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Title: RESOLUTION - Authorizing the Submission of a Grant Application to the Fresno Council of Governments for the 2020 Measure "C" Transit Oriented Infrastructure for In-Fill Development Grant Program in the amount of \$1,633,000; and Authorizing the Execution of Documents by the Public Works Director or Designee (Council District 3)
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REPORT TO THE CITY COUNCIL

February 27, 2020

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SUBJECT

RESOLUTION - Authorizing the Submission of a Grant Application to the Fresno Council of Governments for the 2020 Measure "C" Transit Oriented Infrastructure for In-Fill Development Grant Program in the amount of \$1,633,000; and Authorizing the Execution of Documents by the Public Works Director or Designee (Council District 3)

RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the City Council adopt a resolution authorizing the submission of a grant application to the 2020 Measure "C" Transit Oriented Infrastructure for In-Fill Development Grant Program for the Merced Complete Street Project in the amount of \$1,633,000; and authorizing 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 Measure “C” Transit Oriented Infrastructure for In-Fill Development (Measure “C” TOD) Grant Program. The application will request funds to reconnect Merced Street between H Street and Congo Alley, consistent with the Downtown Specific Plan. The Measure “C” TOD Program was created to support community-based transit projects that are developed through an inclusive planning process with broad private-public partnerships and outreach; improve the range of transportation choices by supporting transit facilities and improving links between facilities and activity nodes; and, support well-designed, high-density housing and mixed uses near transit. The Measure “C” TOD project provides funding to three types of projects: planning projects, transportation infrastructure capital improvement projects, and a housing in-fill incentive program.

BACKGROUND

The Measure “C” TOD program was created in the 2006 Measure “C” Extension Plan. The call for projects is administered through the Fresno Council of Governments, with final approval by the Fresno County Transportation Authority (FCTA) Board. FCTA is the authority responsible for administering Measure “C” funding. The goals of the Measure “C” TOD allocation are to support community based transit projects that are developed through an inclusive planning process with broad public-private partnership and outreach, improve the range of transportation choices by supporting transit facilities and improving links between facilities and activity nodes, and support well-designed, high-density housing and mixed uses near transit. City and County governments in Fresno County are eligible for the TOD program. Private sector or non-profit organizations can apply for the funding through the representation of the local government where the project is located. Projects must be located within ½ mile of an existing bus stop or proposed High Speed Rail Station that is in the latest Regional Transportation Plan.

As described in the 2006 Measure “C” Extension Expenditure Plan, the TOD program provides funding to three types of competitive projects:

- A. Transportation infrastructure to transit facilities to encourage safety and access to transit facilities, support in-fill development or revitalization, reduce traffic congestion at transit stations, and provide for a wider range of transportation choices and improved internal mobility. Funds can be used for preliminary design and environmental studies, engineering, land acquisition, and construction.
- B. Planning projects or matching money to identify nodal transit sites on transit corridors for transit oriented development, planning retrofit projects for existing neighborhoods, downtowns, commercial cores, and transit station areas and stops in order to create access to transit and missed use development in transit friendly environments. The community planning process must result in transportation/land-use concept plans, streetscape design concept plans, environmental studies, detailed drawings, construction cost estimates or implementation plans for specific capital projects.
- C. Housing in-fill incentive projects which reward local governments for encouraging developers to build compact designs with higher housing densities, affordable, accessible housing, and

mixed uses that are characteristic of well-implemented transit oriented design in other cities developments at transit stops. Local government agencies can spend funds to supplement development fees or on a capital project that supports new housing development connections to transit.

There is a total of \$990,000 available for the Cycle VIII Call for Projects. Approximately \$850,000 accrues annually, but only projects with high scores can be awarded grant funds. Projects must receive a minimum score of 70 points in order to be considered for funding. To meet this requirement, City staff has carefully screened potential projects to present the most competitive package as dictated by grant criteria. Grant scoring is weighted in favor of projects that can present a strong nexus to transit oriented development, proximity/support for high-density land use characteristics, transportation infrastructure that increases accessibility to transit, TOD friendly parking policies, green features and affordable housing. Attached to this item is a list of projects that are expected to score well.

The application will request funds for the Merced Complete Street Project. This project will improve Merced Street between H Street and Congo Alley (first alley west of Fulton), consistent with the adopted Downtown Specific Plan. Merced Street did connect to Fulton originally, but was modified to allow for more parking in the 1960s. Restoring the original roadway will provide connectivity for pedestrians from the restored Hotel Fresno, Chinatown and other locations to travel to and from Fulton, the Courthouse, and the transit center on Van Ness and Fresno Street. The improvements will provide wide sidewalks and enhanced landscaping to match the design used for Merced just west of Fulton Street.

The City was awarded TOD funds last year to design the Merced Complete Street Project. This year's request will be to allocate funds in the next three TOD cycles to the Merced Project. Cost estimates for the Merced Complete Street Project exceed the funds available for this year's cycle, but the adopted TOD program guidelines do allow for large projects with multi-year funding requests. If the application is successfully awarded funding, the TOD program guidelines would allow for up to half of the available TOD funding each year to go toward the multi-year project. The City was previously awarded a multi-year allocation of TOD funds to be used on the Fulton Street Reconstruction Project.

Applications are due on February 28, 2020. Projects selected for funding by the scoring committee will receive final approval by the Fresno County Transportation Authority on June 3, 2020. Project selected for funding must be able to enter into an agreement with FCTA within a year of award. The City Attorney's office has reviewed and approved the resolution as to form.

ENVIRONMENTAL FINDINGS

By the definition in the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines Section 15378a resolution applying for grant funding does not qualify as a "project" as defined CEQA.

LOCAL PREFERENCE

Local preference was not implemented because this resolution does not include a bid or award a construction or services contract.

FISCAL IMPACT

This resolution will have no impact on the General Fund. Should the grant be awarded, Measure “C” TOD funds will be incorporated into the City of Fresno annual budget.

Attachments:

Project List

Resolution