



Steering Committee Meeting

Minutes
March 27th, 2024
3:30 PM

I. Welcome – Chairwoman Lyon

II. Previous Meeting Minutes – Chairwoman Lyon
Minutes from the February 28th, 2023, Steering Committee meeting were approved unanimously.

III. Phase 1 Project Update – Sheila Parker
At last month's meeting, I reported that we were ready to go to construction, but we needed to acquire all the right-of-way before we could do that. We waited while the legal department was filing the needed condemnations for the project, so we tried to figure out some creative ways to expedite the process. We did find an instance where the SCDOT had given conditional right-of-way certification and we decided to go that route. I drafted a lengthy justification letter as to why we should be granted the certification conditionally. SCDOT responded that they would grant it to us. I've filled out the necessary paperwork needed for that, and they sent me the certification. Once the Federal Highway Administration authorizes the release of those construction funds, which should be any day, I can finish the advertisement and send that to procurement, so we are almost there.

IV. Federal Funding Opportunity- Kyle James, BCDCOG

We've presented a few times on Federal funding opportunities. This is funding separate from county level or any other local level funding. We discussed funding opportunities specifically from the bipartisan infrastructure law and the Inflation reduction act. There aren't many opportunities out there, and we must be selective and put our time to the best use. A group of funding opportunities that we're tracking from BIL and IRA ATIIIP is the new one that's now available. It used to be 200. Well, it was authorized for 200 million dollars over 5 years, but only 45 million in one year has been allocated to date. There are separate requirements for planning and design versus construction. The total project cost for planning and design ranges between 100,000 to 2 million. This would be total, including local match which would be 20%. The funds could be used for anything but our purposes conceptual design and preliminary design. Once an award is executed, then there is 2 years to complete that conceptual and preliminary design for, say phases 2 and 3, or just one of the 2 phases. If we were to go the construction route, the project would need to fit into a narrow window of cost range between



15 and 19.5 million, and at least 7.5 million needs to be available from the local match. If you went over 15 million then would have to add more to that. This Grant program can pay for right of way bonds, financing, interest, taxes, fees, surveying just about anything you could think of, and it's got a longer than usual expenditure period. From the year of execution, you'd have 5 additional years to spend the award funding. Because of that price range it's a little bit high compared to our last cost estimates for phases 2 and 3 and the minimum 7.5-million-dollar match is higher than most other programs. It might not be a good fit unless the county TST got approved, and you wanted to leverage it against it.

Although there is a minimum 20% match for the planning and design, more points are awarded to projects exceeding that 20% match. They're trying to subsidize projects that get a match waiver for being in a disadvantaged community which the Rethink Folly Road corridor would not qualify for with projects that are paying more than the 25, 20% match which would probably be an important consideration when applying. Lead organizations that can apply are either BCDCOG or SCDOT. Charleston County, the Town of James Island, and the City of Charleston can serve as a pass through for the funding once awarded. The application would be due on June 17th, and this committee would need to approve the idea to go after the funding and then would need to identify a 20% match before writing the application.

Discussion

Councilwoman Parker asked Mr. James if he needed the Committee to make a motion today.

Mr. James explained that BCDCOG could be the organization to apply but they would need a motion stating that the steering committee wanted to go after the available funding and how they would approach the 20 % match requirement. Councilwoman Parker then asked what the current cost estimate was for phases 2 & 3. Mr. James showed a spreadsheet to the committee and explained that a high estimate would be 12.8 million, which was under the 15 million dollars minimum for construction. He clarified that we could meet the minimum requirements for funding for planning and design but not construction, and that it would be wise to pursue this funding for both planning and design.

Ms. Zimmerman stated that the maximum planning grant for the program was \$2 million and asked Mr. James if the committee should pursue the maximum grant award and if the planning costs for phase 2 and 3 could be less than that. Mr. James indicated he thought it would be wise to go for less. Phase 2 had a rough estimate of \$480,000 for conceptual and preliminary design, so consider double that something around 1 million total, which would mean a \$200,000 minimum cost share. Ms. Zimmerman asked where the committee would pull the \$200,000 match locally and inquired as to the jurisdictional breakdown of phases 2 & 3. Councilwoman Parker indicated that phase 3 was predominately County and City but phase 2 included all 3 jurisdictions. Ms. Zimmerman asked the



municipalities present if they had the ability to budget a split of money from the 3 entities to come up with the required match.

Councilwoman Parker stated that she could not speak for the City as a whole, but she would support going after City funds for the match for the project. Ms. Parker agreed saying that she could not speak for the County and would need council permission but \$200,000 did not seem to be a huge ask between all 3 municipalities. Chair Lyon chimed in and agreed she could not speak for anyone but herself but was certainly interested in doing what she could to help support this project moving forward.

Mr. James added that if the committee wanted to go for more than the 1 million dollars they could add additional projects like the Sol Legare sidewalk project could be a possibility. In general, this Federal funding opportunity separates opportunities and has 2 categories or project types, one for spines which the Rethink Folly Road Project is a very good example of, and one for networks, but you could certainly have a spur off a spine that qualifies so that wouldn't be a limitation. Ms. Zimmerman asked if planning dollars were needed for the Sol Legare sidewalk? Mr. James clarified that it would be design dollars. Ms. Zimmerman asked if Councilmember Boykin had any thoughts about the County's involvement. Councilwoman Parker asked Mr. James if this was like SS4A. He clarified that it wasn't but had similar categories but was focused on bicycle/ pedestrian infrastructure.

Mr. James mentioned the competitiveness of the project \$45 million total available nationally that could be anywhere between 2 awards nationally and 75 awards and indicated it was a highly competitive process. He indicated a match would be needed before he would write an application for the funding opportunity. Councilwoman Parker indicated that the committee would need to speak to their respective municipalities regarding match funds.

Chairwoman Lyon stated that the next steering committee meeting was scheduled for the end of May. She asked other committee members if match funds were usually governed by how much jurisdiction municipalities had in a section and asked Kyle if the end of May was enough time to get an application in. Mr. James stated that an application would be due on June 17th but would be quite a bit of work so the sooner he could get started the better. Mrs. Vitello asked what the historical breakdown of contributions was for the first phase. Mr. Parker indicated that the City and Town each gave \$400,000 and a portion of \$15 million pot from County TST came from the County. Ms. Zimmerman added that there was also \$1.5 million in Federal dollars.

Mr. James Indicated that a 20% match for phases 2 and 3 would be needed but that there was a lot of incentive to go beyond the 20% match for this grant. Councilwoman Parker indicated she felt like it was a great opportunity, and she thought we would be upset if we didn't go after it. She indicated she understood getting the cost share worked out is complicated, but she would do whatever she could to get the city to contribute. Ms. Vitello asked if the application was due in June, which would give Mr. James enough time to move forward with the application. Mr. James indicated that May 1 would be the drop dead for starting an application. Chairwoman Lyon asked the committee members if they



would be interested in having another meeting on April 17th and received a response in the affirmative. Ms. Zimmerman stated that because it would be a more competitive application with more than a 20 % match it would make the most sense for the municipalities to each put up \$100,000 for a match and commit to that. Chairwoman Lyon stated that the committee would reconvene virtually on April 17th at 3:30 PM.

V. Jurisdictional Updates– Various

Town of James Island – Kristen Crane

- No updates

City of Charleston –James Wallace

- 345 Folly Road-Dairy Queen construction should start soon.

BCDCOG/CARTA – Belen Vitello

- No updates

City of Folly Beach – Jenna Stephens

- No updates.

Charleston County – Emily Pigott

- No updates.

VI. Adjourn - Meeting adjourned