



MEMORANDUM

Date: October 21st, 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. 2020-09

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

I. GRANT PROJECTS

Infrastructure/Construction:

1. 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.

2. 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. WISD has selected Huckabee for architectural services and LTY Engineers & Kimley Horne for engineering on this project.

3. 2019-2020 CDBG – South East Ave. Sanitary Sewer Repairs

Application has been submitted and we are awaiting a response. City was notified of funding and is pending agreement and kick-off meeting with Tx Dept. of Agriculture.

4. 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 State Side to provide relocation assistance. Impacted property owners started receiving offers and relocation support starting August 2020. USACE staff has indicated they will be ready to begin work in Early 2021, dependent on the completion time for the relocation process.

Phase 2 Design Charette held virtually w/ USACE, Kenall, Inc., Freese & Nichols and City of Wharton staff Tuesday, April 21, 2020. Staff continues monthly coordination meetings and has begun receiving Phase 2 ROE's.

Housing:

5. TDHCA – HOME Reservation Participation

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 and 3rd homeowner signed closing documents and construction began August of 2020 to be completed in October 2020.

6. 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.

7. 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. 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. GrantWorks will be going out to bid for construction contractor within the next 60 days. GrantWorks will also be making additional efforts to reach potential applicants through end of November.

8. 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 during the 2019-2020 funding. The City was notified that the project will be recommended for the 2020-2021 funding cycle under the SRTS program. Status is still pending, response not expected until Spring of 2021.

Disaster Recovery (non-infrastructure or housing):

9. 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. Expenses of actions to facilitate compliance with COVID-19 related public health measures. Expenses associated with the provision of economic support in connection with the COVID-19 public health emergency, and any other COVID-19 – related expenses reasonably necessary to the function of government that satisfy the fund's eligibility criteria

including possible economic assistance funding.

City Council approved expenditure requests by each City Department Head at the Council Meeting held on August 10th, 2020. Departments have begun submitting approved purchase orders.

10. 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. Award has been made to City and kick-off meeting conducted with TEDM on August 6th, 2020. Engineering and design are currently underway.

II. STUDIES:

11. 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. The wayfinding study started in June with community input meetings to develop preliminary ideas. Proposed logo options are currently being finalized and wayfinding signage variations are being drafted.

III. OTHER PROJECTS & EVENTS:

12. Mini Mural Art Park – Cultural Arts

Community Development department was not selected for an application to AARP for funding to establish a mini mural art park in the space adjacent to City Hall. City Staff is currently exploring alternative grant opportunities and partnerships to complete this project.

13. City of Wharton “Discover Wharton” Tourism Campaign

City has developed “Discover Wharton” tourism 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. Community Development Dept. is currently working with contributing partners in updating the City website to incorporate tourism campaign. City staff anticipates public marketing campaign for tourism upon adoption of new community logo from wayfinding study currently underway.

14. 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. Improvement designs are currently underway, and anticipated to be complete by December 2020, with construction planned for the 2020-2021 fiscal year.