

**CITY OF EL PASO, TEXAS
AGENDA ITEM
DEPARTMENT HEAD'S SUMMARY FORM**

AGENDA DATE: 12/14/21

CONTACT PERSON(S) NAME AND PHONE NUMBER: Elizabeth Triggs, Interim Director, (915) 212-1619

DISTRICT(S) AFFECTED: All Districts

STRATEGIC GOAL: Goal 1: Create an Environment Conducive to Strong, Sustainable Economic Development.

SUBJECT:

That the City of El Paso is authorized to apply to U.S. Economic Development Administration's Economic Adjustment Assistance program for the purpose of securing a grant to conduct a feasibility study that will assess and consider the expansion and modernization of the Stanton Street Bridge and Stanton Street Corridor; the Mayor be authorized to assign a letter of support (Exhibit "A") for the submission of the application; and the City Manager be authorized to take all necessary actions to pursue this grant opportunity.

BACKGROUND / DISCUSSION:

On March 11, 2021, President Joseph R. Biden signed the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 into law providing additional relief to address the continued impact of COVID-19 on the economy, public health, state and local governments, individuals, and businesses. Under the American Rescue Plan Act, the U.S. Economic Development Administration (the "EDA"), a bureau within the U.S. Department of Commerce, was allocated \$3 billion in supplemental funding to assist communities nationwide in their efforts to build back better by accelerating the economic recovery from the coronavirus pandemic and building local economies that will be resilient to future economic shocks. The EDA has made this funding available through six innovative challenges, including the Economic Adjustment Assistance program which will provide \$500 million in grant funding to hundreds of communities across the nation to assist them in planning, building, innovating, and putting people back to work through construction or non-construction projects designed to meet local needs. As part of the City's commitment to the success of its land ports of entry, the City wishes to apply to the Economic Adjustment Assistance program to secure funding for a feasibility study to assess and consider the modernization of the Stanton Street Bridge and Stanton Street Corridor. The City of El Paso will request

PRIOR COUNCIL ACTION:

N/A

AMOUNT AND SOURCE OF FUNDING:

The City of El Paso is requesting \$1,000,000 through the Economic Adjustment Assistance grant and will provide a 30% match of \$300,000 from the International Bridges Restricted Fund (P3 program) – Dept. 564 - Fund 3360 - Division 64870.

HAVE ALL AFFECTED DEPARTMENTS BEEN NOTIFIED? YES NO

PRIMARY DEPARTMENT: International Bridges Department

SECONDARY DEPARTMENT: Economic and International Development Department

*****REQUIRED AUTHORIZATION*****

DEPARTMENT HEAD:

Elizabeth Triggs

(If Department Head Summary Form is initiated by Purchasing, client department should sign also)

Revised 04/09/2021

RESOLUTION

WHEREAS, on March 11, 2021, President Joseph R. Biden signed the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 into law providing additional relief to address the continued impact of COVID-19 on the economy, public health, state and local governments, individuals, and businesses; and

WHEREAS, under the American Rescue Plan Act, the U.S. Economic Development Administration (the “EDA”), a bureau within the U.S. Department of Commerce, was allocated \$3 billion in supplemental funding to assist communities nationwide in their efforts to build back better by accelerating the economic recovery from the coronavirus pandemic and building local economies that will be resilient to future economic shocks; and

WHEREAS, the American Rescue Plan Act funding enables the EDA to provide larger, more transformational investments across the nation through the provision of flexible funding and support for community-led economic development; and

WHEREAS, the EDA has made this funding available through six innovative challenges, including the Economic Adjustment Assistance program which will provide \$500 million in grant funding to hundreds of communities across the nation to assist them in planning, building, innovating, and putting people back to work through construction or non-construction projects designed to meet local needs; and

WHEREAS, the City of El Paso (the “City), located along the United States-Mexico border, has been uniquely impacted by COVID-19 due to federally mandated temporary travel restrictions limiting non-essential travel of non-citizens into the United States through land ports of entry; and

WHEREAS, cross-border pedestrian and personally owned vehicle northbound travel declined significantly in El Paso between 2019 and 2020 (58.1% and 32.5%, respectively) following implementation of the temporary travel restrictions applicable to land ports of entry, negatively impacting the local economy, and particularly, service and retail industries; and

WHEREAS, the City recognizes its regional land ports of entry are key economic drivers critical to the region’s economic growth and resilience; and

WHEREAS, with the lifting of temporary travel restrictions to allow non-essential travel by non-citizens with proof of vaccination, cross-border traffic has begun to return to pre-pandemic levels; and

