



MEMO

TO: President Gardiner and Members of Council
FROM: Town Manager
SUBJECT: DOT RAISE Grant Engagement Letter
DATE: February 21, 2022

Background

Congressman Mrvan's office recently issued a notice of funding availability for \$1.5 billion in Department of Transportation (DOT) grant funding through the Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity (RAISE) discretionary grant program.

From the DOT guidance on this grant:

"RAISE projects are rigorously reviewed and selected based on merit. Projects will be evaluated on statutory criteria of safety, environmental sustainability, quality of life, economic competitiveness and opportunity, state of good repair, partnership and innovation. New this year, under the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, 2022 RAISE applications will also be evaluated on the criteria of mobility and community connectivity. The Department will assess projects for universal design and accessibility for travelers, as well as consider how proposals increase mobility for freight and supply chain efficiency."

The Ridge and Calumet Streetscape Plan is a prime candidate for funding, as we will be mitigating stormwater and making intentional multi-modal connections through our community utilizing the transit being constructed by NICTD.

The deadline for applications is April 25th. This is a very short runway. The complexity of the application is similar in scope and depth as the TIGER grants of old.

Methodology

To meet the deadline and submit a competitive application, staff would like to engage Sam Schwartz Engineering to assist us in our application. As the engineer of record that partnered with Teska on the initial streetscape project, they already have a significant amount of project data needed for submission. They also have the staff capacity to turn this around in a competent workmanlike manner in the allotted time. The total projected cost of implementation of the Streetscape Plan is \$34 million. To even have a shot at a grant to fund a project of this scale is an opportunity the Town should take seriously and consider investing in.

In 2021, Rockford Illinois won a similar grant for \$16 million to fund their Complete Streets program.

The Town has so far secured commitments from Rep. Mrvan, Mike Noland of NICTD, and Ty Warner of NIRPC to submit letters of support for the project when the application is submitted. Staff has reached out to Sen. Young's office and was told that they would consider a letter after reviewing the application.

The projected engagement cost with Sam Schwartz Engineering should not exceed \$10,000. This engagement will be paid through the LIT Economic Development Fund.

Recommendation

By motion and voice vote, authorize the Town Manager to enter into an agreement with Sam Schwartz Engineering to assist in the Town's application for DOT RAISE Grant funding at a cost not to exceed \$10,000.