



Legislation Text

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City of Alexandria, Virginia

MEMORANDUM

DATE: MARCH 29, 2022

TO: THE HONORABLE MAYOR AND MEMBERS OF CITY COUNCIL

THROUGH: JAMES F. PARAJON, CITY MANAGER

FROM: EMILY A. BAKER, DEPUTY CITY MANAGER
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DOCKET TITLE:

Consideration of a Resolution to Support a Grant Application to the U.S. Department of Transportation for the FY 2022 Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity (RAISE). [ROLL-CALL VOTE]

ISSUE: Should the City seek grant funding from the U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) to support the next phase of King St and Beaugard St Intersection Improvements?

RECOMMENDATION: That City Council:

- (1) Approve the attached resolution supporting an infrastructure project application to the U.S. Department of Transportation;
- (2) Approve the submission of up to \$6 million in RAISE grant application by April 14, 2022; and
- (3) Authorize the City Manager to apply for this RAISE Grant and enter into any necessary agreements with DOT and the Commonwealth of Virginia to accept this grant.

BACKGROUND: In 2021, Congress passed the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act) into law, and in 2022, among other infrastructure funding programs, funded \$1.5 billion for the U.S. Department of Transportation’s Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity (RAISE) discretionary grant program. RAISE discretionary grants, which was formerly known as TIGER grants, funds various large and small infrastructure projects for communities. Applicants may request funding for various capital and planning projects including highway, bridge, or other road projects. Grant applications are evaluated by DOT on a merit criterion including: improvements to safety, environmental sustainability, quality of life, mobility and community connectivity, economic competitiveness, state of good repair, partnerships and collaboration and innovation. The evaluation focuses on the degree to which a project addresses a problem or need relative to the requested funding for the project. RAISE also requires that project benefits be analyzed relative to project cost and demonstrate readiness in terms of environmental risk and permitting, financial completeness to obligate funds by September 30, 2026, and technical assessment of feasibility and capacity to deliver the project.

Per the DOT’s RAISE program guidelines, the Federal share may be up to 80 percent of the costs of project located in an urban area. Non-federal contributions can include state, local, and private sector funding.

DISCUSSION: Staff evaluated a number of projects for RAISE grant funding and ultimately determined that the King Street and Beauregard Street Intersection Improvements project was the most viable candidate. Staff believes the project will score well in the merit criteria for safety, quality of life, and economic competitiveness, given the project proximity to the Gateway at King and Beauregard development, generating more multimodal trips given the mixed-use nature of the development. This project is partially located in a Historically Disadvantaged Community per the US DOT Census Tract tool, proactively addressing equity for individuals, and improving transportation system connectivity to revitalize communities.

This project originated in 1997 and originally was an intersection safety and capacity project. The project scope included an intersection redesign to provide additional left-turn lanes to accommodate vehicular traffic. This realignment included upgraded crosswalks and curb ramps. The project was phased over time to accommodate development at the intersection and complete utility work prior to final build. The first phase - utility relocation - was completed in December 2017.

In FY21, staff reevaluated the design to ensure that it met current design standards in alignment with the Complete Streets and Vision Zero policies. With new multi-family buildings, restaurants, a Capital Bikeshare station, and future West End Transitway bus stops, there will be a substantial increase in people walking around this location. The design is currently being modified, based on an updated traffic analysis, to include crossing improvements, pedestrian refuge islands and curb ramps to enhance safety at this location. The medians will be widened to narrow travel lanes to slow traffic and will include green elements to improve stormwater management on the site.

FISCAL IMPACT: The total approved budget for Phases I and II of this project is approximately \$16 million, and approximately \$10 million has been spent to date. This leaves approximately \$4.8 million in state funding from prior year grants and \$1.2 million in local dollars to complete Phase II, which is currently estimated to cost closer to \$11 million. The request for RAISE funding of up to \$6 million would bridge the gap and allow the City to reallocate the local dollars to another project. The twenty-percent local match required for this grant

is covered with existing grant funding. If awarded and accepted, the City will be required to obligate funds by September 30, 2026.

Should this project not be funded by RAISE, there will be a shortfall in funding necessary to construct the project as designed. The City would then need to determine additional funds prior to construction.

ATTACHMENTS:

Attachment 1: Resolution

Attachment 2: Transportation Commission Endorsement Letter

Attachment 3: Presentation

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