

INTRODUCED: September 12, 2022

A RESOLUTION No. 2022-R059

To express the City Council's support for the City's participation in the United States Department of Transportation's Reconnecting Communities Pilot Program to aid the restoration of communities hindered from economic progress by transportation infrastructure for the purpose of funding the City's "Reconnect Jackson Ward project."

Patrons – Mayor Stoney, Vice President Robertson, Mr. Jones, Mr. Addison, Ms. Lambert
and Ms. Jordan

Approved as to form and legality
by the City Attorney

PUBLIC HEARING: SEP 26 2022 AT 6 P.M.

WHEREAS, upon the information and belief of the Council, the City's participation in the United States Department of Transportation's Reconnect Communities Pilot Program would provide funding for the City's "Reconnect Jackson Ward project" to continue planning activities to reconnect the Jackson Ward neighborhoods separated by transportation infrastructure; and

WHEREAS, the Council believes that it is in the best interest of the citizens of the City of Richmond that the Council support the City's participation in the United States Department of Transportation's Reconnect Communities Pilot Program to aid the restoration of communities

AYES: 7 NOES: 0 ABSTAIN:

ADOPTED: SEP 26 2022 REJECTED: STRICKEN:

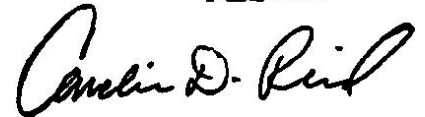
hindered from economic progress by transportation infrastructure for the purpose of funding the City's "Reconnect Jackson Ward project;"

NOW, THEREFORE,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF RICHMOND:

That the Council hereby expresses its support for the City's participation in the United States Department of Transportation's Reconnect Communities Pilot Program to aid the restoration of communities hindered from economic progress by transportation infrastructure for the purpose of funding the City's "Reconnect Jackson Ward project" and, to the extent permitted by law, commits to the 20 percent matching funds if the project is approved for funding.

**A TRUE COPY:
TESTE:**

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Camille D. Rind". The signature is fluid and cursive, written over the printed name.

City Clerk



City of Richmond

900 East Broad Street
2nd Floor of City Hall
Richmond, VA 23219
www.rva.gov

Item Request

File Number:

O & R Request

DATE: 16 August 2021

EDITION: 1

TO: The Honorable Members of City Council

THROUGH: The Honorable Levar M. Stoney, Mayor

THROUGH: J. E. Lincoln Saunders, Chief Administrative Officer

THROUGH: Sharon L. Ebert, Deputy Chief Administrative Officer for Economic Development and Planning

FROM: Kevin J. Vonck, Director, Department of Planning and Development Review

RE: Request to City Council support of a planning grant application for the Reconnect Jackson Ward project.

ORD. OR RES. No. **TBD**

PURPOSE: To express the City Council's support for the City's participation in the United States Department of Transportation's Reconnecting Communities Program (RCP) for a planning grant for the Reconnect Jackson Ward project.

REASON: An approved Council Resolution indicating the Council's request for participation and support of the identified potential project and commitment to provide the 20% matching funds if the federal funding is approved is necessary to participate in the FY22 RCP grant program.

RECOMMENDATION: Department of Planning and Review recommends approval of this resolution.

BACKGROUND: The US Department of Transportation has published a Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) for \$1 billion in grant funding beginning FY22 and ending in FY26 through the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA). IIJA established the new Reconnecting Communities Pilot discretionary grant program. This program dedicates funds to support planning grants and capital construction grants to restore communities that were cut off from economic

progress by transportation infrastructure. Funding can be used to restore connectivity through removal, retrofit, mitigation, or replacement of eligible infrastructure facilities. The City is developing a planning grant application. The maximum planning grant award is \$2 million; however, US DOT anticipates grants may range from \$100,000 to \$2 million. The deadline for this application is October 13, 2022.

