



Legislation Text

File #: 23-0416, Version: 1

City of Alexandria, Virginia

MEMORANDUM

DATE: NOVEMBER 2, 2022

TO: THE HONORABLE MAYOR AND MEMBERS OF CITY COUNCIL

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

FROM: TERRY SUEHR, DIRECTOR, PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION

DOCKET TITLE:

Consideration of a Resolution Approving a \$50 million Grant Application for the Federal Emergency Management Agency's (FEMA) Building Resilient Infrastructure and Communities (BRIC) Grant Program for the Waterfront Flood Mitigation Project. [ROLL-CALL VOTE]

ISSUE: Consideration of a competitive grant application to the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) through the Virginia Department of Emergency Management (VDEM) for up to \$50 million (the maximum single award) for the FY22/FY23 Hazard Mitigation Assistance (HMA) Building Resiliency Infrastructure and Communities (BRIC) Program for the City's Waterfront Flood Mitigation Project (Project).

RECOMMENDATION: That City Council:

1. Adopt the attached resolution authorizing the City Manager to submit a competitive grant application to FEMA for up to \$50 million for the FEMA BRIC Program for the City's Waterfront Flood Mitigation Project ("Project");
2. Authorize the City Manager to enter into any agreements that may be required to receive these funds, should the requested allocation be approved, and to provide certification of Council's commitment to fund the City's local share; and
3. Commit to fund its local share of engineering and construction costs.

BACKGROUND: FEMA's Building Resilient Infrastructure and Communities (BRIC) pre-disaster grant program supports states, local communities, tribes and territories to undertake hazard mitigation projects, reducing the risks they face from disasters and natural hazards. BRIC is a new FEMA pre-disaster hazard mitigation program that replaces FEMA's existing Pre-Disaster Mitigation (PDM) program. The grant program provides cost-share funding of up to 75% or \$50 Million for a project. The BRIC program aims to categorically shift the federal focus away from reactive disaster spending and toward research-supported, proactive investment in community resilience. FEMA anticipates BRIC funding projects that demonstrate innovative approaches to partnerships, such as shared funding mechanisms, and/or project design. It is anticipated that for FY22 the FEMA BRIC programs funding capacity nationwide will be ~\$1.8 billion. Department of Project Implementation (DPI) has submitted preapplication materials and intends to

apply for FY22/FY23 funding from the BRIC program.

The City's previously submitted FY21 application for FEMA BRIC funding was not awarded a grant. The highly competitive program had only \$1 billion available in FY21 funding to award compared to over \$4.16 billion in grant applications received. Based on the additional planning, site investigations, and additional civic engagement conducted since the time of the FY21 application, the City has further refined and narrowed the conceptual alternatives and has added additional levels of flood protection (via potential use deployable technology) that should further increase the Benefit Cost Analysis (BCA) and qualitative performance assessment by FEMA, thereby making the application more competitive for the BRIC funding which has nearly doubled in FY22.

DISCUSSION: The City of Alexandria's waterfront lies within the Potomac River watershed and frequently experiences flooding (including backflow of river outfalls, overtopping of the existing bulkhead and inundation of storm sewers), which affects businesses, residents, and infrastructure along the waterfront. Since 2010, the City has been working to identify the various causes of flooding in the waterfront area. The City has identified and evaluated potential mitigation measures and is finalizing engineering recommendations to address stormwater and flood impact management.

The original baseline scope of the Waterfront Flood Mitigation Project is estimated to cost \$200 million. The project is identified in the City's Capital Improvement Program (CIP) with funding of \$102 million. The goals of the project are to address localized flooding due to insufficient storm sewer capacity in historic areas, overtopping of low-lying shorelines and bulkheads, and to meet the public space and amenity goals and objectives of the Waterfront Small Area Plan. DPI seeks to pursue up to \$50 million in grant funding for project construction from the BRIC program.

FISCAL IMPACT: FEMA requires funds to be available (or to otherwise demonstrate that funds will be made available to complete the project and meet the match requirements) at the time of application to FEMA in early CY 2023 (and due prior to VDEM in late 2022) to demonstrate the City's ability to pay for the remaining portion of the project not in receipt of grant funding. The funding already appropriated for FY22 and FY23 will help the City match to the \$50 million grant. The City's Waterfront Flood Mitigation Project is identified in the City's CIP with a current funding level of \$102 million over three fiscal years. The cost estimate for the core area plan is \$200 million. Receipt of grant funding will help bridge part of the gap between the CIP funding and the expected project cost. The BRIC application cost share may cover up to 75% of the project costs up to maximum award per project of \$50 million. Award notification is expected in Summer 2023 and would allow the City to construct a larger portion of the desired scope than the \$102 million would be able to pay for. Should the grant not be approved, elements of the desired project may have to be phased or de-scoped to keep costs within available funding.

ATTACHMENT: Resolution

STAFF:

Emily A. Baker, Deputy City Manager

Morgan Routt, Director, OMB

Arthur Wicks, Capital Improvement Program Manager, OMB

Matthew Landes, Division Chief, DPI

Jesse E. Maines, Division Chief, Stormwater Management, T&ES