



Legislation Text

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City of Alexandria, Virginia

MEMORANDUM

DATE: FEBRUARY 20, 2024

TO: THE HONORABLE MAYOR AND MEMBERS OF CITY COUNCIL

THROUGH: JAMES F. PARAJON, CITY MANAGER /s/

FROM: ADRIANA CASTAÑEDA, DIRECTOR, TRANSPORTATION AND ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES

DOCKET TITLE:

Consideration of a Resolution for a Grant Application to the United States Department of Transportation for the Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity Grant Program. [ROLL-CALL VOTE]

ISSUE: Consideration to submit an application for the 2024 Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity (RAISE) discretionary grant program to the United States Department of Transportation (USDOT) through formal Resolution.

RECOMMENDATION: That City Council:

1. Approve a Resolution to support the submission of up to \$1,000,000 for a planning study on Seminary Road between Library Lane and North Beauregard Street;
2. Authorize the City Manager to allocate \$250,000 in developer contributions from the City's Capital Improvement Program for a 25% local match; and
3. Authorize the City Manager to apply to the RAISE discretionary grant program and enter into any agreements with USDOT to accept and implement the grant.

BACKGROUND: The USDOT recently released a Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) for the FY 2024 RAISE program, allocating \$1.5 billion in discretionary grants for freight and passenger transportation infrastructure projects with significant local or regional impacts. RAISE Grants, as specified by the USDOT, can fund both capital and planning projects. The grants for planning projects are especially crucial, as they support essential planning initiatives that align with the City's goals for sustainable development, improved

transportation infrastructure, and enhanced community connectivity. For planning projects, the RAISE discretionary grant program provides funding for planning activities that address key challenges and opportunities in transportation infrastructure. The City aims to leverage this opportunity to develop comprehensive plans to enhance mobility, safety, and address the evolving needs of our growing community along Seminary Road between Library Lane and North Beauregard Street.

Nearly all of the intersections along this segment of the Seminary Road corridor have been identified for safety enhancements as part of the Vision Zero program, Safe Routes to School Walk Audits, community feedback, and the Alex West planning process. These intersections cannot be addressed in isolation; a more holistic assessment of the corridor is needed to determine how to mitigate the issues and understand their impact on traffic.

DISCUSSION: Due to the close proximity to the interstate, and the number of ramps connecting to this segment of Seminary Road, the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) will be closely involved as a key stakeholder with any study in this area. Additionally, VDOT requires an Operational and Safety Analysis Report (OSAR) to accompany any recommended changes that could involve access modifications to highway ramps. Conducting this planning early, in coordination with the state, will set the City up for future success and expedited project delivery, should the recommendations that come out of this planning study come to fruition.

The proposed OSAR study would seek to develop a comprehensive transportation plan that focuses on improving accessibility, reducing congestion, and promoting alternative modes of transportation, such as walking, biking, and public transit. This plan would prioritize the integration of various transportation modes, while creating a seamless and interconnected network that enhances the overall mobility and accessibility of the City.

Key recommendations from various City plans and future development would be incorporated into this study. The outcome of the study would be used to identify feasible modifications to ramps, lane designation, pedestrian, bicycle, and transit access improvements centered around safety and mobility that can be constructed and incorporated into new development plans, a future RAISE grant application, or other implementation grant.

FISCAL IMPACT: The RAISE grant mandates a 20% local match, amounting to a maximum \$200,000, for the proposed grant application of up to \$1,000,000. The City is proposing to provide a 25% match of \$250,000 which makes the City more competitive for award. The City anticipates fulfilling this requirement with developer contributions previously secured for this area. These contributions have been appropriated as prior year funds in the Seminary Road and Beauregard Street Ellipse Capital Improvement Program (CIP) project. The funds awarded through this grant must be obligated by September 2028 and fully expended by September 2033.

ATTACHMENTS:

1. Resolution
2. Letters of Support
3. Presentation

STAFF:

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Hillary Orr, Deputy Director, Transportation, T&ES

Ryan Knight, Division Chief of Transportation Engineering, T&ES

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