



City of Austin

Recommendation for Action

File #: 24-3834, **Agenda Item #:** 19.

2/15/2024

Posting Language

Approve a resolution authorizing the submittal of the Bergstrom Spur Trails to Transit project as a candidate for the 2024 Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity discretionary grant program, administered by the United States Department of Transportation.

Lead Department

Transportation and Public Works Department

Fiscal Note

This item has no fiscal impact.

Prior Council Action:

November 30, 2023 - Ordinance No. 20231130-084, updating and amending the Austin Strategic Mobility Plan, including the Urban Trails Plan, and establishing a Tier 1 Trail designation for the Bergstrom Spur Trail was approved on a 10-0 vote with Council Member Alter off the dais.

For More Information:

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Additional Backup Information:

The City seeks funding for the construction of the Bergstrom Spur Trails to Transit project from the United States Department of Transportation's (USDOT) Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity (RAISE) Grant Program. The Trails to Transit project consists of the majority of the six-mile Bergstrom Spur Urban Trail augmented by strategic transit enhancements at intersecting corridors. Funds for the Fiscal Year 2024 RAISE grant will be awarded on a competitive basis for projects that decrease greenhouse gas emissions, address environmental justice and racial equity, and reduce barriers to opportunity. A total of \$1.5 billion is available to be awarded by USDOT for RAISE grants with an individual award size of up to \$25 million.

By approving the associated resolution, Council authorizes the City Manager to apply for construction funding of the Bergstrom Spur Trails to Transit project and to seek an award amount of up to \$25 million. A 20% City funding match (\$6.25 million), if awarded, is available from Urban Trails funds from the 2020 Mobility Bond and other sources.

The Bergstrom Spur Urban Trail is a designated Tier 1 Urban Trail extending from Vinson Drive to East Riverside Drive near US 183 and with an opportunity for eventual extension to the Austin Bergstrom International Airport. This trail provides a recreational opportunity in a high-density, low-income, and park-deficient area. It also provides safe east/west pedestrian and bike connectivity where none currently exists and adds key connections to transit including the South Congress Transit Center, eleven existing Capital Metro Local bus routes, a future Capital Metro Rapid bus route, and the future Project Connect Light Rail line on Riverside Drive.

City staff has partnered with Capital Metro to incorporate transit enhancements to be funded through the Trails to Transit project. These enhancements will provide critical transit operations and connectivity improvements between the trail and adjacent local bus, MetroRapid and eventual Light Rail transit service. The project will also incorporate concrete pads and electrical work to facilitate future MetroBike expansion.

The Bergstrom Spur Trails to Transit project will be supplemented by locally funded projects already underway. The South Pleasant Valley Road extension will complete key network improvements in southeast Austin by connecting the dead-end of South Pleasant Valley Road near Oltorf to Burleson Road, creating an important efficiency for the Capital Metro MetroRapid line under development. In addition, two projects in progress will create a safer crossing of SH 71 at Burleson Road/Todd Lane.

The Trails to Transit project will provide more ways for people in a historically underserved area to safely access transit, schools, employment centers, and other key destinations. The project is located in Council Districts 2 and 3 and is currently in design phase, which will allow construction to begin promptly if funds are received. If a RAISE grant is awarded, the City will be required to enter into a grant agreement with USDOT and formally designate matching funds at that time. Final grant applications are due on February 28, 2024.