



**CITY OF FORT LAUDERDALE
City Commission Agenda Memo
CONFERENCE MEETING**

#13-0200

TO: Honorable Mayor & Members of the
Fort Lauderdale City Commission

FROM: Lee Feldman, ICMA-CM, City Manager

DATE: March 5, 2013

TITLE: Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP) Grant Application and 7/9th
Connector Project Update

The purpose of this memorandum is to provide Commission with an update on the Metropolitan Planning Organization's (MPO) Unfunded Transportation Priorities, an update on the NW 7th/9th Connector project, and an overview of the Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP) Grant opportunities including a selection of projects to consider when applying for funding.

The FY 2013/14 Unfunded Multimodal Surface Transportation Priorities listing (Unfunded Priority List) is based on the adopted 2035 Long Range Transportation Plan and is the culmination of feedback and coordination with the public and implementing agencies (Exhibit 1). The Unfunded Priority List includes transit route priorities, associated mobility hubs, pedestrian, bicycle, and roadway facilities grouped together to represent a complete transit mobility project. The list also includes the adjustments in priorities as directed and approved by the MPO last year.

Priorities established for Fort Lauderdale are the Wave Streetcar (1), Broward Boulevard (2), Oakland Park Boulevard (3), US 441 (4), US 1 (5), Tri-Rail station projects (10), NW 7th/9th Connector (13), Sunrise Blvd. (14), NW 21 Ave. (16), Dixie Highway (17), I-95 Managed Lanes (31), Community Bus Service (41), and some illustrative projects such as the FEC Commuter Rail and the Broward East West Transit projects (69) that do not have identified funding.

The NW 7th/9th Connector project is Priority #13, previously priority #8 for several years until the July 14, 2011 MPO meeting at which time the Board approved moving the project to priority #13 and removed the \$5 million right-of-way acquisition funds from the FDOT work program. The purpose of the NW 7th/9th Avenue Connector project is to reduce traffic congestion and facilitate more efficient traffic flow along Sunrise Blvd by constructing roadway improvements that will connect NW 7th Avenue to NW 9th Avenue between Sunrise Boulevard and Broward Boulevard.

In accordance with the Grant Agreement between the City and the State of Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT), dated March 7, 2006, 100% of the design for the project needs be completed by June 30, 2012 and the Right-of Way (ROW) acquisition or construction phase for the project is required to commence by March 7, 2016 unless an extension is approved by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA). Repayment of all federal-aid reimbursements for preliminary design engineering will be due by the City if the project is not advanced to ROW acquisition or construction by March 7, 2016.

The total funds for the design phase of the project included \$1,400,000 for Federal funds and \$200,000 for City match. A breakdown of project funding and expenses to date is presented in Table 1:

Table 1. Project Funding and Expenses to Date

Funding Source	Available Funds	Reimbursements received to date	Expenses to Date ²
FDOT	\$1,400,000.00	\$720,036.49	\$724,803.09
City Match ¹	\$ 111,440.30		-

Note:

1. Only \$111,440.30 have been appropriated to date (CRA funds)
2. \$4,766.60 in approval process for reimbursements

There are two options that staff has evaluated to proceed.

Option 1- Continuation of the Project:

Complete 100% design and environmental screening for the project by 2013- 2014 and start ROW acquisition or construction when funding becomes available in accordance with the conditions of the Grant. According to the most recent fund balance report, the Northwest Progresso Flagler Heights (NPF) CRA has \$2.4M of uncommitted funds; additionally the NPF CRA may issue bonds to acquire ROW.

CDBG funds could be a used by borrowing through the HUD 108 Loan Guarantee Program. The 108 program allows for City to borrow five times of its entitlement, approximately \$1.8M, to fund HUD eligible activities. Further research is needed to determine if we should use this source of funding since the ROW acquisition is anticipated to occur several years prior to the infrastructure improvement. Because the preliminary assessment shows contaminated ROW, we could designate the area Brownfield and apply for grants for ROW acquisition and clean-up. If we are to proceed with 100% design, the estimated cost to complete, including the contamination screening for the project, is \$750,000.00.

Option 2- Evaluate Project Viability:

Further evaluate environmental risk, remediation cost, and construction cost with FDOT to determine whether or not the costs associated with ROW acquisition and remediation work justify the construction of the project. The outcome of this would be that the

project is viable and we would need to determine whether to proceed. If we chose to not proceed, the funds spent to date will need to be paid back. If the environmental risk reflects that the project is not viable, we would need to engage FDOT and have the potential to not move forward without penalty.

R.J. Behar & Company Inc. will give a presentation on the project and cost estimates (Exhibit 2). Additional information and details for work completed to date on the project is included in Exhibit 3.

In addition, the annual MPO Transportation Enhancement grant program, now known as the Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP), has changed due to the MAP-21 legislation approved at the Federal level. The TAP program now includes the Safe Routes to Schools, Recreational Trails, and the Scenic Highways programs. The overall funding for this program was cut in half this year with approximately \$2.5 million available countywide. The application deadline is March 29, 2013.

The scoring criteria for the TAP grant program has changed this year. The approved rating criterion is shown in Exhibit 4. The City is again permitted to submit two applications to the MPO, with only one being eligible for funding if ranked high enough and meets FDOT eligibility criteria. The application dollar range (\$250K - \$1M) has not changed. Previously, an application received additional points if matching funds were used, however, this year matching funds are not considered in the scoring process. This year's TAP candidate projects are shown in Exhibit 5.

Staff recommends that the Bayview Drive (Sunrise Boulevard to Commercial Boulevard) and NW 7th Avenue (Broward Boulevard to NW 19th Street) projects move forward for submittal to the MPO for the TAP Grant program since staff feels they best meet the scoring criteria because they both provide a safe route to school, parks and churches. The Bayview Drive project promotes tourism and the NW 7th Avenue project serves the traditionally underserved. Both projects are contained in the City's Multimodal Connectivity map.

A City Commission resolution of support is required based upon the scoring criteria shown in Exhibit 4. Staff will present a resolution to the City Commission on March 19, 2013 for approval to submit two applications for this grant opportunity.

Attachments:

- EX 1 MPO Unfunded Priority List
- EX 2 R.J. Behar & Company Inc. Project Update
- EX 3 7th/9th Connector Background
- EX 4 TAP Rating Criteria
- EX 5 TAP Grant Application Candidate Projects

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