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Title: RESOLUTION - Approving the application for grant funds from the United States Department of Transportation's Infrastructure for Rebuilding America Program for the Veterans Boulevard Corridor Improvement Project and authorizing the execution of documents by the Public Works Director or designee (Council Districts 1 and 2)

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Attachments: 1. 19-1173 Resolution.pdf, 2. 19-1173 Project Map.pdf

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REPORT TO THE CITY COUNCIL

February 14, 2019

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SUBJECT

RESOLUTION - Approving the application for grant funds from the United States Department of Transportation's Infrastructure for Rebuilding America Program for the Veterans Boulevard Corridor Improvement Project and authorizing the execution of documents by the Public Works Director or designee (Council Districts 1 and 2)

RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the City Council adopt a resolution authorizing the submission of a grant application to the Infrastructure for Rebuilding America Program for the Veterans Boulevard Corridor

Improvement Project and authorize the execution of all application related documents by the Public Works Director or designee.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Staff is requesting authorization to submit a grant application to the Infrastructure for Rebuilding America (INFRA) program for the Veterans Boulevard Interchange and Corridor Improvement Project. The request will include \$10.5 million to fund construction of Phases 3 and 4b of the Veterans Boulevard interchange and extension, and \$14.5 million to fund related corridor improvements to the Herndon Avenue/Burlington Northern Santa Fe (BNSF) bridge and Adaptive Intelligent Transportation System (ITS) upgrades on Shaw Avenue from Grantland to Polk. The total amount requested from the INFRA program is \$25 million. Veterans Boulevard Phase 3 will construct an interchange at State Route 99 and grade separation over the realigned Golden State Boulevard. Veterans Boulevard Phase 4 will extend Veterans Boulevard to connections with Herndon Avenue to the north and Shaw Avenue to the south. Phase 4 is broken into two sub phases including the southern Phase 4a from Shaw Avenue to Barstow Avenue and the northern Phase 4b from Riverside Drive to Herndon Avenue. The Herndon Avenue/BNSF bridge widening will widen the existing overpass located on Herndon Avenue between Polk Avenue and Milburn Avenue. Adaptive Intelligent Transportation System (ITS) upgrades on Shaw Avenue from Grantland Avenue to Polk Avenue will synchronize traffic signals and reduce congestion in northwest Fresno. For the purposes of the INFRA application the bridge widening is referred to as Phase 6 and ITS updates are referred to as Phase 7. A project map is attached to this Staff Report.

BACKGROUND

On December 21, 2018, the U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) released a Notice of Funding Opportunity for the INFRA Program. INFRA advances the FASTLANE program, an existing grant program established by the Fixing America's Surface Transportation (FAST) Act of 2015. Updated criteria to evaluate INFRA projects have been established in order to align projects with national and regional economic vitality goals and to leverage additional non-federal funding. The deadline to submit grant applications is March 4, 2019.

The DOT will make awards under the INFRA program to both large and small projects. The estimated funding available for fiscal year 2019 under the Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) is approximately \$855-902.5 million for large and small projects. For a large project, the INFRA grant request must be at least \$25 million. For a small project, the grant request must be at least \$5 million. The City of Fresno will pursue funding under the "large project" category. The minimum total project cost for large projects is \$100 million. INFRA funds are limited to 60 percent of the total project costs. Federal funds are also limited to no more than 80 percent of the total project costs. Non-Federal matching funds must total to a minimum of 20 percent of the overall project.

INFRA grants may be used to fund a variety of components of an infrastructure project, however; the DOT is specifically focused on projects in which the local sponsor is significantly invested and is positioned to proceed rapidly to construction. Projects must be able to request obligation for funding within 18 months of award programming. A request for obligation requires that environmental work is completed, right of way has been obtained, engineering plans are approved and the project is ready to move into the construction phase. The Veterans Boulevard Interchange and Corridor Improvement Project meets all of the minimum criteria set forth in the NOFO.

This will be the second request for funding the project through the INFRA program, and third request for Federal funding for construction. For this request for funding, corridor improvements and innovative technology were paired with the Veterans Boulevard interchange and extension to ensure optimized traffic flow through northwest Fresno and to increase the grant application's competitiveness. Incorporating Phases 6 and 7 into the proposal also supports the safety priorities included in the INFRA NOFO.

Veterans Boulevard, originally referred to as the Herndon-Grantland Diagonal, was part of the 1984 General Plan and is a planned six-lane super arterial in the Fresno General Plan (2035). The interchange concept was refined in 1986 with a feasibility study conducted to analyze potential interchange/grade separation configurations. In 1991, a Project Initiation Document was completed, and in 1996, the Official Plan Line for Veterans Boulevard was adopted by the Council. Veterans Boulevard and the proposed interchange with State Route 99 were identified as part of the Circulation Element in both the City and County General Plans. In recent years, staff has completed the Project Study Report, Project Report and Environmental Impact Report. Right-of-way acquisition was completed in 2018. Construction documents are nearing completion.

The new interchange will be a partial cloverleaf connecting State Route 99 and Veterans Boulevard. The new overcrossing will have three northbound and three southbound lanes, a Class I bicycle lane pedestrian trail on the west side of the structure and Class II bicycle lanes on both sides of the structure. The interchange will also include three bridge structures; one to cross over State Route 99, one to cross over the future realigned Golden State Boulevard, and one to cross over the existing Union Pacific Railroad tracks and the future High Speed Rail tracks.

Corridor improvements include widening the Herndon Avenue/BNSF overcrossing from four lanes to six lanes and adding a multi-purpose Class I trail to the north side of the structure, and deployment of adaptive ITS on Shaw from Grantland to Polk. The overcrossing will reduce bottlenecks on Herndon and Veterans Boulevard, and fill a gap in the Herndon Trail by installing bicycle and pedestrian facilities. Engineering plans for the Herndon Avenue/BNSF overcrossing are in the design process and have been funded by Measure C. The Adaptive ITS system proposed for Shaw will employ the latest wireless vehicle detection technology for real-time monitoring and continuous synchronization. Adaptive ITS will interconnect with equipment planned for Veterans and Herndon, and equipment that currently exists on Shaw up to Polk. Funding from INFRA will close an approximately 1.8 mile gap, bringing Adaptive ITS all the way to Grantland.

The City Attorney's office has reviewed and approved the resolution as to form.

ENVIRONMENTAL FINDINGS

A resolution applying for grant funding is not a project for the purposes of the California Environmental Quality Act.

LOCAL PREFERENCE

Local preference is not implicated because this resolution does not include a bid or award of a construction or services contract.

FISCAL IMPACT

This resolution will have no immediate impact on the General Fund. Should the grant be awarded, local matching funds will be identified through future fiscal year capital budgets.

Attachments:

Resolution

Project Map