



City of Arts & Innovation

# City Council Memorandum

**TO: HONORABLE MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL      DATE: OCTOBER 3, 2023**

**FROM: PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT      WARDS: ALL**

**SUBJECT: AUTHORIZATION OF TWO GRANT APPLICATIONS TO THE UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION FOR FISCAL YEAR 2023 RECONNECTING COMMUNITIES AND NEIGHBORHOODS GRANT PROGRAM FUNDING OF \$60,000,000 WITH A 20% REQUIRED LOCAL MATCH OF \$15,000,000 FOR A TOTAL FUNDING PACKAGE OF \$75,000,000 TO CONDUCT A COMMUNITY-CENTERED TRANSPORTATION PLANNING STUDY FOR THE PROPOSED SR-91 PEDESTRIAN AND BICYCLE BRIDGE; AND TO RECONSTRUCT THE MISSION BOULEVARD BRIDGE OVER THE SANTA ANA RIVER**

## **ISSUES:**

Authorize the submittal of two grant applications requesting up to \$60,000,000 in funding with a \$15,000,000 local match component (total funding package of \$75,000,000) for a Fiscal Year 2023 Reconnecting Communities and Neighborhoods (RCN) Grant Program offered by the United States Department of Transportation to complete the following work: 1) Conduct a community-centered transportation planning study for the proposed SR-91 pedestrian and bicycle bridge; and 2) Reconstruct the Mission Boulevard Bridge over the Santa Ana River.

The planning study cost is estimated at \$2,000,000 broken down with a grant funded component of \$1,600,000 and \$400,000 in 20% local match. The bridge replacement project is estimated at \$73,000,000 broken down with a total grant funded component of \$58,400,000 and a required 20% local match of approximately \$14,600,000.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS:**

1. That the City Council authorize the submittal of a Fiscal Year 2023 Reconnecting Communities and Neighborhoods (RCN) grant application to the United States Department of Transportation for a total estimated project cost of \$2,000,000 (including approximately \$400,000 in required local match funds), to conduct a community-centered transportation planning study for the proposed SR-91 pedestrian and bicycle bridge;
2. That the City Council authorize the submittal of a Fiscal Year 2023 Reconnecting Communities and Neighborhoods (RCN) grant application to the United States Department of Transportation for a total estimated project cost of \$73,000,000 (including \$14,600,000 in required local match funds), for the Construction Phase of the Mission Boulevard Bridge Reconstruction Project; and

3. Authorize the City Manager, or designee, to sign the grant application and related documents, including making minor and non-substantive changes as necessary.

### **BACKGROUND:**

Section 11101(d)(3) and 11509 of Division A of the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (also referred to as the “Bipartisan Infrastructure Law” or “BIL”) authorized the discretionary Reconnecting Communities and Neighborhoods (RCN) Grant Program with \$3.353 billion dollars for Fiscal Year (FY) 2023. The RCN Program provides funding for three types of grants: Community Planning Grants, Capital Construction Grants, and Regional Partnerships Challenge Grants. For Community Planning Grants, \$185 million dollars are available from the two programs (\$50 million from RCN component and \$135 million dollars from the Neighborhood Access and Equity (NAE) component). The proposed project intends to pursue a community planning grant type from both RCP & NAE programs.

The purpose of the RCN grants is to advance community-centered transportation connection projects, with a priority for projects that benefit disadvantaged communities, that improve access to daily needs such as jobs, education, healthcare, food, nature, and recreation, and foster equitable development and restoration, and to provide technical assistance to further these goals.

The Neighborhood Access and Equity (NAE) Program (a community sub component of RCN Grants) provides technical assistance and grant funding to improve walkability, safety, and affordable transportation access through context-sensitive strategies for improving community connectivity; mitigating or remediating negative impacts on the human or natural environment; and assisting economically disadvantaged or underserved communities with planning and capacity building activities.

USDOT encourages the submittal of grant applications that meet the statutory requirements for both programs to maximize their potential for receiving Federal support.

The Federal share of these grants may not exceed 80% of total eligible activity costs. Recipients are required to contribute a local matching share of no less than 20% of eligible activity costs. Unless otherwise authorized by statute, all matching funds must be from non-Federal sources. The NAE grant program has no local match for community planning type grants.

The FY 2023 grant applications are due on September 28, 2023 by 11:59 PM (Eastern Time).

