



City of San Antonio

Agenda Memorandum

File Number:17-2611

Agenda Item Number: 14.

Agenda Date: 5/18/2017

In Control: City Council A Session

DEPARTMENT: Office of Historic Preservation

DEPARTMENT HEAD: Shanon Shea Miller

COUNCIL DISTRICTS IMPACTED: Citywide

SUBJECT:

Texas Historical Commission (THC) Grant Acceptance

SUMMARY:

This ordinance ratifies the submission of a grant application and authorizes acceptance of funds upon award, not to exceed \$10,000, from the Texas Historical Commission (THC) for an updated building inventory and expansion of the San Antonio Downtown and River Walk National Register District.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

The City seeks to provide incentives for the rehabilitation and adaptive reuse of buildings in its historic downtown. Providing incentives to property owners and potential buyers supports economic development and promotes the preservation of our historic building stock.

In an effort to expand the number of properties that are eligible to receive State and Federal Historic Tax Credits (HTC's), OHP launched an initiative in 2015 to increase the number of properties in its Downtown that are listed on the National Register of Historic Places. The new district includes 172 contributing buildings in addition to structures and objects. The creation of this new district was an important first step in improving accessibility to the HTC's and promoting adaptive reuse and restoration of our historic buildings downtown.

The next phase of this effort requires that existing National Register Districts be re-inventoried and added to the new, larger Downtown District. The existing National Register Districts were some of the first districts created in the state and do not include numerous buildings which would now be considered contributing within the

expanded period of significance for Downtown San Antonio. For example, the Main & Military Plaza National Register District was listed in 1979. Resources such as the Clegg Building (1910; 1930) are listed as non-contributing in the nomination. While relatively minor alterations have occurred on the street-facing façade of this building, the larger portion of the building with frontage on the San Antonio River remains intact. The City believes that additional, similar resources would likely be found to contribute following an updated inventory and would be considered eligible for HTC's.

As part of its Certified Local Government (CLG) program, the THC offers an annual grant program for local governments for projects that advance preservation goals within the community. OHP proposes to utilize the grant funds to re-inventory properties within two outdated National Register Districts in its Downtown (Alamo Plaza District and Main / Military Plaza District). The updated inventory will be used to update the recent San Antonio Downtown and River Walk National Register nomination and will include consider additional properties constructed within the period of significance. The City will contract with a private consultant to perform the inventory and complete the appropriate updates to the nomination. It is anticipated that this project will cost approximately \$20,000.

The City has preliminarily been awarded a cost reimbursement grant of \$10,000 with a required cash or in kind match of up to \$10,000. City staff is qualified to provide in-kind services which will contribute to the required match for the grant. The estimated completion date for the project is September 2018.

The City has been enrolled in the CLG program since 1993. The City is in excellent standing and meets its annual program requirements.

ISSUE:

The re-inventory and update to the Downtown District will result in an improved process for property owners to explore use of Historic Tax Credits which will reduce time and workload for both City and THC staff. The City will be able to more effectively promote the HTC's and provide property owners with clarity regarding their property's eligibility for the program. The availability of the grant for this effort reduces the fiscal impact to the City.

ALTERNATIVES:

Non-acceptance of the grant would limit funding available to complete the project.

FISCAL IMPACT:

This ratifies the submission of a grant application and authorizes acceptance of funds upon award, not to exceed \$10,000, from the Texas Historical Commission (THC) for an updated building inventory and expansion of the San Antonio Downtown and River Walk National Register District. The grant requires a cash or in-kind match of \$10,000 which will be funded through the Historic Preservation General Fund Budget.

RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends that the City Council ratify the grant proposal and authorize the acceptance of the cost reimbursement grant.

