



MEMORANDUM

Date: September 22, 2021
From: Gwyneth Teves, Community Development Director
To: Honorable Mayor and City Councilmembers
Paul Webb, City Attorney
Subject: Status of City of Wharton Grant Projects Report No. 2021-08

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 in conjunction with GrantWorks, Inc. and KSA Engineering submitted an application of up to \$350,000 for downtown sidewalk renovations/additions. Preliminary scoring is out on the applications. We scored 11th out of 33 applicants for the Downtown Revitalization Program. We are still waiting to hear who of those applicants will be funded.

2. 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 acquiring needed property and USACE will be submitting for Construction Bid as soon as acquisition has begun finalization.

3. 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 **fall/winter** 2021.

4. HMGP – FEMA Shelter/Dome

WISD Minutes from August 10th, 2021, show that the board approved cancellation of the Wharton ISD Community Safe Room Project (HMGP 4332-057) and authorized the Superintendent to take all actions and terminate all agreements as necessary to effectuate cancellation. City staff has not received any communications from WISD at this time on this action.

5. 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 fall/winter 2021.

6. 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.

Acquisitions are still proceeding. All current ED has been completed with DTRG. 1 ED is pending with Winstead. 2 properties are still under negotiation discussions and 3 to close in next 4 weeks.

7. TxDOT – Safe Routes to School

The City staff was notified of award for this project April 30, 2021. City staff is currently procuring the administration and engineering services. Kickoff meeting with TxDOT occurred June 29th. City staff is in consultation with TxDOT on engineering procurement and anticipate the project to let for construction September 2022. City staff and TxDOT executing Advanced Funding Agreement for the project.

Housing:

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 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. Acquisition is under process with HDR, who was selected by City Council.

9. 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 2 overall program applicant withdrawals. Construction completed on 2 homes May 2021 with 1 remaining applicant in the process. City staff received a 1-year extension on the grant funding in order to complete construction and allow any additional possible applicants to expend the funds. One home will have to be rebid for construction and application process is reopened and posted on utility bills from September 22 – October 15, 2021. Notification will also be posted at City Hall, in the Wharton Journal Spectator and shared on social media.

Disaster Recovery (non-infrastructure or housing):

10. 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 winter 2021.

11. 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:

12. 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.

13. 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.

14. 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. **Draft plan to be submitted to TDEM & FEMA for final review September 24th, 2021.** Once approved by FEMA the plan will be presented to each jurisdiction for adoption.

15. 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. The project was approved by TWDB on July 7th, 2021, for funding. City staff is working with TWDB on the contract and beginning implementation.

III. OTHER PROJECTS & EVENTS: