



Department Source: Public Works

To: City Council

From: City Manager & Staff

Council Meeting Date: February 19, 2024

Re: Authorizing the 2024 Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity (RAISE) 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) Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity (RAISE) grant funding. The funding request is for a planning grant to complete a study along the I-70 Business Loop Corridor.

Discussion

The Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity (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. For the grant application, the project has to be designated as a planning grant or a construction grant.

Evaluation of the application uses merit criteria and considers locations of areas of persistent poverty, historically disadvantaged communities, and project readiness and support. The merit criteria include the following sections:

- **Safety:** Protects non-motorized travelers, reduces fatalities and serious injuries, or includes actions identified in the National Roadway Safety strategy plan.
- **Environmental Sustainability:** Includes benefits of climate change and environmental justice by reducing air pollution and greenhouse gas emissions, addressing disproportionately negative environmental impacts, or implements transportation-efficient land use.
- **Quality of Life:** Increases affordable transportation choices, improves access to daily destinations, expands active transportation usage, or implements transit-oriented development.
- **Mobility and Community Connectivity:** Improves access to system-wide connectivity with access to transit, micro-mobility and mobility-on-demand, removes physical barriers to reconnect communities, or improves accessibility for non-motorized users by providing a complete street approach.
- **Economic Competitiveness and Opportunity:** Improves intermodal or multimodal freight mobility or promotes long-term economic growth.
- **State of Good Repair:** Restores and modernizes existing infrastructure or addresses system vulnerabilities.



City of Columbia

701 East Broadway, Columbia, Missouri 65201

- **Partnership and Collaboration:** Engages residents and community-based organizations or provides public and/or private partnerships to ensure equity.
- **Innovation:** Considers implementation of innovative technologies, innovative project delivery, or innovative financing.

This 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 in order to reinvigorate the corridor and help to connect a number of historically disadvantaged and underserved communities. The improvements will help support a growing network of community services and established education and commercial centers along the corridor.

The project planning will include funding for completing the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) process, a traffic study, a topographic and utility survey, and stormwater modeling. 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 completed throughout the project planning stages.

The City originally applied for this grant during the year 2023 application processes. The project was evaluated as "highly recommended" for each of the merit criteria. The City ultimately was not awarded the grant for this project, but was encouraged to apply again in 2024. The City has also applied for the Reconnecting Communities and Neighborhoods (RCN) planning grant for this project. The application was submitted in September of 2023 and staff has not heard back yet about the awarding of this grant. Notification of the RCN grant awards should be this Spring. If the City is awarded the RCN grant, the application for the RAISE grant will be withdrawn for consideration.

The Business Loop Community Improvement District 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. It is anticipated that the application will request the federal funding of \$2,500,000 to \$3,000,000 to complete the planning study. There is not required local match for the grant funding.

Fiscal Impact

Short-Term Impact: Requesting the study to be totally funded by the grant. No local match is required for the planning study.

Long-Term Impact: Unknown.



Strategic & Comprehensive Plan Impact

Strategic Plan Impacts:

Primary Impact: Reliable and Sustainable Infrastructure, Secondary Impact: Inclusive and Equitable Community, Tertiary Impact: Resilient Economy

Comprehensive Plan Impacts:

Primary Impact: Infrastructure, Secondary Impact: Mobility, Connectivity, and Accessibility, Tertiary Impact: Economic Development

Legislative History

Date	Action
09/18/2023	R136-23 Authorizing application to the U.S. Department of Transportation for the Reconnecting Communities and Neighborhoods (RCN) planning grant to study the I-70 Business Loop corridor between Stadium Boulevard and Eastland Circle.
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 2024 Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity (RAISE) grant funding.