



## CITY OF WASHINGTON, ILLINOIS

### Committee of the Whole Agenda Communication

**Meeting Date:** September 12, 2022

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**Agenda Item:** ITEP Project Application Consideration

**Explanation:** IDOT recently opened its call for projects for the Illinois Transportation Enhancement Program (ITEP). Applications must be submitted to IDOT by September 30. The City was most recently awarded ITEP funds in 2018 to complete Phase I Engineering as part of eventual streetscape improvements on the Square. This program has also assisted with the engineering and construction of three rec trail projects.

As is the case with prior cycles, ITEP provides funding on an 80/20 basis for most eligible projects including recreation trails and streetscape enhancements. The City applied for the completion of all engineering and construction for the Square project in 2017 but was only awarded the PE I portion of the project when the grants were announced in 2018. The PE I project has been nearly complete for awhile; the City's consulting engineer (Hutchison Engineering) finished the bulk of the work necessary to submit a Project Development Report to IDOT. Staff and Hutchison Engineering are still awaiting comments from IDOT on the Intersection Design Study. Having PE I complete helps in the application scoring.

This cycle has slightly more funds allocated (\$125 million) compared to 2020 (\$105.6 million). However, the majority of this—\$100 million—is set aside for trails projects, though there is some leeway for streetscape projects to be considered in the “pedestrian/bicycle facilities” category, which would increase its funding chance. Applicants can apply for a maximum of \$3 million per project in ITEP funds. As in 2020, this year's program sets aside 25% of the funds for high-need communities; applicants that qualify as such will either have a local match of 0-10% instead of the customary 20%. An announcement of awards is anticipated in the spring of 2023.

**Fiscal Impact:** The Finance and Personnel Committee discussed a possible ITEP application submittal at its meeting on August 15. It recommended a submittal of a project that focused on the installation of new and replacement streetlights along the Business 24 corridor to the east and west of the Square up to a total project cost of \$375,000. Upon this recommendation and the direction to have further discussion on a possible application at the next Committee of the Whole meeting, staff did additional research into the program to see what the best fit may be.

ITEP does not fund stand-alone streetlighting projects. As a result, any submittal would need to be a more inclusive streetscape project that at least includes some combination of sidewalk construction/reconstruction, street furniture, and landscaping. Traditional streetlights and pedestrian/vehicular combination lights are covered on a 50/50 basis while pedestrian-level lights are covered at 80/20. IDOT's Central Office reviews all lighting designs on state routes such as BR 24. It appears doubtful that IDOT would accept strictly pedestrian lighting and would likely require either combination lights that provide light for both the sidewalk and roadway or traditional streetlights that are more focused on vehicular traffic. Replacing the current lights with the same height and style would likely not meet IDOT's lighting specs. This would require 50% local participation for any lights and a larger share of the project cap of \$375,000 as was the consensus of the F&P Committee.

IDOT has not begun engineering solicitation for the eventual BR 24 reconstruction project. At best, construction is likely at least three years from commencing. While staff has gotten some tangible feedback from IDOT District 4 staff, they have been very careful in noting that without the drafting of any plans, an exact scope of the reconstruction work is speculative. Given that there figures to be associated storm sewer and sidewalk work in conjunction with the roadway reconstruction, that would impact the location of any lighting and whether overhead utilities may be relocated underground.

ITEP regulations stipulate that any awarded funds must be obligated within four years of the award date. With awards tentatively scheduled to be announced by IDOT in the spring of 2023, that would necessitate that engineering be completed and approved by IDOT no later than 2026 with construction to begin by the spring of 2027. Hopefully there will be considerably more clarity on the scope of the BR 24 reconstruction project by that point and ideally, the design for that project will be long underway and potentially completed. But given that there will not be a BR 24 reconstruction scope prior to the September 30 ITEP application deadline, staff asked IDOT about what flexibility, if any, there would be to make changes to ITEP project that takes into account the BR 24 project. IDOT's reaction was that if the City applied, the unknowns of the BR 24 project could be clearly identified. However, much uncertainty with an ITEP scope would impact the scoring of the application within the Project Readiness category.

It would not be advisable to expend any City or State funds on ITEP project components that would need to be removed/replaced later for the BR 24 work nor should an ITEP project include components that may be part of the BR 24 construction. That response from IDOT indicated that it may be best to wait until the next cycle (anticipated to be in the fall of 2024) when more should be known about the BR 24 project.

**Action Requested:** Staff seeks feedback on the possible submittal of an ITEP application. Given the uncertainties of the BR 24 reconstruction project and the likelihood that any ITEP work done within BR 24 right-of-way would be impacted, it may be best to wait until the next ITEP cycle—which is anticipated to be in the fall of 2024—when more should be known about the BR 24 project. ITEP guidelines stipulate that a resolution be approved prior to an application submittal committing to a local cost share.