



Legislation Text

File #: 20-0017, Version: 1

City of Alexandria, Virginia

MEMORANDUM

DATE: SEPTEMBER 18, 2019

TO: THE HONORABLE MAYOR AND MEMBERS OF CITY COUNCIL

FROM: MARK B. JINKS, CITY MANAGER /s/

DOCKET TITLE:

Consideration of a Resolution Authorizing a Competitive Grant Application Under the Virginia Department of Transportation for Transportation Projects Eligible Under the Transportation Alternatives Program.[ROLL-CALL VOTE]

ISSUE: Consideration of a resolution authorizing a competitive grant application to the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) for Transportation Projects Eligible under the Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP).

RECOMMENDATION: That City Council:

- (1) Adopt the attached resolution (Attachment 1) to authorize the submission of a \$1 million grant application for a VDOT Transportation Alternatives Program grant for a sidewalk on the north side of Seminary Road between Zabriskie Drive and Beth El Hebrew Congregation; and
- (2) Authorize the City Manager to submit this resolution and enter into any agreements with the state that may be required to receive these funds should the requested allocation be approved.

BACKGROUND: The federal Surface Transportation Block Grant (STBG) program includes set-aside funding for the transportation alternatives program. The TAP set-aside funds include all projects and activities that were previously eligible under the Transportation Alternatives Program. VDOT and the National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board (TPB), the federally designated Metropolitan Planning Origination (MPO) for the Washington Region, are each responsible for selecting projects in Northern Virginia for a portion of the funding available to Northern Virginia jurisdictions. VDOT solicits and receives applications, working with the TPB to select projects for Northern Virginia. Because this is federal funding administered through VDOT, all projects must follow strict federal requirements. Use of federal funds adds layers of required approvals to projects, which can delay and add significant cost to smaller projects.

Approximately \$5 million are available each fiscal year for Northern Virginia jurisdictions through the TAP set-aside. The maximum request allowed is \$1 million per project application per fiscal year and awards are typically in the \$200,000 to \$600,000 range. Applications are due October 1, 2019. Based on this guidance, staff recommends applying for funding at the top of this scale, with the understanding that requests may only receive partial funding through this program. Additional funding may be achieved through another program or a subsequent round of the TAP set-aside.

DISCUSSION: With this application, staff proposes to apply for funds to permanently install a sidewalk on Seminary Road. On September 14, 2019, City Council approved design alternative 3 which calls for a bike lane (and temporary pedestrian facility) on the north (westbound) side of Seminary Road located between Zabriskie Drive and Beth El Hebrew Congregation. The project was reviewed and endorsed by the Transportation Commission in June 2019 (Attachment 2).

The sidewalk gap on Seminary Road is identified as one of the City's top 10 priority sidewalk projects. This site has topographical and right-of-way challenges associated with it, which makes design and construction more extensive and costly than typical sidewalk project. Staff have worked with the Virginia Theological Seminary, who have expressed support of the project. With Council approval on September 14 of the Seminary Road lane reconfiguration project, the road portion of the project will be undertaken this fall, but the sidewalk installation described in this memorandum will occur at a later date when funds are available.

FISCAL IMPACT: The TAP grant requires a 20% local match. As a result, the City match would be \$200,000, to be paid for with \$200,000 of prior year funds from the Complete Streets CIP project.

Staff previously estimated this sidewalk could cost as much as \$1.5 million, which included a considerable contingency. After further refinement, staff believes the project can be designed and built for \$1 million. Additionally, the grant application is for the maximum allowed in one fiscal year and reflects a funding match to which the City can currently commit. Should the project be selected and awarded an amount less than \$1 million, staff can apply for a future round of TAP funding or other external funding to help close the funding gap.

ATTACHMENTS:

Attachment 1: Resolution of Support

Attachment 2: Transportation Commission Endorsement

STAFF:

Emily A. Baker, Deputy City Manager

Joanna Anderson, City Attorney

Yon Lambert, Director, T&ES

Hillary Orr, Deputy Director of Transportation, T&ES

Christopher Ziemann, T&ES

Christine Mayeur, T&ES