



Legislation Text

File #: 22-0176, Version: 1

City of Alexandria, Virginia

MEMORANDUM

DATE: OCTOBER 19, 2021

TO: THE HONORABLE MAYOR AND MEMBERS OF CITY COUNCIL

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

DOCKET TITLE:

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 FY 2021 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;
- (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 FY 2021 the FEMA BRIC programs funding capacity nationwide will be \$1 billion. Department of Project Implementation (DPI) has submitted preapplication materials and intends to apply for FY 2021 funding from the BRIC program.

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 current 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 for \$102 million with \$22 million already appropriated in FY 2022. 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 and the Council-adopted 2014 Waterfront 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 in early CY 2022 to demonstrate the City's ability to pay for the remaining portion of the project not in receipt of grant funding. The \$22 million already appropriated for FY 2022 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 July 2022 and would allow the City to construct a larger portion of the desired scope than the \$10 million would be able to pay for. Should this grant not be approved, elements of the project will have to be phased or de-scoped to keep costs within available funding.

ATTACHMENT: Resolution

STAFF:

Emily A. Baker, Deputy City Manager

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Morgan Routt, Director, OMB

Arthur Wicks, Capital Improvement Program Manager, OMB

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