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Title: RESOLUTION - Authorizing Submission of Applications for Grant Funds From the 2019/2020 Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement Program and the Surface Transportation Block Grant Program Call for Projects from the Fresno Council of Governments and Authorizing the Execution of all Application Related Documents by the Public Works Director, Director of Transportation, or designees (Citywide)
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REPORT TO THE CITY COUNCIL

September 26, 2019

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SUBJECT

RESOLUTION - Authorizing Submission of Applications for Grant Funds From the 2019/2020 Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement Program and the Surface Transportation Block Grant Program Call for Projects from the Fresno Council of Governments and Authorizing the Execution of all Application Related Documents by the Public Works Director, Director of Transportation, or designees (Citywide)

RECOMMENDATIONS

Staff recommends that the City Council adopt a resolution authorizing the submission of Regional Bid and Lifeline grant applications to the Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement Program (CMAQ) and the Surface Transportation Block Grant Program (STBG), and authorize the execution of all application related documents by the Public Works Director, Director of Transportation, or their designees.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Fresno Council of Governments (Fresno COG) issues a Call for Projects every two years to solicit applications for transportation projects under two Federal programs, CMAQ and STBG. Federal funding is apportioned for these programs through the Federal Fixing America's Surface Transportation (FAST) Act. The FAST Act authorizes \$305 billion over fiscal years 2016 through 2020 for highway projects, highway and motor vehicle safety, public transportation, motor carrier safety, hazardous materials safety, rail, research, technology, and statistics programs. In September 2019, the Fresno COG Policy Board will initiate the 2019/2020 CMAQ and STBG Call for Projects to solicit projects to be programmed in the Federal Transportation Improvement Plan (FTIP). Project funding can be programmed/appropriated across four Federal fiscal years which include 2020/2021 through 2023/2024.

The Call for Projects includes a two-step funding cycle. The first funding round involves a competitive or "Regional Bid" grant application process. Regional Bid applications are due to Fresno COG by November 15, 2019 (CMAQ) or December 6, 2019 (STBG). The second round of funding is for Lifeline grant applications. Lifeline grant applications are due by February 28th, 2020 for both funding programs. Staff has evaluated the City's transportation needs as compared to the STBG and CMAQ program eligibility requirements and project selection criteria. A list of recommended Public Works and Transportation projects are attached to the resolution. It is recommended that the Council adopt the resolution in support of the grant applications proposed. Adoption will allow staff to proceed with preparing and submitting applications for the projects. Projects with the most competitive score will be submitted to the regional bid. Other projects on the list will be considered for lifeline funds and/or other state grant programs.

BACKGROUND

Fresno COG, acting in its role as a Metropolitan Planning Organization, is in the process of programming/appropriating the future federal transportation revenues that are allocated to the Fresno County region. Funds for both CMAQ and STBG are reimbursable Federal-aid funds, subject to the requirements of Title 23, United States Code. Eligible uses of the funds include preliminary engineering, right-of-way acquisition, capital costs and construction costs associated with an eligible project.

Program Purpose and Eligible Projects

The STBG grant program was established by California statute utilizing Surface Transportation Program funds that are identified in Title 23, Section 133 of the United States Code. STBG eligibility generally includes asphalt concrete pavement overlays and roadway reconstruction, capacity enhancing projects (such as the addition of new roadway), traffic signals and safety projects, transit capital projects and landscaping. This program prioritizes maintaining existing facilities, which results in maintenance and reconstruction facilities receiving higher scores from the grant scoring

committee.

The purpose of the CMAQ grant program is to fund transportation projects or programs that will contribute to attainment or maintenance of the national ambient air quality standards for ozone, carbon monoxide and particulate matter. CMAQ project eligibility generally includes transit improvements such as the expansion of service or retrofit/replacement of fleet vehicles, traffic flow improvements through the installation of traffic signals or intelligent transportation systems (ITS), pedestrian and bicycle projects including trails, new sidewalks and bike lanes, and other particulate matter (PM) reduction projects such as paving roadway shoulders to reduce PM 10.

Project Selection, Approval and Programming Process

CMAQ and STBG programs both include a competitive Regional Bid grant funding cycle and a Lifeline grant funding cycle. Staff have identified a list of projects to apply for. The project list is attached to this item. Projects were identified based on Active Transportation Plan priorities, local and regional planning priorities, City Council and community requests and the pavement condition index. The majority of projects are focused on active transportation and complete streets improvements, though a broad array of improvements are proposed to improve transportation, safety, traffic flow, air quality and visibility.

The estimated available funding for the region to be programmed by Fresno COG is listed below and based on prior year allocations. Fresno COG expects to receive the final amounts available in the next few weeks.

- CMAQ Regional Bid - \$20.8 Million
- CMAQ Lifeline - \$4.7 Million
- STBG Regional Bid - \$11.4 Million
- STBG Lifeline - \$9.1 Million

Regional Bid funding is awarded through a competitive application process between Fresno COG member agencies and school districts (CMAQ only) across Fresno County. On average a total of approximately 45-50 project applications are submitted to each program from Fresno County agencies. Applications are then screened for eligibility and scored by a committee. All projects submitted to either grant program must be authorized through Council resolution. The total number of projects that can be submitted to the Call for Projects Regional Bid is limited to ten per City/Agency for CMAQ and ten per City/Agency for STBG. In the last two competitive funding cycles (2015/2016 and 2017/2019) the City of Fresno was awarded grant funding totaling \$21.3 million for twelve projects.

Successfully securing Regional Bid funds is based on a project's ability to compete well against other projects submitted for funding within the region. Once projects are officially scored by COG's scoring committee, recommendations for funding will be routed for approval through COG's Transportation Technical Committee, Policy Advisory Committee and the Policy Advisory Board. Once approval is received, agencies will be officially notified of their awarded projects and may begin the programming process. Programming refers to the scheduling and budgetary appropriations process COG coordinates for transportation projects in the region.

Lifeline programming occurs after the first round of competitive grant funding is awarded. Lifeline

funding is distributed to each city and county on a formula basis. Projects on the STBG and CMAQ grant list approved by Council that received partial funding from the competitive Regional Bid process will receive the remaining funding needed. Due to the limited amount of funding available, not all projects on the list included with this item will be funded by Regional Bid or Lifeline funds.

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 applicable as 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. A local match is often required for projects selected for funding by Fresno COG. When required, the minimum local match contribution is 11.47% of project costs. Local match funds are typically funded through gas tax, Measure "C" and/or development impact fees as appropriate for the particular project. Should the grant be awarded, local matching funds will be identified through future fiscal year capital budgets.

Attachments:

Resolution

Project List