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**County of El Paso
Agenda Item Details**

Item Title: I-10 Deck Funding and Project Sponsor Consideration

Submitted By: Ricardo A. Samaniego, County Judge

Department: County Judge's Office

Department Phone Number: 915-546-2098

Subject: Discuss and take appropriate action to adopt a resolution regarding the County's potential role to sponsor the Downtown Deck Plaza Project dependent upon favorable terms and take any other appropriate action to support the El Paso MPO's grant application. (#5600-OP)

Background: The El Paso Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) plans to apply for the FY2024 Federal Reconnecting Communities Pilot (RCP) Discretionary Grant Program for the I-10 Downtown Deck Design and Planning with support from various community partners. The County approved providing a match of up to \$1,000,000 for this grant application on August 26, 2024. This resolution outlines the intended roles of community partners and, if approved, states that the County is willing to negotiate in good faith with relevant partners regarding its potential sponsorship and management of the Downtown Deck Plaza and sponsorship responsibilities should acceptable terms be reached during such negotiations.

New
Match Required: Yes
Personnel: No

New
Match Required: Yes
Personnel: No

Fiscal Impact: Fiscal Impact Historical

Fiscal Impact Projected
Match will be needed for FY26.

Long Account Number: Amount:

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Budget or Unbudgeted Match: Unbudgeted.

Recommendation: Approve and adopt a resolution regarding the County's potential role to sponsor the Downtown Deck Plaza Project upon the finalization of favorable terms and take any other appropriate action to support the El Paso MPO's grant application.

Prior Action: The Court approved providing a match of \$1,000,000 to the RCP Grant application on August 26, 2024.

Strategic Plan: Goal:

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Objective:

Strategic Plan Information:

**Estimated Time Needed
For This Item:**



125 E 11th St | Austin, Texas 78701
512.463.8588
txdot.gov

September 11, 2024

The Honorable Pete Buttigieg
Secretary
U.S. Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Ave, SE
Washington, DC 20590

Dear Secretary Buttigieg:

On behalf of the Texas Department of Transportation, I am pleased to support the on-going efforts of the El Paso Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) related to the "Reconnecting Downtown El Paso via the I-10 Deck Plaza Design Project." The Project will enhance pedestrian safety, expand multimodal connectivity, and address economic development challenges. The application is being submitted in partnership with the City of El Paso, El Paso County, and Deck Plaza Foundation.

This letter is intended to serve as our commitment to work with the MPO to administer the grant funds for the development and construction of the project. If funds are awarded for this project, TxDOT would have the opportunity to incorporate the construction of the deck plaza in the broader Downtown 10 project. Amenities will be constructed by the MPO through local funds within the scope of the project. These amenities will create public spaces ready to be occupied and activated and will be governed through a multiple-use agreement with TxDOT.

Thank you for considering this application. If you have any questions, please call me at (512) 305-9515 or you or your staff may contact Melanie Alvord, Director, Federal Affairs at Melanie.Alvord@txdot.gov or (512) 944-5135.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "M. Williams", written in a cursive style.

Marc D. Williams, P.E.
Executive Director

cc: Tomas Trevino, P.E., District Engineer, El Paso District
Melanie Alvord, Director, Federal Affairs Section



EL PASO COUNTY
STATE OF TEXAS

RESOLUTION



WHEREAS, in 1969 I-10 was extended through El Paso, disrupting the heart of Downtown El Paso. The Texas Department of Transportation has prioritized and funded the reconstruction of I-10, including the Downtown segment, offering a once-in-a-generation opportunity to create a new, community space reconnecting this portion of our community.

WHEREAS, after several community meetings across El Paso, the El Paso Metropolitan Planning Organization, the Downtown Deck Plaza Foundation, the City of El Paso, have partnered to apply for the U.S. Department of Transportation Reconnecting Communities Pilot (RCP) Grant Program for planning and design of Phase 1 of the Downtown Deck Plaza Project.

WHEREAS, on August 26, 2024, the County Commissioners Court voted to provide a \$1,000,000 match for the Downtown Deck Plaza Project and considered the potential opportunities and responsibilities of owning the Downtown Deck Plaza.

WHEREAS, the current owner of the eligible facility is the Texas Department of Transportation, who is offering their support for this project through a letter of support. After the design is finalized, the Texas Department of Transportation would enter into agreements with the project sponsor regarding air rights and maintenance of deck. The County is willing to negotiate in good faith with relevant partners regarding its potential sponsorship and management of the Downtown Deck Plaza and sponsorship responsibilities should acceptable terms be reached during such negotiations.

WHEREAS, the Downtown Deck Plaza Foundation is a nonprofit supporting organization to the Paso del Norte Community Foundation established to support the design, development, fundraising, operations, maintenance and programming for the Downtown Deck Plaza through an agreement with the project sponsor. The Downtown Deck Plaza has committed \$250,000 in matching funds for the Fiscal Year (FY) 2024 Reconnecting Communities grant application.

WHEREAS, the City of El Paso was an initial planning partner for the Fiscal Year 2021 RAISE Grant for the Phase I Feasibility Study and is set to consider contributing up to \$750,000 in matching funds for the FY2024 Reconnecting Communities grant application.

WHEREAS, the El Paso Metropolitan Planning Organization will serve as the lead applicant for the FY2024 Reconnecting Communities Grant and financial contributor to the project through transportation funds available for the project.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the El Paso County Judge and Commissioners Court do hereby commit to working in good faith to reach an agreement to serve as the project sponsor of the Downtown Deck Plaza.

SIGNED, this 23rd day of September 2024

Commissioner Carlos Leon, Pct. 1

Commissioner David C. Stout, Pct. 2

Commissioner Iliana Holguin, Pct. 3

Commissioner Sergio Coronado, Pct. 4

County Judge Ricardo A. Samaniego



RICARDO SAMANIEGO
El Paso County Judge

August XX, 2024

The Honorable Pete Buttigieg
Secretary
U.S. Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE 9th Floor
Washington, DC 20590

Subject: Letter of Commitment for \$1,000,000 Match for Reconnecting Communities Pilot (RCP)
Discretionary Grant Program Application

Dear Secretary Buttigieg,

El Paso County commits to providing up to \$1,000,000 in local match funding for the Reconnecting Communities Pilot (RCP) Discretionary Grant Program should the I-10 Downtown Deck Project be accepted and funded through the U.S. Department of Transportation.

The I-10 Downtown Deck Project is a once in a generation opportunity to make significant investments in the downtown of El Paso. This project would reconnect neighborhoods historically separated by I-10, provide recreational space in the heart of downtown, and provide enhanced economic opportunities for our region.

It is for these reasons that we commit to this local match for the I-10 Downtown Deck Project. I respectfully urge your thorough and fair consideration of the I-10 Deck application in accordance with all applicable rules and regulations. Should you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact me at (915) 546-2098.

Sincerely,