



City of San Antonio

Agenda Memorandum

File Number:17-5375

Agenda Item Number: 20.

Agenda Date: 11/30/2017

In Control: City Council A Session

DEPARTMENT: Transportation & Capital Improvements

DEPARTMENT HEAD: Mike Frisbie. P.E.

COUNCIL DISTRICTS IMPACTED: Council District 5

SUBJECT:

Nationally Significant Freight and Highway Projects (NSFHP) Infrastructure For Rebuilding America (INFRA) Grant Program

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) Infrastructure For Rebuilding America (INFRA) Grant Program for the construction of the Zarzamora Street at Frio City Road Railroad Overpass Project, located in Council District 5.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

The Zarzamora Street at Frio City Road Railroad Overpass Project, located on the west side of San Antonio's urban core, is a critical piece of the region's transportation network. Identified as the most heavily congested at-grade crossing in South Texas by Union Pacific Railroad (UPRR), this grade-separated bridge will improve safety for all modes while also relieving congestion for those traveling the corridor. Additionally, this project will increase the economic vitality of the region by allowing more freight to pass through the intersection with fewer potential conflicts and incidences.

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 provides

connection to several 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 an average 25.96 trains within a 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 has increased every year from 32 in 2012, to 43 in 2014. Additionally, several crashes were identified in the Federal Railroad Administration's 2015 Web Accident Prediction System report.

The current total cost estimate for the bridge overpass at the UPRR and Frio City Road intersections is over \$35 million. Voters approved the inclusion of this project in the 2017-2022 Bond Program, with \$10 million allocated for the construction of the project. This rail crossing is also included in the Texas Department of Transportation's (TxDOT) adopted State Freight Plan.

For these reasons, pursuing an INFRA Grant would be extremely beneficial to the project and would allow the City to best leverage additional funding, using the monies allocated through the 2017-2022 Bond Program. Other than inclusion in the Bond Program, 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) INFRA Grant for the construction of the Zarzamora Street at Frio City Road Railroad Overpass Project, located in Council District 5.

The City could be awarded approximately \$35 million in federal funds for implementation of the overpass project. While yet to be finalized, the design could potentially include four 12-foot lanes (two in each direction) and bicycle and pedestrian amenities on each side that would go over the UPRR tracks and allows drivers, bicyclists, and pedestrians to avoid the Zarzamora at Frio City Road intersection.

TCI seeks the opportunity to submit an application to receive funding from the USDOT to improve the safety, congestion and mobility for all modes of transportation, as well as improve the economic vitality of this region.

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 is currently included in the City of San Antonio's 2017-2022 Bond Program.

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 \$35 million in federal funds for the implementation of 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 40% City match will be required and the City has \$10 million available towards the match as part of the 2017-2022 Bond Program. If the City is awarded the full \$35 million from the grant program, additional funds from the City in the amount of \$4 million would be required to provide the 40% match. At that time, TCI will work to identify additional funding through future fiscal years. Award announcements are anticipated in Spring 2018.

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) INFRA Grant for the construction of the Zarzamora Street at Frio City Road Railroad Overpass Project.