



# City of San Antonio

## Agenda Memorandum

### File Number:

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**Agenda Item Number:** 10

**Agenda Date:** January 12, 2023

**In Control:** City Council A Session

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**DEPARTMENT:** Center City Development & Operations

**DEPARTMENT HEAD:** John Jacks

**COUNCIL DISTRICTS IMPACTED:** District 1

**SUBJECT:**

Market Square Underpass Project

**SUMMARY:**

This ordinance approves the acceptance of funds and equipment in the amount of \$50,000.00 from the 80 | 20 Foundation and \$46,000 from the University of Texas at San Antonio for the Market Square Underpass project – informally named ‘The Pass’ - and the approval of a lease agreement with the Texas Department of Transportation (TXDOT) for use of the IH-35 elevated highway underpass between Dolorosa and Commerce streets.

**BACKGROUND INFORMATION:**

In 2019, the Center City Development & Operations Department (CCDO), in partnership with Centro San Antonio, sponsored a collaborative placemaking process with Market Square stakeholders to create a placemaking plan for Gateway Plaza located at the IH-35 underpass, a property owned by the Texas Department of Transportation.

In 2021, Project for Public Spaces, Inc. with funding from Bayer HealthCare LLC and its brand Claritin, awarded the City of San Antonio a Clarity Parks Project grant in the amount up to \$100,000 to bring kids outdoors through programming and placemaking improvements to the

Gateway Plaza. Specifically, the funds will support placemaking activities, programming, and physical improvements such as landscaping, a half basketball court, a fixed ping pong table, greenery, seating, and appropriate play/educational features. As the Zona Cultural neighborhood continues to evolve, it is critical to transform the underutilized plaza into a great outdoor connector and vibrant active space. Plaza improvements can help enhance connectivity between the near westside neighborhood, University of Texas at San Antonio Downtown Campus, Market Square, Milam Park, and surrounding civic assets. This project focuses on the portion of the plaza adjacent to Dolorosa St.

The Claritin grant focuses on creating outdoor spaces for youth. This project is focused on teenage and college aged youth, and the activation of a largely unprogrammed area. In addition to the original \$100,000 grant received from Claritin, which also provided significant in-kind design services delivered by Project for Public Spaces. The project also includes a series of murals on the concrete piers supporting the elevated highway. Those murals are funded by Public Art funding through the Department of Arts & Culture.

#### **ISSUE:**

The overall design and concept proposed by Project for Public Spaces surpassed the the generous \$100,000.00 grant provided by Claritin. UTSA and the 80 | 20 Foundation have been partners throughout the development of this project, and they have stepped forward to help support and realize the vision by providing additional support. The 80 | 20 Foundation has agreed to provide \$50,000.00, \$38,000.00 in a monetary grant and \$12,000.00 in equipment and the University of Texas at San Antonio will provide a grant in the amount of \$46,000.00 for the project. This funding is critically important to the project's success, as was the input and staff time these entities have contributed to the project thus far.

The area to be improved is owned by TXDOT and the City must execute an agreement to deliver and maintain these enhancements. This item approves an agreement with the State at no cost to the City, with the understanding that installation methods and materials must be approved by TXDOT before they are implemented or installed on the property.

#### **ALTERNATIVES:**

If the agreement with TXDOT is not approved then the project will not be realized. Should the City choose to not accept the offered grant funding, then the project scope will either need to be significantly reduced or the City would need to identify other funding sources.

#### **FISCAL IMPACT:**

This ordinance authorizes the acceptance of funds in the amount of \$38,000.00 in grant funds from the 80 | 20 Foundation and \$46,000.00 in funds from UTSA. In addition to that monetary support, the City will accept \$12,000.00 in furniture and equipment from the 80 | 20 Foundation that will defer project costs and support the project.

**RECOMMENDATION:**

Staff recommends acceptance of the grant funds from the 80 | 20 Foundation and UTSA and the approval of the lease agreement with the Texas Department of Transportation for use of the IH-35 elevated highway underpass between Dolorosa and Commerce streets.