



MEMORANDUM

Date: May 18, 2021
From: Gwyneth Teves, Community Development Director
To: Honorable Mayor and City Councilmembers
City Attorney Paul Webb
Subject: Status of City of Wharton Grant Projects Report No. 2021-04

Below, I have outlined a report on the status of the City of Wharton Grant Projects:

I. GRANT PROJECTS

Infrastructure/Construction :

1. 2021 TxCDBG DRP/MS – Downtown Sidewalk Improvements

City staff is currently working with GrantWorks, Inc. and KSA Engineering on the development of an application of up to \$350,000 for downtown sidewalk renovations/additions. Application was submitted May 1, 2021.

2. 2020 CDBG-MIT – City of Wharton Harvey Mitigation Project

Application for assessment and rehabilitation and mitigation of the city's 67 miles of wastewater collection lines and 500 manholes to identify the necessary mitigation actions and options for system rehabilitation. 10 lift stations will be mitigated by elevating the foundations/pads, wet wells, and electronic components above the BFE, including any appurtenances that are affected by flood waters. Application under review and award announcement is unknown at this time.

3. Santa Fe Channel Outfall Improvements

City staff has been working with USACE for emergency repairs and funding to make repairs to the outfall channel. City staff is currently working with property owners on adjoining sides for easements/acquisitions.

4. CDBG-DR – Infrastructure

Method of Distribution approved by GLO and HUD. City has received an award of \$1,650,172.00 for infrastructure projects related to Hurricane Harvey. Jones & Carter has completed surveys and staff is currently working on easement acquisition and project budget. Acquisition is currently ongoing. Anticipate construction to begin spring/summer 2021.

5. HMGP – FEMA Shelter/Dome

The City received notification of Award on January 21, 2020. The City Council accepted the award of the funding for Phase I on 02/10/2020. WISD is responsible for all grant activities with the City Staff providing cursory review. WISD has selected

Huckabee for architectural services and LTY Engineers & Kimley Horne for engineering on this project. WISD has received an extension on the deadline of Phase I to August 1, 2021. WISD is working with FEMA and TDEM on several RFI's.

6. 2019-2020 CDBG – South East Ave. Sanitary Sewer Repairs

City has received funding and has finalized agreement and completed kick-off meeting with Tx Dept. of Agriculture. Design in progress and construction to begin summer/fall 2021.

7. City of Wharton Flood Reduction Project – The Lower Colorado River Basin Phase I, Texas WHARTON FLOOD RISK MANAGEMENT PROJECT

The City of Wharton was notified that the Flood Reduction Project was funded in the early part of 2018. HDR was selected by the City Council on 06/14/19 for acquisition services.

Phase 2 currently under design.

85 parcels are currently designated for Phase I. 41 properties have been fully acquired, 13 are City Owned, no closings pending at this time. Negotiations ongoing with 31 properties.

8. TxDOT – Safe Routes to School

The City submitted the Preliminary Application in April 2019. The City was not selected during the 2019-2020 funding. The City was notified that the project will be recommended for the 2020-2021 funding cycle under the Transportation Alternatives Program and has completed RFI and resubmitted the updated application. The City staff was notified of award for this project April 30, 2021. City staff is currently procuring the administration and engineering services.

Housing:

9. CDBG-DR – Buyouts/Acquisitions

Method of Distribution approved by GLO and HUD. City has received an award of \$1,693,784.00 for buyout/acquisition projects related to Hurricane Harvey. The guidelines have been approved by the GLO and no public comment was received during the required posting period. Intake meetings continue with property owners and GrantWorks. RFQ was posted for the Acquisition Services and only one proposal was received. City staff will be rejecting the proposal and going back out for procurement due to GLO requirements.

10. 2016 CDBG-DR – Housing Elevation/Reconstruction

Notification of \$2,000,000 funding was received February 4, 2019. 3 applications have been approved and are in home build selection phase. City issued notice of grant in utility billing, resulting in 12 new inquiries and a new total of 5 applicants, with 1 overall program applicant withdrawal. Construction to be complete on 2 homes May 2021. 3 applicants are pending groundwork (environmental and home inspection) for approval from GLO. Procurement for construction on the third approved home will take place May 2021.

Disaster Recovery (non-infrastructure or housing):

11. TDEM - Coronavirus Relief Funds

Funds made available for reimbursement of medical expenses, public health expenses, payroll expenses for public safety, public health, health care, human services, and similar employees whose services are substantially dedicated to mitigating or responding to the COVID-19 public health emergency. All funds were expended and request for reimbursement has been submitted to TDEM.

12. HMGP – Critical Facility Generators

The City received notification of award by TDEM 02/18/2020. Kick-off meeting conducted with TEDM on August 6th, 2020. Engineering and design are currently underway. Installation anticipated to begin fall 2021.

13. 2021 American Rescue Plan - Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds

Local governments will receive funds in two tranches, with 50% provided beginning in May 2021 and the balance delivered approximately 12 months later. States that have experienced a net increase in the unemployment rate of more than 2 percentage points from February 2020 to the latest available data as of the date of certification will receive their full allocation of funds in a single payment; other states will receive funds in two equal tranches. Governments of U.S. territories will receive a single payment. Tribal governments will receive two payments, with the first payment available in May and the second payment, based on employment data, to be delivered in June 2021.

The Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds provide eligible state, local, territorial, and Tribal governments with a substantial infusion of resources to meet pandemic response needs and rebuild a stronger, and more equitable economy as the country recovers. Recipients may use these funds to:

- Support public health expenditures, by, for example, funding COVID-19 mitigation efforts, medical expenses, behavioral healthcare, and certain public health and safety staff.
- Address negative economic impacts caused by the public health emergency, including economic harms to workers, households, small businesses, impacted industries, and the public sector.
- Replace lost public sector revenue, using this funding to provide government services to the extent of the reduction in revenue experienced due to the pandemic.
- Provide premium pay for essential workers, offering additional support to those who have and will bear the greatest health risks because of their service in critical infrastructure sectors.
- Invest in water, sewer, and broadband infrastructure, making necessary investments to improve access to clean drinking water, support vital wastewater and stormwater infrastructure, and to expand access to broadband internet.

Within these overall categories, recipients have broad flexibility to decide how best to use this funding to meet the needs of their communities.

Funding from the Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds is subject to the requirements specified in the Interim Final Rule adopted by Treasury on May 10,

2021.

This document has been submitted to the Office of the Federal Register (OFR) for publication and is currently pending placement on public display at the OFR and publication in the Federal Register. The document may vary slightly from the published document if minor editorial changes have been made during the OFR review process. Upon publication in the Federal Register, the regulation can be found at www.federalregister.gov, www.regulations.gov, and at www.treasury.gov. The document published in the Federal Register is the official document.

II. STUDIES:

14. Texas A & M – Texas Target Communities Greenspace and Connectivity Study

The City of Wharton has partnered with Texas Target Communities at Texas A&M University to develop a Master Plan and Landscape Improvement Design for the Levee Green Space and the Downtown Business District. The project will explore downtown enhancement strategies and ideas to build the levee green space and trail system to meet the residents' recreational needs and improve connectivity.

Community engagement occurred February 26, 2021. A mid-review occurred on March 18th, 2021 and the final presentation and review occurred on April 23, 2021 with City of Wharton Council, Staff and Stakeholders.

The final document will be delivered in fall of 2021 for City Council review and adoption.

15. Texas A & M AgriLife Extension Service – Texas Community Watershed Partners

The City of Wharton and Texas Community Watershed Partners (TCWP) have partnered for TCWP to provide technical assistance services to the City to help prepare revisions to its subdivision ordinance.

This Project Scope of Work identifies three major tasks to support the City's efforts to update its subdivision regulations. Task 1 includes background research and a code review to improve the Project Team's collective understanding of the relevant topics and establish the need for future tasks. Task 2 aims to further refine and ultimately establish City staff's recommended policy approaches for the identified issues. This will provide the necessary vision against which an updated subdivision ordinance can be drafted and components identified. Task 3 will translate these policy recommendations into subdivision regulations for future adoption by the Wharton City Council. This process will require coordination with City stakeholders to ensure that regulations are legally enforceable, clearly crafted, and easily understood.

City staff meets bi-monthly with TCWP to coordinate the scope and will be presenting Council with recommendations throughout the process as well as new ordinances at the end of the project near the end of 2021.

16. 2021 Hazard Mitigation Plan

The City of Wharton entered into an MOU with Wharton County, City of El Campo and City of East Bernard to complete a Multi-Jurisdictional update to the current Hazard mitigation Plan that is required to be updated every 5 years as a FEMA requirement. The last plan was adopted in November 2016 and the plan must be

updated and maintained to remain in good standing for many grant programs. The city staff as well as staff from each jurisdiction are coordinating through a steering committee to complete the update for submission to FEMA for approval. In the next month the planning process will release a survey for the public to complete as well as hold several public meetings. Once approved by FEMA the plan will be presented to each jurisdiction for adoption.

17. TWDB – Internal Drainage Study and Drainage Improvements

Application submitted under the TWDB Flood Infrastructure Fund to study flood risks inside the City Limits and ETJ and move forward with the most critical projects in Phase 1. The application is being reviewed by TWDB and one RFI has been completed. Recommendation will be presented to the TWDB meeting on July 7th, 2021 for funding.

18. City of Wharton, Texas Community Wayfinding Program

City of Wharton working in partnership with the Wharton Downtown Business Association (WDBA), Wharton Economic Development Corporation (WEDC), and the Wharton Chamber of Commerce to complete a wayfinding study. Logo design has been finalized and adopted by the City Council and city staff has begun logo rollout and implementation and proposed wayfinding signage designs are currently in final stages of review with proposed implementation plan. Plan and implementation recommendation provided to the City Council in April 2021 and no action was taken.

III. OTHER PROJECTS & EVENTS:

19. AARP Grant Applications 2021

City Staff has submitted grant applications to the 2021 AARP funding round for fitness stations at Santa Fe Trail, new/improved and art-walk crossings along the Santa Fe Trail, and for a mini-park with murals adjacent to City Hall. Grant application responses are expected in June of 2021.

20. City of Wharton “Discover Wharton” Community Marketing Campaign

City has developed “Discover Wharton” community marketing campaign in response to “Tourism Assessment” completed in Spring of 2020 by Wharton Downtown Business Association (WDBA) and approved for incorporation into Comprehensive Plan by City Council at Council meeting on May 11th, 2020. The marketing campaign went live in January of 2021 with the release of monthly digital billboard designs and in use for community events.

21. Guffey Park Improvements

City Council approved Community Development Dept. to retain David Bucek as architect to design proposed improvements to Guffey Park in Council Meeting held on August 10th, 2020. Preliminary design and budget being finalized, and construction planned for the 2021-2022 fiscal year.