



Staff Report

File #: 24-59
Version: 1

Date: 2/26/2024
Item #: 3.3d.

TO: Mayor and City Council
THROUGH: Keith Stahley, City Manager
FROM: Brian D. Martin, PE, Public Works Director

SUBJECT:

Application for grant funds to develop a transportation corridor plan for Front Street NE north of downtown.

Ward(s): 1

Councilor(s): Stapleton

Neighborhood(s): Central Area Neighborhood Development Organization and Grant Neighborhood Association

Result Area(s): Safe, Reliable and Efficient Infrastructure

SUMMARY:

The United States Department of Transportation (USDOT) is soliciting applications for grant funding of projects through the Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity (RAISE) program. This proposed grant application seeks funding through the RAISE program to conduct an alternatives analysis and complete preliminary engineering study to develop a plan for transportation improvements on Front Street NE between South Street NE and the Front Street NE Bypass. These improvements are needed due to safety issues resulting from the railroad alignment that is in the middle of Front Street NE (Attachment 1). The estimated cost for the study is \$2.5 to \$5.0 million. If awarded funding for this study, the City will be eligible to receive 100% grant funding because the project is in an area classified by the federal government as being of persistent poverty. This work should also position the city of Salem for future federal funding opportunities as they come available.

ISSUE:

Shall City Council authorize the City Manager to apply for grant funding to develop a transportation corridor plan for Front Street NE, from the Front Street NE Bypass to South Street NE, through the USDOT RAISE program and, if successful, further authorize the City Manager to enter into an agreement with the USDOT to accept and expend the funds?

RECOMMENDATION:

Authorize the City Manager to apply for grant funding to develop a transportation corridor plan for Front Street NE, from the Front Street NE Bypass to South Street NE, through the USDOT RAISE program and, if successful, further authorize the City Manager to enter into an agreement with the USDOT to accept and expend the funds.

FACTS AND FINDINGS:

Annually, the USDOT solicits transportation improvement projects for funding through the RAISE program. This year, RAISE grant applications are due February 28, 2024. The total RAISE funds available in FY2024 for projects nationally is \$1.3 billion. Although the RAISE program requires a 20 percent match, the City's proposed project is in an area of the city that has been identified by the federal government as an area of persistent poverty. Such areas are eligible for 100 percent grant funding with no match requirement. Staff is proposing to submit a project that meets the requirements of the RAISE grant program, will advance plans for sustainability of the transportation system as identified in the *Salem Transportation System Plan*, and will provide the preliminary engineering necessary to support future development in the area.

The proposed tasks and products of the study are as follows:

Task #1 - Existing Conditions

Data collection and analysis for existing conditions will be conducted for the following:

- All transportation modes in the Front Street Corridor to characterize existing conditions and issues in the corridor.
- Land uses in the corridor.
- Environmental analysis to identify environmental issues.
- Property analysis of the corridor.
- Market analysis of redevelopment potential in the corridor.
- Forecasts of land use in the Front Street NE Corridor to identify the transportation demands that can be expected 10 and 20 years into the future.

The product of Task #1 will be an Existing Conditions report incorporating the existing conditions and issues in the corridor, the environment analysis, the redevelopment market analysis, and the land use forecast for the corridor.

Task #2 - Future Transportation Needs

Based on public input and the data and analysis carried out in Task #1, forecasts of transportation demand will be developed for the main transportation modes - pedestrian, bicycle, transit, vehicles, and trucks. Although not currently served by transit, it is anticipated that redevelopment will increase the number of employees and residents in the area and result in sufficient demand that will justify regular transit service. Transportation performance measures will be developed for all modes. A

transportation performance measure analysis for all modes will be developed and used to analyze the proposed future improvements. The product of Task #2 will be a Future Transportation Needs report.

Task #3 - Alternatives Analysis, Scoring and Selection

Up to four alternatives scenarios for meeting the expected future transportation needs in the Front Street NE Corridor will be developed. All four scenarios will be based on the same forecast of future transportation demand but will utilize different road improvement concepts. Each of the scenarios will be analyzed using the transportation performance measures. A preferred transportation improvement scenario will be prepared based on transportation improvements identified as providing the greatest benefit in the alternatives analysis. The product of Task #3 will be an Alternatives Analysis report describing the alternative scenarios and the results of the performance measure analysis.

Task #4 - Development of the Preferred Transportation Improvement Scenario

Transportation investments that are required to implement the preferred transportation improvement scenario will be identified and described. Preliminary engineering to reach 30 percent design of the selected alternative will be carried out. Based on the preliminary engineering, the proposed project components will be organized into groups that can be implemented in a five-to-ten-year period. Using the environmental data and analysis from Task #1, documentation required to address the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) will be prepared for the projects identified for the first 10-year period. The products of Task #4 will be the Preferred Transportation Improvement Scenario report and environmental documentation to address NEPA requirements for the Preferred Transportation Improvement Scenario.

Task #5 - Project Cost Estimates and Benefit-Cost Analysis

Preliminary cost estimates will be prepared for the transportation improvement projects proposed for the first 10 years of project implementation. For projects proposed for the later implementation phases, conceptual costs will be prepared and updated by the City when those phases move into preliminary engineering and environmental review. The product of Task #5 will be the Project Cost Estimates and Benefit-Cost Analysis report.

Task #6 - Public Engagement

Public engagement will be conducted throughout the course of the project to collect input on specific tasks and products, and to help shape and guide subsequent tasks and products. The product of this task will be materials prepared for use in the public engagement process and a report on public engagement from all sources.

Task #7 - Final Report and Recommendations to City Council

A report on the project and a set of recommendations will be prepared for consideration by the City Council. The final report will present the analysis and plans from Tasks #1 - #6 and the public input received during the study.

Task #8 - Project Management

Task #8 will include all the project management tasks carried out by the City of Salem to advance

the proposed study from initiation to approval of the final report. Products of the project management process will include an executed contract and scope of work, preparation of all required financial reports and project invoices and payments, procurement for consultant services, formation and administration of a technical advisory committee, posting of public notices as required, presentations on the project by City staff to boards, commissions and public groups, and providing all required materials, reports and other products to the USDOT at the conclusion of the project.

Budget

The total budget is expected to be between \$2.5 and \$5.0 million. City staff are currently refining the cost estimate based on other similar projects. As noted, the City is eligible to receive 100% funding for this project with no match requirement.

BACKGROUND:

The funds that USDOT distributes through the RAISE program are authorized by Congress through FY2027 by the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law. Funding awards for FY2024 will be announced by June 27, 2024. Following award announcement, the recipients will work with the Federal Highway Administration's Oregon Division Office to prepare a funding obligation agreement. The preparation and approval of the obligation agreement by all the parties is expected to require about one year. Staff estimates that it will take about three years to complete this project including procurement of consultant services and public engagement.

Robert D. Chandler, PhD, PE
Assistant Public Works Director

Attachments:

1. Vicinity Map