ecosystem, and for phased connections of the trailway systems.

Commissioner DeBerry note that the Greenway Trails System needed better connectivity around the entire City and the County in order to benefit the entire community in an aligned, united effort.

Councilmember Rocha Garcia referenced the geographic map of the Greenway Trails System and noted that the southwest area of the City did not have any trailways. She expressed her support for Council District 4 and noted that for years it lacked economic development, access to health care, and had the highest reported cases of COVID-19 during the onset of the pandemic. She called for an expansion of the Greenway Trails System that would connect Camargo Park to Lackland AFB, to Pearsall Park, to Port San Antonio, to Downtown.

Councilmember Perry asked for clarification on the evaluation criteria for the Brooks – S. New Braunfels Roadway Project and noted that the Project could be designed to make it more competitive and unique in such a way to fit the RAISE Grant criteria. Ms. Monterville explained that the Brooks Project was not a unique project and was solely a roadway project which did not meet the RAISE Grant criteria in the areas of sustainability and equity. She highlighted that the benefit-cost analysis was a key component of the evaluation process and noted the Brooks Project was not successful under the DOT Build Program which was the same funding program as the current RAISE Grant Program. Razi Hosseini reported that earlier in the year, the Public Works Department and Transportation Department received City Council approval to request \$20 million in AAMPO funding for the Brooks Project. Mr. Serna noted that the Brooks Project was initially submitted under the previous administration and the new administration had a change in transportation funding priorities with a primary focus on equity in underserved areas, in addition to job creation and economic development. He observed that the Brooks Project had a better funding chance under the current administration. Mr. Boothe agreed with Mr. Serna's observations.

Commissioner DeBerry noted that future infrastructure stimulus funds were anticipated and would provide more opportunities for the funding of the Brooks Project. Mr. Boothe confirmed that a sizeable Surface Transportation Bill was expected. He noted that the focus of the House Bill was on climate change and sustainability, and would be packaged as part of a larger infrastructure package that would include broadband funding and other items that were part of the American Jobs Plan. He explained that the House Bill would substantially increase the amount of funding for highways and transit and sub-allocated funding for the region.

Chairman Pelaez stated that it was difficult to choose between the Greenway Trails System Project and the Brooks Project and observed that the chances of success were higher with the Greenways Trail System Project. He added that investing in green spaces and trails was economic development that provided amenities which attracted people that wanted to live in nice areas near their work, which was important to them. He noted that one of the benefits of having the City, Bexar County, and their partnerships involved in funding matters was that it fortified collective efforts when all were united in advocating for the same things.

Assistant City Manager Coyle stated that the next steps would be to reconvene the group of community partners and share with them the intent of the project partners to submit the Greenway Trails System Project for the RAISE Grant Program and noted the possibility of adding more sections to the application.

Adjourn

There being no further discussion, the meeting was adjourned at 11:14 AM.

*Councilmember Manny Pelaez,
Co-Chairman*

*County Commissioner Justin Rodriguez,
Co-Chairman*

Respectfully Submitted,

Nancy Cano, Office of the City Clerk