



MEMORANDUM

Date: March 16th, 2020
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. 2020-03

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

I. GRANT PROJECTS

Infrastructure/Construction:

1. HMGP – Warning System Mitigation (Siren Warning System)

Application submitted 10/13/16 under the DR-4269. This project was awarded 02/26/2018 and was accepted by the City Council on 03/26/18. Scope change approval was received 02/01/2019. Befco Engineering was awarded the engineering contract on 05/13/19. The project was awarded for construction bid at the Council Meeting 02/10/2020. Sirens are on order and are anticipated to be in for installation by May 1st.

2. 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. The City Staff met with the GLO for a kickoff meeting 02/17/2020 to review contracts and projects.

3. HMGP – FEMA Shelter/Dome

HMGP Application submitted by WISD for 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 and the staff attended a kickoff meeting at the WISD Administration Building on 2/18/2020. Agreement with WISD has been reviewed and approved by the School Board. Signed agreement was submitted to the City and is filed with the project. WISD is responsible for all grant activities with the City Staff providing cursory review.

4. 2019-2020 CDBG – South East Ave. Sanitary Sewer Repairs

Application has been submitted and we are awaiting a response.

5. 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. City staff has been meeting with USACE staff monthly on items to be addressed. HDR was selected by the City Council on 06/14/19. The acquisition progress has started and HDR is working with the surveyors and appraisers. Impacted property owners can expect to start receiving appraisals in the next couple of months. USACE staff has indicated they will be ready for as early as Fall 2020. USACE is still in the process of contracting design firms for the remaining portions of the Flood Reduction Project and will be working concurrently on this while phase 1 is in progress.

Phase 2 Design Charette held virtually w/ USACE, Kenall, Inc., Freese & Nichols and City of Wharton staff Tuesday, April 21, 2020.

Housing:

6. TDHCA – HOME Reservation Participation

There were 73 applicants from throughout the city that submitted applications to participate in the program. There are currently 43 still working on applications. There are 7 applicants in title phase and 5 have been fully approved through TDHCA. 5 applicants have been awarded funding as of 7/17/19. 1 subject has declined the contract. Construction on the first home is complete and signed over and the 2nd homeowner signed closing documents 01/2020 and construction is anticipated to start this quarter.

7. GLO Community Development and Revitalization Program

The City Council procured GrantWorks, Inc. for administration and Jones & Carter for engineering. Notice of Funding Opportunities have not yet been published or advertised.

8. 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 City Staff met with the GLO for a kickoff meeting 02/17/2020 to review contracts and projects. No changes

9. 2016 CDBG-DR – Housing Elevation/Reconstruction

Notification of \$2,000,000 funding was received by city staff on February 4, 2019. This funding will assist homeowners with elevation, rehabilitation, and reconstruction of homes to address existing damage and mitigate future damage. 5 applicants have submitted applications and 3 are in the state processing. 2 are still pending additional paperwork.

10. TxDOT – Safe Routes to School

The City submitted the Preliminary Application in April 2019. City staff was notified that the preliminary application had been selected for review and City staff met with TxDOT Representative on May 10, 2019. City Staff submitted the detailed application August 15th, 2019. The City was not selected in the initial round of funding issued in 01/2020. There will be a second round of funding awards announced in 04/2020. We are currently awaiting the 2nd round award announcements to see if our initial application will be approved.

Disaster Recovery (non-infrastructure or housing):

11. HMGP – Critical Facility Generators

HMGP Application was submitted on 9/11/18 and we received notification of award by TDEM 02/18/2020. 1 RFI has been requested and responded to.

12. FEMA – Temporary Housing Units

City staff is currently aware of 1 THU still in the City.

II. STUDIES:

13. Community Tourism Assessment

City Staff supported the Wharton Downtown Business Association (WDBA) in a site visit with the Office of the Governor Economic Development and Tourism staff. The WDBA, with the help of the Wharton Economic Development Corporation (WEDC) hosted the group, taking them on an extensive tour of Wharton's highlights to better identify ways to increase and promote tourism. A final tourism report will be published and provided to the WDBA and then presented for City Council to review for inclusion in the Comprehensive Plan.

14. City of Wharton, Texas Community Wayfinding Program

Wharton Downtown Business Association (WDBA), and Wharton Economic Development Corporation (WEDC) are working in partnership with the Wharton Chamber of Commerce and the City of Wharton complete a wayfinding study. The wayfinding study is anticipated to take place in May following the release of the Tourism Report. Study is anticipated to identify a phased-implementation plan outlining with which types of signs should go where around the City, and at what point in time.

III. OTHER PROJECTS & EVENTS:

15. LCRA – Steps Forward

Due to the COVID 19 Pandemic, the LCRA Steps Forward day was cancelled. LCRA, however still provided the \$1000 funding to the City. Staff purchased 2 hanging plants for each home that would have been a recipient of the program and is working to implement the Train Depot Sign renovations.

16. Mini Mural Art Park – Cultural Arts

Community Development department has submitted an application to AARP for funding to establish a mini mural art park in the space adjacent to City Hall. Application is pending response, with an update expected by end of May 2020.

17. Food Truck Mondays – Community Development

Community Development department has launched a Food Truck Lunch Series starting March 16th at Guffey Park from 11a-2p on every 1st and 3rd Mondays. So far, we have had 3 events. Each event has hosted over 175 customers even during the current pandemic and social distancing requirements.

18. City Department Facebook Page – Community Development

Community Development department has established a new Facebook page (www.facebook.com/WhartonCD) has a new outlet to announce events designed to improve quality of life, bring the community together, and encourage economic development.

19. City of Wharton “Back in Business” Campaign

Over 400 letters went out to local businesses the first 2 weeks of April giving businesses COVID 19 funding and recovery resources. Community Development has been collaborating with the WEDC, Chamber and WDBA on a weekly basis to assist in coordinating a recovery effort for local businesses. We have reached out to BCL to collaborate with them on funding for small businesses and are working with them on plans to begin implementation.