Eligible facilities are a road, street, highway, port, airport, bridge, rail line, or other transportation facility that creates a barrier to communities. A barrier to community is characterized by a high volume of traffic, high speeds, grade separations, or a design that creates unsafe conditions or is impossible to cross. A barrier also reduces access to everyday destinations. There is a local cost matching requirement of 20% for planning grants. Matching funds can include non-federal sources of funds from the state, local government, philanthropy, private donations, or in-kind contributions. In-kind contributions can include community members' time, donated materials, or pro bono work by third parties. Eligible planning grant activities include public engagement, visioning, place based strategies, planning studies, conceptual designs, environmental reviews, land use and zoning reform, transit-oriented development planning and housing planning. Removing, retrofitting, or replacing a facility can include, but is not limited to, projects such as creating high quality public transit, capping or lids over roads or major highways, creating pedestrian walkways and overpasses, or linear parks.

All projects will be rated using the merit criteria buckets of 1) Equity, Environmental Justice, Community Engagement, 2) Mobility and Community Connectivity, 3) Community Based Stewardship, Management, and Partnerships, and 4) Equitable Development and Shared Prosperity. Further evaluation will include a technical and financial component. The US DOT Secretary will make the final selections with recommendations from the senior review team.

The Richmond 300 Master Plan sets forth recommendations and policy to guide the future growth of the city. One main recommendation of the plan is to study the feasibility of building a park, road, or another type of connection over I-95 and I-64 to reconnect Jackson Ward with North Jackson Ward. I-95/I-64 meets the US DOT 'eligible transportation facility' criteria as a major highway that is characterized by high speeds, grade separation, and is impossible to cross. The feasibility study has concluded there are several options for capping the highway.

The next step is to apply for a planning grant with the US Department of Transportation to continue planning work to further the reconnection project. The planning tasks may include but are not limited to a traffic analysis and impact study, an environmental review, conceptual design and preliminary engineering, local history and archival research, and community engagement. The planning funding would set the City to apply for capital grants to implement the vision of reconnecting Jackson Ward.

The intent of this resolution is to provide City Council authorization to participate in the 2022 Reconnecting Communities Pilot Program (RCP) grant and to commit 20% matching funds if the federal funding is awarded for the project.

FISCAL IMPACT/COST: No cost for preparing the application. The Virginia Office of Intermodal Planning and Investment has hired a consultant to assist with the grant application. In FY24 through FY25 up to \$400,000 may be need to provide the 20% match, depending on the final award amount from the US DOT..

FISCAL IMPLICATIONS: Not participating in this program eliminates the possibility of receiving up to \$1,600,000 (80%) in federal infrastructure funds for the Reconnect Jackson Ward project.

BUDGET AMENDMENT NECESSARY: Not at this time. It is anticipated that the City will allocate the required 20% matching City funds from DPW funds and/or PDR funds in FY24 thru FY25 when and if the grant is awarded by US DOT.

REVENUE TO CITY: \$1,600,000 if grant application is approved.

DESIRED EFFECTIVE DATE: Upon adoption.

REQUESTED INTRODUCTION DATE: September 12, 2022

CITY COUNCIL PUBLIC HEARING DATE: September 26, 2022

REQUESTED AGENDA: Consent

RECOMMENDED COUNCIL COMMITTEE: Land Use, Housing and Transportation
(September 20, 2022)

CONSIDERATION BY OTHER GOVERNMENT ENTITIES:

AFFECTED AGENCIES: Public works, Law Department, Planning & Development Review, Economic Development, Finance Department, Budget & Strategic Planning

RELATIONSHIP TO EXISTING ORD. OR RES.: ORD. 2020-236 (adoption of Richmond 300)

REQUIRED CHANGES TO WORK PROGRAM(S): None

ATTACHMENTS:

- Draft Ordinance

STAFF: Maritza Mercado Pechin, Deputy Director, Dept. of Planning and Development Review
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