


COUNCIL COMMUNICATION

	Number: 22-149	Meeting: April 4, 2022
	Agenda Item: 8	Roll Call: [_____]
	Submitted by: Steven L. Naber, P.E., City Engineer	

AGENDA HEADING:

Approving and authorizing the application for a U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity (RAISE) Discretionary Grant for the Southeast Connector Project between SE 30th Street and U.S. 65.

SYNOPSIS:

Recommend approval and authorization to apply for a DOT RAISE Discretionary Grant as provided under the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act and the Fiscal Year (FY) 2022 Appropriations Act for the Southeast Connector (SE 30th Street – U.S. Highway 65) Project.

FISCAL IMPACT:

Amount: \$65 million

Funding Source: Various funding Sources, as follows:

- \$25,000,000 - RAISE Discretionary Grant
- \$11,284,000 - Federal STBG funding allocated by the Des Moines Area Metropolitan Planning Organization
- \$28,716,000 - 2022-2023 CIP, Page 116, Southeast Connector – SE 30th Street to U.S. 65, ST256, GO Bonds and Proceeds from Federal Title 23 Excess Land Sales

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:

- The Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act appropriated \$1.5 billion to be awarded by the DOT for FY 2022 for the Local and Regional Project Assistance Program, known as the RAISE Grants program, under National Infrastructure Investments.
- The FY 2022 Appropriations Act added \$775 million in funding to the RAISE grant program, increasing the total for RAISE discretionary grants to \$2.275 billion.
- Of the \$2.275 billion funding, the DOT will award at the following levels:
 - At least \$113.75 million in planning grants.
 - At least \$35 million awarded to areas of persistent poverty and historically disadvantaged communities.

- 50% of the remaining funds are to be awarded for urban projects and 50% of the remaining funds are to be awarded to rural projects across the U.S. The Southeast Connector Project is considered an urban project since the Des Moines urbanized area has a population greater than 200,000.
- The funds are to be awarded on a competitive basis for surface transportation projects that will have a significant local or regional impact. The merit selection criteria are safety, environmental sustainability, quality of life, improves mobility and community connectivity, economic competitiveness and opportunity, state of good repair, partnership and collaboration, and innovation.
- Federal Administration priorities for the RAISE discretionary grant program are to fund projects that reduce greenhouse gas emissions and are designed to address climate change impacts, promote energy efficiency, support fiscally responsible land use, increase use of lower-carbon travel modes, incorporate zero emission vehicle infrastructure, increase climate resilience, support domestic manufacturing, as well as address environmental justice and racial equity.
- As with prior discretionary grant programs, the RAISE discretionary grant program is highly competitive. Grants funded under the program for urban projects will range from a minimum of \$5 million to a maximum of \$45 million. Grant requests larger than \$25 million are only eligible for the funding added with the FY2022 Appropriations Act.
- On June 28, 2021, by Roll Call Number 21-0949, City Council approved and authorized the submittal of an application for the DOT RAISE discretionary grant provided under the National Infrastructure Investments in the Consolidated Appropriations Act FY2021 for the Southeast Connector Project between SE 30th Street and U.S. Highway 65.
- In 2021, the DOT received 763 applications, totaling \$10,300,048,349, for the 2021 RAISE discretionary grant. Of those applications, 15 were received from the State of Iowa, requesting a total of \$238,818,916 in 2021 RAISE grant discretionary grant funding.
- On November 19, 2021, U.S. Secretary of Transportation Pete Buttigieg announced nearly \$1 billion in funding through 2021 RAISE funded 90 projects in 47 states, the District of Columbia and Guam. One (1) project from the State of Iowa was awarded \$15,000,000 in 2021 RAISE grant funding: Drive to Prosperity: Manufacturing Drive and Bluff Boulevard Reconstruction project in Clinton, Iowa. The City of Clinton had requested \$19,000,000 in 2021 RAISE grant funding.
- On March 1, 2022, City staff met with Howard Hill, Transportation Analyst at the U.S. DOT to discuss the 2021 RAISE grant application. Howard Hill stated that the evaluators and senior review team reviewing the 2021 RAISE grant applications viewed the City of Des Moines application as one (1) of the three (3) applications from the State of Iowa that were “Highly Recommended.”
- The Southeast Connector project satisfies many of the selection criteria identified in the grant and aligns well with the Administration’s priorities on several points. When completed, this segment of the Southeast Connector will make the final connection to U.S. Highway 65 that will result in a transformative roadway corridor from downtown Des Moines through the

southeast quadrant of the City and eastern Polk County that will increase safety, enhance quality of life, open up opportunities for community connectivity, promote future economic development, enhance the ability to transport goods, and provide more direct and safer connections to other major transportation corridors such as Interstates 35 and 80, Highway 5 in addition to U.S. Highway 65. Additionally, it is anticipated the completion of this project will divert traffic from University Avenue, Scott Avenue and Vandalia Road.

- As part of the project, a 12-foot-wide multi-use trail will be constructed that will fill in a critical gap that is present within the Central Iowa Trail System by connecting the Martin Luther King Jr. Trail with the Gay Lea Wilson Trail in eastern Polk County.
- City staff have worked jointly with the City of Pleasant Hill and a consultant to prepare the RAISE application. Application documents consist of a Benefit Cost Analysis and a 30-page maximum Project Narrative as the main components of the application. The application must be submitted by April 14, 2022.
- The City of Pleasant Hill completed the Pleasant Hill Boulevard and Vandalia Road intersection project in 2021, which is a part of the overall Southeast Connector Project. The City of Des Moines previously transferred \$7.9 million of federal funds to Pleasant Hill for construction of the intersection project.
- The estimated total project cost for the Southeast Connector (SE 30th – U.S. Highway 65) is \$65 million, with \$50 million being for construction and the remaining for design, right-of-way acquisition, utility relocations and construction administration and inspection. The 2022 RAISE discretionary grant application will request \$25 million for construction of the project which is intended to include the paving for two (2) lanes of roadway, a 1,515-foot long bridge, multiuse trail, the relocation and improvement of 4,000-feet of the SE Des Moines Levee system, storm water enhancements, as well as right-of-way and grading for future expansion of the roadway if future traffic volumes warrant.
- Award announcements are to be made by August 12, 2022. All awarded funds are to be obligated by September 30, 2026, and expended no later than September 30, 2031. RAISE discretionary grants may be used for up to 80 percent of eligible project costs, but priority will be given to projects in which federal funding is required to complete an overall financing package.

**PREVIOUS COUNCIL ACTION(S):**

Date: October 4, 2021

Roll Call Number: [21-1459](#)

Action: [Approving](#) Supplemental Agreement No. 3 to the Professional Services Agreement (PSA) with Kirkham Michael & Associates, Inc. for additional design services for the Southeast Connector – SE 30th Street to U.S. 65, not to exceed \$900,000. ([Council Communication 21-419](#)) Moved by Gatto to adopt. Motion Carried 7-0.

BOARD/COMMISSION ACTION(S): NONE**ANTICIPATED ACTIONS AND FUTURE COMMITMENTS:**

If selected for a RAISE grant, the City will be requested to enter into a grant agreement, which will be presented to City Council for consideration and approval.

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