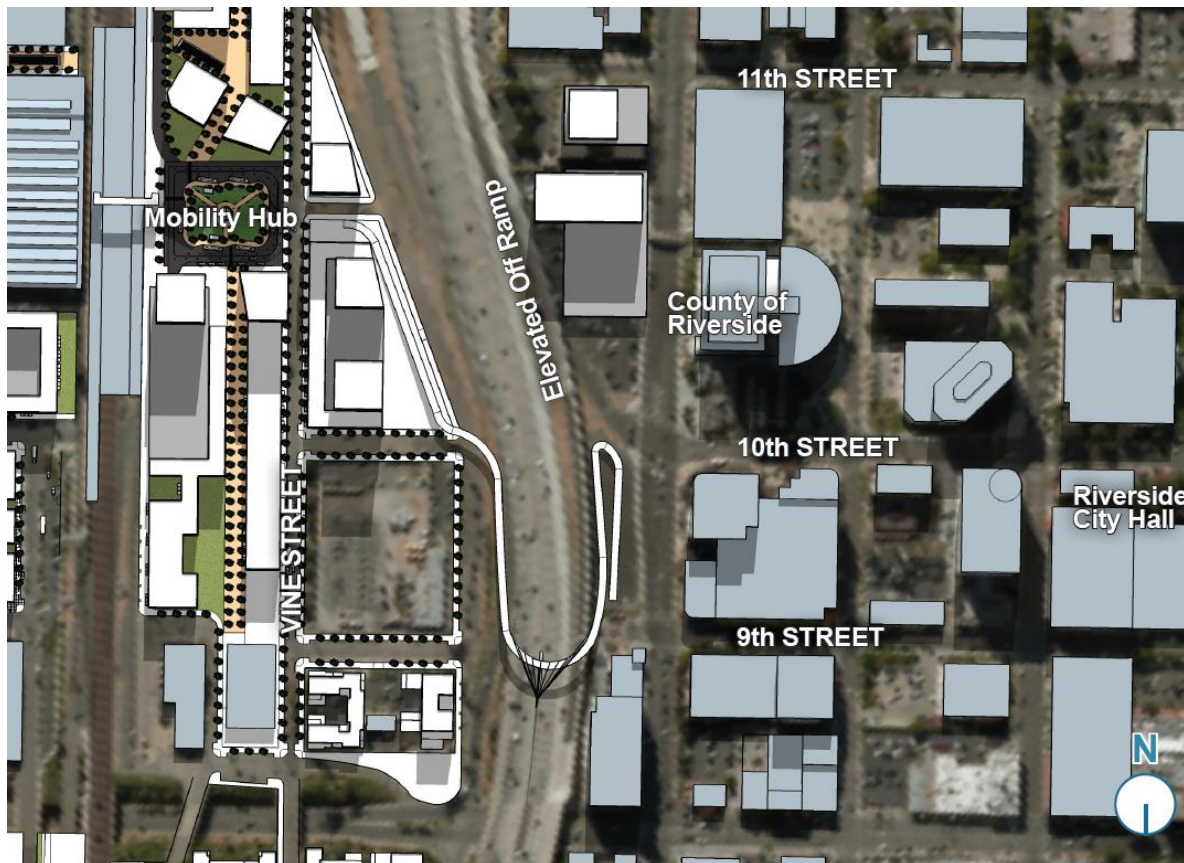
### **DISCUSSION:**

The Public Works Department is requesting authorization from the City Council to submit two grant applications requesting a total of up to \$60 million in USDOT FY 2023 RCN grant funding for the following projects.

#### **SR-91 Pedestrian and Bicycle Bridge Project:**

The first grant application is to conduct a community-centered transportation planning study for the proposed SR-91 pedestrian and bicycle bridge. This project is included in the Marketplace District Vision Plan which was prepared using funding from the Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG).

The project is anticipated to provide a feasibility study to evaluate a minimum of three (3) options for the pedestrian and bicycle bridge structure above the 91-Freeway connecting Downtown Riverside to the Marketplace District. The project aims to advance community-centered transportation connection concerns, promote active transportation, reduce vehicle usage, increase connectivity, and improve the quality of life in the community. The total project cost is up to \$2 million (\$1.6 million in grant funds and \$400,000 in local match funds). Attachment 1 illustrates the proposed SR-91 Pedestrian and Bicycle Bridge Project.



Source: Marketplace District Vision Plan. Proposed SR-91 Pedestrian and Bicycle Bridge.

The recommended feasibility study is identified in the Marketplace District Vision Plan. The proposed community-centered transportation planning study is consistent with the program initiatives of both the Reconnecting Communities Pilot (RCP) Program and the Neighborhood Access and Equity (NAE) Program.

If the project is awarded, the proposed project improvements are expected to improve connectivity between Downtown Riverside and the Eastside Community, enhance pedestrian and bicycle safety and mobility for residents, and improve public health by encouraging increased walking and biking as a more active lifestyle. The project would provide a direct link for residents using the new Vine Street Mobility Hub and Downtown Metrolink Station. The combined effects would also reduce greenhouse gas emissions as residents would be encouraged to walk for shorter trips.

Mission Boulevard Bridge Reconstruction Project:

The second grant application is for replacing the existing Mission Boulevard Bridge spanning over the Santa Ana River which is functionally obsolete. The new bridge will be wider to accommodate

standard vehicle lanes, 8-foot shoulders/bike lanes, and a 12-foot barrier separated multi-use path. The Project is designed to meet current geometric, bridge, and seismic design criteria and to mitigate soil liquefaction. This project will provide a resilient bridge that maintains a state of good repair and supports regional mobility and economic competitiveness.

