



Department Source: Public Works

To: City Council

From: City Manager & Staff

Council Meeting Date: September 18, 2023

Re: Authorizing the 2023 Reconnecting Communities and Neighborhoods (RCN) grant application.

Executive Summary

Staff has prepared for Council consideration a resolution authorizing the City Manager to submit an application for the U.S. Department of Transportation (USDOT) Reconnecting Communities and Neighborhoods (RCN) grant funding. The funding request is for a planning grant to complete a study along the I-70 Business Loop Corridor.

Discussion

The Reconnecting Communities and Neighborhoods (RCN) grant is a joint funding opportunity for the Reconnecting Communities Pilot (RCP) and the Neighborhood Access and Equity (NAE) programs through the U.S. Department of Transportation (USDOT). The purpose of the funding opportunity is to invest in surface transportation projects that will prioritize disadvantaged communities; improve access to daily needs; foster equitable development and restoration; and remove transportation related barriers. For the grant application, the project has to be designated as a planning grant or a construction grant and the application can be considered for both programs. The program will award at least \$1.5 billion for capital construction projects and \$185 million for community planning projects.

The applications are evaluated using merit criteria and prioritizes historically disadvantaged communities. The merit criteria include the following sections: equity and environmental justice; access; facility suitability; community engagement and community-based stewardship, management, and partnerships; equitable development; climate and environment; and workforce development and economic opportunity.

The I-70 Business Loop Corridor application will request a planning grant to study the I-70 Business Loop corridor between Stadium Boulevard and Eastland Circle. The study will include improving safety for both motorized and non-motorized users, improving accessible multi-modal operations, providing aesthetics along the corridor, and improving economic vitality along the roadway. Features proposed to be studied will include a complete streets design, intersection improvements, bike lanes and pedestrian connection improvements, aesthetic improvements, and stormwater improvements. The improvements strive to reinvigorate the corridor, connect a number of historically disadvantaged and underserved communities, and support a growing network of community services, education opportunities, and commercial centers along the corridor.

The project planning will include funding to complete the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) process, a traffic study, a topographic and utility survey, and stormwater modeling.



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With this information non-motorized and motorized improvements, stormwater improvements, and aesthetic improvements will be designed resulting in the completion of preliminary plans for the project. Robust public engagement will be included throughout the project planning stages.

The City applied for the Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity (RAISE) grant for the Business Loop 70 project in February of this year. The RAISE grant is a highly competitive merit-based program through the U.S. Department of Transportation (USDOT) to invest in surface transportation projects that will improve safety, environmental sustainability, quality of life, mobility and community connectivity, and economic competitiveness. The City was not awarded this RAISE grant for Business Loop 70, but the USDOT encouraged pursuing the RNC grant and/or a future RAISE grant for the project.

The Business Loop Community Improvement District (CID) and the Missouri Department of Transportation are anticipated to be core stakeholders with the City in applying for the grant and implementing the grant, if awarded. The total anticipated study cost is \$2,663,500 and a 20% local match is required. Therefore, the application will request the federal funding of \$2,130,800 with a match of \$500,000 from the City and \$32,700 from the Business Loop CID. Funding for the City's match will be from the quarter-cent capital improvement program sales tax.

Fiscal Impact

Short-Term Impact: The City's local match of \$500,000 will be funded by the quarter-cent capital improvement program sales tax.

Long-Term Impact: Unknown.

Strategic & Comprehensive Plan Impact

[Strategic Plan Impacts:](#)

Primary Impact: Reliable Infrastructure, Secondary Impact: Inclusive Community, Tertiary Impact: Not Applicable

[Comprehensive Plan Impacts:](#)

Primary Impact: Mobility, Connectivity, and Accessibility, Secondary Impact: Infrastructure, Tertiary Impact: Livable & Sustainable Communities



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Legislative History

Date	Action
02/20/2023	R31-23 Authorizing application to the U.S. Department of Transportation for the Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity (RAISE) planning grant to study the I-70 Business Loop corridor between Stadium Boulevard and Eastland Circle.

Suggested Council Action

Adopt the resolution authorizing the City Manager to submit an application to the U.S. Department of Transportation for the Reconnecting Communities and Neighborhoods (RCN) grant funding.