



# City of San Antonio

## Agenda Memorandum

**File Number:**  
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**Agenda Item Number:** 3

**Agenda Date:** September 26, 2023

**In Control:** Transportation and Infrastructure Committee

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**DEPARTMENT:** Government Affairs

**DEPARTMENT HEAD:** Sally Basurto

**COUNCIL DISTRICTS IMPACTED:** Citywide

**SUBJECT:**

Federal Grant Opportunity - Reconnecting Communities and Neighborhoods (RCN) Program.

**SUMMARY:**

Briefing on a proposed planning grant application for the Reconnecting Communities and Neighborhoods grant program to study how best to overcome the barrier created by Interstate 37 (I-37) and better connect downtown San Antonio to historically underserved communities on the Eastside.

**BACKGROUND INFORMATION:**

As a grant program through the U.S. Department of Transportation, the Reconnecting Communities and Neighborhoods (RCN) program will fund projects which advance community-centered transportation connection projects that benefit disadvantaged communities by improving access to jobs, education, healthcare, food, nature, and recreation. RCN's goal is to address barriers by removing, retrofitting, or mitigating highways and other transportation facilities to ensure

improved connectivity, mobility, access, and economic development.

RCN was created through the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL) and Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) and focuses on the following priorities: Housing supply; rural and tribal communities; safety; climate and sustainability; equity and Justice40; workforce development, job quality, and wealth creation; transformation; and thriving communities.

The RNC program will fund a total of \$188 million for Community Planning Grants, \$2.7 billion for capital construction grants, and \$450 million to regional partnership challenge grants. Applications for the RCN program are due on September 28, 2023.

The Government Affairs Department, through direction from the City Manager's Office, identified the need to support a planning study and preliminary engineering analysis for prioritizing solutions that remedy decades of historic inequities and fractured connections in the heart of San Antonio between the Eastside and Downtown neighborhoods.

#### **ISSUE:**

The City is applying for a \$2.96 million federal planning grant through the Reconnecting Communities and Neighborhoods (RCN) program. If selected, the planning grant will fund a comprehensive community-driven planning process and the engineering and planning studies necessary to develop a project that minimizes the barrier created by Interstate 37 (I-37) and better connect downtown San Antonio to historically underserved communities on the Eastside.

The study area is one that has been marked by disinvestment, multiple displacements, segregation, and exclusionary zoning, intersecting the fate of Eastside residents with redlining, I-37, Hemisfair, and the Alamodome.

The planning process will include public workshops, individual stakeholder meetings, small group meetings, and numerous outreach events to encourage participation and inform the public of the effort. An oversight committee that includes leadership from Hemisfair, UTSA, City, TxDOT, neighborhood associations, community organizations, and others will be established to provide feedback on the effort and oversight of the process.

The deliverables from the planning grant will produce a project concept developed through a community driven planning process that will serve as the foundation for a federal grant application seeking the capital funds necessary for the project's construction.

#### **FISCAL IMPACT:**

In total, the estimated cost for the Study and public engagement is \$3.7 million. The required non-federal match for this grant is 20% or \$740k. If the City is awarded the grant, staff will return to City Council to accept the grant and recommend a funding source for the 20% match.

#### **ALTERNATIVES:**

This item is for briefing purposes only.

**RECOMMENDATION:**

This item is for briefing purposes only.