



Recommendation for Action

File #: 23-2760, **Agenda Item #:** 98.

9/21/2023

Posting Language

Authorize negotiation and execution of a grant agreement with the United States Department of Transportation for \$1,120,000 for the Our Future 35: Connecting Austin Equitably Mobility Study; approve an ordinance amending the Fiscal Year 2022-2023 Transportation and Public Works Department Operating Budget Special Revenue Fund (Ordinance No. 20220817-004) to accept grant funds from the United States Department of Transportation Reconnecting Communities Grant Program in the amount of \$1,120,000; and amending the Transportation and Public Works Department Capital Budget (Ordinance No. 20220817-004) to transfer in and appropriate \$1,120,000 in grant funds and to transfer in and appropriate \$280,000 from the Transportation and Public Works Department Operating Budget for the Our Future 35: Connecting Austin Equitably Mobility Study.

Lead Department

Transportation and Public Works Department

Fiscal Note

Funding in the amount of \$1,120,000 is available from the United States Department of Transportation, Reconnecting Communities Grant Program. A local funding match in the amount of \$280,000 is available in the Fiscal Year 2022-2023 Capital Budget of the Transportation and Public Works Department. A fiscal note is attached.

Prior Council Action:

February 23, 2023 - Resolution 20230223-044 regarding the I-35 Capital Express Projects, including official comments from the City Council to the Texas Department of Transportation on the draft Environmental Impact Statement for the I-35 Capital Express Central Project was approved as amended on a 10-1 vote with Mayor Watson voting no.

September 28, 2022 - Resolution No. 20220929-059 authorizing the submittal of the Our Future 35: Connecting Equitably Study as a candidate for the Reconnecting Communities Pilot program. Resolution was approved on an 8-0 vote with Council Member Kelly abstaining, Council Member Harper-Madison off the dais, and Council Member Fuentes absent.

For More Information:

Richard Mendoza, Interim Director, 512-974-2488; Susan Daniels, Acting Transportation Officer, 512-974-7916; Daniel Valbracht, Finance Manager III, 512-974-7901; Gilda Powers, Administrative Manager, 512-974-7092.

Additional Backup Information:

In October 2022, the City sought funding for planning needs associated with the I-35 Cap and Stitch initiative, in the form of the Our Future 35: Connecting Austin Equitably Mobility Study, from the United States Department of Transportation's (USDOT) Reconnecting Communities Pilot (RCP) program. In February 2023, USDOT notified the City that it had received a planning grant award in the amount of \$1,120,000.

The RCP program is part of the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law that provides discretionary funding for planning and capital construction. Funds for the Fiscal Year 2022 RCP Program planning grants were awarded on a competitive basis for projects that reconnect communities by removing, retrofitting, or mitigating highways or

other transportation facilities that create barriers to community connectivity, including mobility, access, or economic development.

Specifically, the Our Future 35: Connecting Austin Equitably Mobility Study will ensure that new infrastructure over I-35 connects seamlessly to surrounding cultural and transportation networks.

The Our Future 35: Connecting Austin Equitably Mobility Study project limits align with TxDOT's Capital Express Central segment between SH 71 (Ben White Boulevard) and US 290 East.

The General Fund will not be required to contribute additional funds beyond those currently budgeted to this grant. The City of Austin and its partners will continue to seek support in future discretionary grant applications associated with the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law.