



City of Austin

Recommendation for Action

File #: 24-4117, Agenda Item #: 30.

3/21/2024

Posting Language

Approve a resolution authorizing submittal of an application for the 2024 Climate Pollution Reduction Grant administered by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, in support of Transportation Demand Management programs related to commute alternatives during multiple extended infrastructure construction projects in Austin and Travis County.

Lead Department

Transportation and Public Works Department.

Fiscal Note

This item has no fiscal impact.

For More Information:

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Additional Backup Information:

The City seeks funding for an implementation grant application for the 2024 Climate Pollution Reduction Grant (CPRG) discretionary grant program. The CPRG program, created by the Inflation Reduction Act and administered through the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, (EPA) provides a total of \$5 billion in federal grants to states, local governments, tribes, and territories to develop and implement ambitious plans for reducing greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions and other harmful air pollution.

Construction will transform Central Texas' transportation network over the next 10 years. Roughly 2.5 million people live in our region today - and the population is expected to increase to more than 3 million by 2030. With more than **35** significant construction projects worth nearly \$20B that are soon-to-be under way, introduction, encouragement, and services related to Transportation Demand Management will help relieve congestion, reduce pollution, and provide viable options to single occupancy driving for the near and long term.

By approving the associated resolution, Council authorizes the City Manager to apply for funding of \$47.85 million in CPRG implementation grant funds to support the promotion of alternate transportation options over driving alone. The Transportation Demand Management (TDM) program proposes four complimentary strategies to help reduce vehicle miles traveled (VMT) at an especially critical time in our region with multiple roadway infrastructure construction projects underway over the next several years.

The grant application proposes to improve existing infrastructure by enhancing Capital Metropolitan Transportation Authority (CapMetro) Park and Ride facilities (mobility hubs) to provide multimodal transportation options, real-time parking and transit information, better bicycle parking and shelters and other amenities. The grant also proposes new, smaller neighborhood mobility hubs to connect transit stops with last-mile transportation options like bike share, scooters, rideshare, paratransit or circulators.

Mobility hubs are becoming increasingly critical in urban planning as they offer a central location for transportation services such as public transit, bike share, and ridesharing services. By providing these options

in one location, mobility hubs promote sustainable transportation options, which are critical to reducing greenhouse gas emissions and addressing climate change.

The grant application proposes to pair improved infrastructure with TDM information, education, and incentive programs to encourage behavior change and shape regional travel demand by increasing the number of commuters sharing rides using carpool and vanpools, transit, and active transportation options. This portion of the grant would consist of a coordinated regional mobility platform and one-stop-shop for accessing transportation options, transportation subsidies and rewards for taking low-GHG trips, marketing, and communications to reach communities impacted by major transportation construction projects, and on-the-ground community engagement to reach communities with personalized travel planning assistance.

The grant proposes to improve transit service throughout the region by providing more funding to both CapMetro and the Capital Area Rural Transportation Service (CARTS) for increasing service reliability and frequency on adjacent routes during construction periods.

The grant proposal also provides for improved data collection on transportation choices, including better trip tracking infrastructure for active transportation, and air quality monitoring. This data will be used to better monitor and model where TDM programming is working, and future improvements are needed.

Efforts funded by this grant would complement efforts by the Capital Area Metropolitan Planning Organization (CAMPO) that is developing other TDM measures across the region.

In 2023, the City's Office of Sustainability was awarded \$1 million by the EPA to develop an Austin-Round Rock-Georgetown Metropolitan Statistical Area regional Priority Climate Action Plan (PCAP). The PCAP consists of projects focused on greenhouse gas reductions. To develop the PCAP, the Office of Sustainability worked with City departments, regional stakeholders, and a Community and Stakeholder Advisory Committee to create a list of near-term, high-priority, and implementation-ready projects. The Office of Sustainability collected approximately 100 proposals project ideas and have reduced it down to two that will be pursued for competitive CPRG implementation grant funding:

The proposed TDM application would be the sole application led by the City of Austin for this 2024 cycle. Another application may be submitted with Travis County in a lead position.

A city matching fund is not required for this grant opportunity under the terms of the Inflation Reduction Act.