WHEREAS, continued investment in and modernization of the City’s proximately located land ports of entry will facilitate the current and future flow of multi-modal cross-border traffic, thereby benefitting local businesses and the economy through an expanded customer base; and

WHEREAS, as part of the City’s commitment to the success of its land ports of entry, the City wishes to apply to the Economic Adjustment Assistance program to secure funding for a feasibility study to assess and consider the modernization of the Stanton Street Bridge and Stanton Street Corridor; and

WHEREAS, matching funds are required for successful grant applicants and will require at least a 20 percent local match which may include cash and in-kind contributions to the project; and

WHEREAS, the City is requesting \$1,000,000 through the Economic Adjustment Assistance grant and will provide a 30% match of \$300,000 from the International Bridges Restricted Fund (P3 program) – Dept. 564 - Fund 3360 - Division 64870.

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF EL PASO:

That the City of El Paso is authorized to apply to U.S. Economic Development Administration’s Economic Adjustment Assistance program for the purpose of securing a grant to conduct a feasibility study that will assess and consider the modernization of the Stanton Street Bridge and Stanton Street Corridor; the Mayor be authorized to assign a letter of support (Exhibit “A”) for the submission of the application; and the City Manager be authorized to take all necessary actions to pursue this grant opportunity.

(Signatures Begin on Following Page)

APPROVED this _____ of _____, 2021

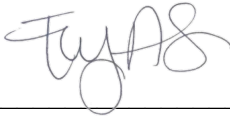
THE CITY OF EL PASO:

Oscar Lesser
Mayor

ATTEST:


Laura D. Prine
City Clerk

APPROVED AS TO FORM:



Evy A. Sotelo
Assistant City Attorney

APPROVED AS TO CONTENT:



Elizabeth K. Triggs, Interim Director
Economic and International Development



EXHIBIT "A"

MAYOR

Oscar Leeser

December 14, 2021

CITY COUNCIL

District 1

Peter Svarzbein

District 2

Alexsandra Anello

District 3

Cassandra Hernandez

District 4

Joe Molinar

District 5

Isabel Salcido

District 6

Claudia L. Rodriguez

District 7

Henry Rivera

District 8

Cissy Lizarraga

Mr. Robert Peche

U.S. Economic Development Administration

1401 Constitution Avenue, NW

Suite 71014

Washington, DC 20230

Dear Mr. Peche:

On behalf of the City of El Paso (the "City"), I am pleased to submit this letter of commitment for our Economic Adjustment Assistance grant application for a feasibility study that will analyze how to modernize the Stanton Street Bridge and Stanton Street Corridor, improving international travel and trade. The City has identified the regional ports of entries as a key economic drivers and recognize their importance to strengthening the region's economic resilience and prosperity.

El Paso is at the heart of commercial trade and meets the needs of the nation through commercial trucking and cross-border travel. Maintaining and expanding trade with Mexico is critical to the United States current and long-term economic prosperity. This grant opportunity will increase efficiency and explore options to expand bridge operations throughout Downtown El Paso.

The City was unique impacted by COVID-19 due to the restrictions the Department of Homeland Security published in March 2020, temporarily limiting the travel of individual from Mexico at land ports along the U.S.-Mexico Border to only "essential travel". Although these restrictions were lifted, thereby allowing vaccinated non-citizens to travel to the U.S. for non-essential reasons, the impact, the economic impacts can be felt throughout the surround area. This feasibility study will develop a plan for the Stanton Street Bridge and Downtown El Paso to recover from COVID-19 and to establish a strategy that is resilient to future economic shocks and stressors.

Working with our community and business partners, the City of El Paso will lead this coalition to address short- and long-term obstacles to port expansion and bridge modernization. The City is dedicated to ensuring the success of this project and has committed \$300,000 from our International Bridges Restricted Fund.





MAYOR

Oscar Leeser

Together with support from the federal government, El Paso can be positioned for economic recovery and continued economic prosperity.

CITY COUNCIL**District 1**

Peter Svarzbein

We urge the EDA to strongly consider our application for a feasibility study that will enhance and modernize the Stanton Street Bridge and support the businesses along the Stanton Street Corridor.

District 2

Alexsandra Annello

Sincerely,

District 3

Cassandra Hernandez

District 4

Joe Molinar

Oscar Leeser

Mayor

City of El Paso

District 5

Isabel Salcido

District 6

Claudia L. Rodriguez

District 7

Henry Rivera

District 8

Cissy Lizarraga

CITY MANAGER

Tommy Gonzalez