



# City of San Antonio

## Agenda Memorandum

**File Number:** 16-2787

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**Agenda Item Number:** 17.

**Agenda Date:** 6/2/2016

**In Control:** City Council A Session

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**DEPARTMENT:** Transportation & Capital Improvements

**DEPARTMENT HEAD:** Mike Frisbie, P.E.

**COUNCIL DISTRICTS IMPACTED:** Council District 5

### **SUBJECT:**

Nationally Significant Freight and Highway Projects (NSFHP) FASTLANE16 Grant

### **SUMMARY:**

An ordinance authorizing the submission of an application to the US Department of Transportation (USDOT) for the Nationally Significant Freight and Highway Projects (NSFHP) FASTLANE16 Grant for the design of the Zarzamora Street at Frio City Road Railroad Overpass Project.

### **BACKGROUND INFORMATION:**

In January 2016, City Council approved two Professional Services Agreements with Pape Dawson and Maestas & Associates for the proposed 2017-2022 Bond Program. The two firms will be scoping and estimating proposed projects for inclusion in the Bond Program. Of the projects that are being evaluated, Pape Dawson reviewed the potential project of the Zarzamora Street at Frio City Road Railroad Overpass Project which is located on the west side of San Antonio's urban core.

Currently, the intersection of Zarzamora Street at Frio City Road is a five-legged intersection. Zarzamora Street is an illuminated four-to-six-lane road that crosses US HWY 90, UPRR tracks, as well as commercial and residential neighborhoods. The intersection experiences heavy congestion, especially during AM and PM peak, and sizeable traffic throughout the day. The corridor is a main transit route for the area and is connection to local schools. The transportation system in this area is the key lifeline for residential and commercial land uses. Additionally, the Project is in the proximity of Port SA and the former military installation known as Kelly Air Force Base.

The Union Pacific Railroad crossing carries on an average 25.96 trains within 24 hour period. The average wait time at the gates for the traffic at the intersection is about 6 minutes and 40 seconds. This wait time builds up a long queue on almost all five legs of the intersections for the turning motorists, waiting for the gates to open. The presence of South San Antonio High school and two other elementary schools makes a congested situation for parents who drive their kids to school every day, especially in the morning rush hour.

It was observed within this area of the five-legged intersection the total number of crashes have increased every year from 32 in 2012, to 43 in 2014. Additionally, several crashes we identified in the Federal Railroad Administration's 2015 Web Accident Prediction System report.

Pape Dawson's evaluation has estimated that the design of the project could be over \$9 million which would provide the design of a bridge overpass at the UPRR and Frio City Road intersections. The proposed road and bridge would potentially include four 12-foot lanes (two in each direction) and 6-foot sidewalks on each side that would go over the UPRR tracks and allows drivers to avoid this intersection. The environmental work that would need to be done includes a Level II estimate, National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) review, TCEQ permits, and Cultural Research for archeological assessment. For these reasons, pursuing a FASTLANE16 Grant would be extremely beneficial to the project and would allow the City to best leverage construction funding if the Zarzamora Project is included in the 2017-2022 Bond Program and/or considered in other federal grant awards. This area has not previously received any type of funding for improving the proposed intersection.

#### **ISSUE:**

This ordinance authorizes the submission of an application to the US Department of Transportation (USDOT) for the Nationally Significant Freight and Highway Projects (NSFHP) FASTLANE16 Grant for the design of the Zarzamora Street at Frio City Road Railroad Overpass Project.

The City could be awarded approximately \$5,417,604.77 in federal funds dedicated specifically to the design and environmental document the overpass project. The design could potentially include four 12-foot lanes (two in each direction) and 6-foot sidewalks on each side that would go over the UPRR tracks and allows drivers to avoid the Zarzamora at Frio City Road intersection. The environmental work that would need to be done includes a Level II estimate, National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) review, TCEQ permits, and Cultural Research for archeological assessment.

TCI seeks the opportunity to receive funding from The USDOT to improve the safety, congestion and mobility for all modes of transportation. The implementation of the design of the Zarzamora Street at Frio City Road Railroad Overpass Project would aid preparation of the Project for possible construction funding sources and reduce the expenditures by the City to make the Project shovel ready. A grant award date has not been identified by US DOT, but staff will continue to monitor the updates provided by the agency. This Project currently is being considered for the City of San Antonio's 2017 Bond Program and MPO Long Range Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) funding.

#### **ALTERNATIVES:**

City Council could choose not to authorize any or all of the activities in this submittal for federal funding consideration. However, the City would miss an opportunity to obtain approximately \$5,417,604.77 in federal funds dedicated specifically to the design and environmental document related to the Zarzamora Street at Frio

City Road Railroad Overpass Project.

**FISCAL IMPACT:**

City Council action to submit the application does not commit any funds. A match is required however the City has until 2019 to determine the funding source for that match.

**RECOMMENDATION:**

Staff recommends approval of this ordinance authorizing the submission of an application to the US Department of Transportation (USDOT) for the Nationally Significant Freight and Highway Projects (NSFHP) FASTLANE16 Grant for the design of the Zarzamora Street at Frio City Road Railroad Overpass Project.