



City of San Antonio

Agenda Memorandum

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Agenda Item Number: 3

Agenda Date: August 29, 2022

In Control: Transportation and Mobility Committee Meeting

DEPARTMENT: Public Works Department

DEPARTMENT HEAD: Razi Hosseini

COUNCIL DISTRICTS IMPACTED: Citywide

SUBJECT:

Bipartisan Infrastructure Law Reconnecting Communities Pilot Program and Railroad Crossing Elimination Grant Program Update

SUMMARY:

Staff briefing on the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law Reconnecting Communities Pilot Program and Railroad Crossing Elimination Grant Program to include an overview of each program and the currently proposed projects.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

Through the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL), signed into law in 2021, Congress reauthorized the federal surface transportation programs and increased funding by \$550 billion. Since the June 21, 2022 Transportation and Mobility Committee meeting, the federal government has released further guidance and notices of funding opportunities under BIL. During this month's Transportation and Mobility Committee meeting, the Public Works Department will provide a

status on the Reconnecting Communities Pilot Program and the Railroad Crossing Elimination Grant Program.

Reconnecting Communities Pilot Program

The Bipartisan Infrastructure Law established the new Reconnecting Communities Pilot Grant Program, funded with \$1 billion over the next five years. This represents a significant increase in infrastructure funding and the San Antonio region has developed a strategy to maximize federal awards to benefit the community. On June 30, Department of Transportation (DOT) released the notice of funding opportunity for the Reconnecting Communities Pilot Program. In FY 2022, \$195 million is available to fund projects that remove, retrofit, or mitigate transportation facilities, such as highways and rail lines that create barriers to community connectivity. Funding is available for technical assistance, planning, and capital construction. Eligible projects include high-quality public transportation, infrastructure removal, pedestrian walkways and overpasses, capping and lids, linear parks and trails, roadway redesigns and complete street conversions. This first-ever federal program focuses on reconnecting communities previously cut off from economic opportunities by transportation infrastructure.

Through coordination with local partners and agencies, there were three potential projects identified that met the criteria of the Reconnecting Communities Program. They included the following proposed projects: Port San Antonio's Streetscapes Project, Hemisfair's Multiuse Streets Reopening Project and the City's Multi-Corridor Transportation Facilities Improvements project. The partners, agencies and City are currently working on refinements to their proposed projects and will coordinate their submissions for current and future funding opportunities.

Railroad Crossing Elimination Grant

On July 12, the Federal Railroad Administration released the notice of funding opportunity for the Railroad Crossing Elimination Program. The program will fund projects that enhance safety, improve the health and safety of communities, eliminate highway-rail and pathway-rail grade crossings, and reduce freight movement and railroad operations' impacts on underserved communities. Funding is available for planning, environmental review, design and construction of an eligible project. Eligible projects include grade separation or closure (including through use of a bridge, embankment, tunnel or combination thereof), track relocation, improvement or installation of protective devices (signals, signs or other), measures to improve safety related to a separation, closure or track relocation and safety improvements related to mobility of people and goods at highway-rail grade crossings. In FY 2022, \$573 million is available, with 20 percent set aside for rural projects.

The Public Works Department in coordination with the Texas Department of Transportation (TXDOT) Rail Division in Austin has identified a potential project located in Council District 2 that accomplishes the program's intended merits. This project is located at the Union Pacific Railroad crossing at Rittiman Road and Gibbs Sprawl Road and focuses on improving safety. The City intends to coordinate with TxDOT for the submission of a grant application in early October with full support of TxDOT.

ISSUE:

This briefing will provide an overview of the process and currently proposed projects for each of the respective grant-funded programs.

FISCAL IMPACT:

This item is for briefing purposes only.

ALTERNATIVES:

This item is for briefing purposes only.

RECOMMENDATION:

This item is for briefing purposes only.