This project is a critical connection between the City of Riverside and City of Jurupa Valley and a major part of the regional transportation network and improves the quality of life for residents in the two Cities, including those in underserved communities. The Project provides multimodal facilities for walking and biking and maintaining access to the Santa Ana River Trail, providing equitable access to transportation, housing, and recreation. The Project has also been developed with input from the community to verify the improvements meet the public's needs, which includes input on bridge architecture.

This project was originally federally funded under the Highway Bridge Program (HBP). However, HBP funding was over-expended and recipient Cities were notified the funding may not be available at the time of construction. The Public Works Department is pursuing other funding options as potential alternatives to the HBP. If the City is successful in obtaining RCN funds, the City will seek an agreement with the City of Jurupa Valley for a 50% participating contribution towards the 20% local match requirement.

### **STRATEGIC PLAN ALIGNMENT:**

This item supports **Strategic Priority 6 – Infrastructure, Mobility, and Connectivity** and aims to ensure safe, reliable infrastructure that benefits the community and facilitates connection between people, places, and information. The proposed USDOT FY 2023 RCP funded projects align with the goals below:

**Goal 6.1** – Provide, expand and ensure equitable access to sustainable modes of transportation that connect people to opportunities such as employment, education, healthcare, and community amenities.

**Goal 6.3** – Identify and pursue new and unique funding opportunities to develop, operate, maintain, and renew infrastructure and programs that meet the community's needs.

Furthermore, this project aligns with each of the five Cross-Cutting Threads as follows:

1. **Community Trust** – The proposed improvements are part of a more significant endeavor to improve the City's active transportation network and increase the traffic safety of residents and visitors along city streets.
2. **Equity** – Public Works strives to improve the City's transportation network to provide safe and reliable multi-modal transportation options. All local businesses and resident communities will benefit from the synergy of the proposed pedestrian and bridge connection.
3. **Fiscal Responsibility** – The proposed community-centered transportation project will leverage various city funds to garner grant funding of an 80%-20% split (80% grant funds, 20% local match).
4. **Innovation** – The proposed planning project builds off the Vision Plan for each High Quality Transit Area (HQTA) Analysis Program to help implement the transportation connectivity

goals and objectives of the Regional Transportation Plan / Sustainable Communities Strategy (RTP/SCS). The proposed project will evaluate multiple potential locations for an iconic bicycle/pedestrian bridge connecting Downtown Riverside to areas east of the SR-91 Freeway. The proposed bridge reconstruction will include enhanced infrastructure for active transportation on the bridge deck.

- 5. Sustainability & Resiliency** – Both projects will facilitate active transportation and support the reduction of vehicle miles traveled.

**FISCAL IMPACT:**

If the grant for the SR-91 Pedestrian and Bicycle Bridge feasibility study is awarded, the fiscal impact will be \$1.6 million in grant funds and \$400,000 in required local match funds.

If the grant for the Mission Boulevard Bridge Reconstruction Project is awarded, the fiscal impact will be \$58.4 million in grant funds and \$14.6 million in required local match funds. The City would seek a 50/50 split of the required match with the City of Jurupa Valley, with each City contributing \$7.3 million of the required local match.

Table 1 – Project Costs:

<b>Project Name</b>	<b>Reconnecting Communities Pilot (RCP) (FY 2023) Grant Program Funds Requested (maximum)</b>	<b>Local Match Funds (20%)</b>	<b>Total Project Cost</b>
<u>Transportation Planning Grant:</u> SR-91 Pedestrian and Bicycle Bridge Project Study Analysis	\$1,600,000	\$400,000	\$2,000,000
<u>Implementation Grant:</u> Mission Blvd Bridge Reconstruction Project	\$58,400,000	\$14,600,000	\$73,000,000
<b>Estimated RCP Grant Program (FY 2023) Total:</b>	<b>\$60,000,000</b>	<b>\$15,000,000</b>	<b>\$75,000,000</b>

Upon grant funding being awarded, staff will return to City Council for acceptance of funds, appropriation of the award, and to make a recommendation for allocating the required 20% local match in an amount up to \$15,000,000 from potential non-federal funding sources that may include Special Gas Tax, Measure A, City funds, or other sources as available. Additionally, the City of Riverside would seek an agreement with the City of Jurupa Valley for their fair share (\$7.3 million) local match responsibility for the Mission Blvd Bridge Reconstruction Project.

Prepared by: Gilbert Hernandez, Public Works Director  
 Certified as to availability of funds: Kristie Thomas, Finance Director/Assistant Chief Financial Officer

Approved by: Kris Martinez, Assistant City Manager  
Approved as to form: Phaedra A. Norton, City Attorney

Attachment: Marketplace District Vision Plan