



Legislation Text

File #: 23-2719, Version: 1

STRATEGIC PRIORITY: Environmental & Sustainability
AGENDA DATE: November 8, 2023
COUNCIL DISTRICT(S): All
DEPARTMENT: Office of Environmental Quality & Sustainability
EXECUTIVE: M. Elizabeth Cedillo-Pereira

SUBJECT

Authorize **(1)** the application for and acceptance of a grant from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) for the FY 2023 Revolving Loan Fund Grant via Cooperative Agreement (Grant No. 4B02F40101, Assistance Listing No. 66.818) in the amount of \$1,000,000.00 to clean up brownfield sites and provide cleanup planning and community involvement related activities for brownfield sites primarily in the South Dallas/Fair Park area for the period October 1, 2023 through September 30, 2028; **(2)** the establishment of appropriations in an amount not to exceed \$1,000,000.00 in the Brownfields Revolving Loan Fund Grant Fund; **(3)** the receipt and deposit of funds in an amount not to exceed \$1,000,000.00 in the Brownfields Revolving Loan Fund Grant Fund; **(4)** a contract with Stantec Consulting Services, Inc. in the amount of \$91,000.00 for environmental consulting services to assist the City with implementing the Brownfields Program; and **(5)** execution of the FY 2023 Brownfields Revolving Loan Fund grant agreement and all terms, conditions, and documents required by the agreement - Not to exceed \$1,000,000.00 - Financing: U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Grant Funds

BACKGROUND

A brownfield is a property that may have its expansion, redevelopment, or reuse complicated by the presence or potential presence of a hazardous substance, pollutant, or contaminant. The EPA's Brownfields Program provides grants and technical assistance to communities, states, tribes and others to assess, safely clean up, and sustainably reuse contaminated properties.

In 2023, the City used a qualifications-based process to contract a Qualified Environmental Professional (QEP) consultant team to assist with preparing the fiscal year (FY) 2023 Brownfields Assessment Coalition Grant application and to support grant implementation activities if the City was awarded the EPA grant. Stantec Consulting Services, Inc. was the vendor selected to provide these services.

In May 2023, the EPA selected the City of Dallas for the Brownfields Revolving Loan Fund (RLF) Grant. The City of Dallas was awarded a \$1,000,000.00 grant for use over a five-year grant term for FY 2023-28. While the grant funds are available for use throughout the City, funds will primarily focus

on revitalizing priority brownfield sites in the South Dallas/Fair Park target area that includes the historic 277-acre Fair Park campus and is bounded by Interstate Highway 30 to the north, the Trinity River to the west, and the Great Trinity Forest to the south and east. Three priority focus areas have been identified within the target area: Fair Park focus area, Martin Luther King Corridor focus area, and the St. Philip's focus area, Jefferies Meyers, and Joppee within the geographic boundary. Generational poverty and welfare issues, including crime and lack of affordable housing make it extremely difficult to attain higher education and secure better employment. To help combat these conditions, the City secured an FY 2020 EPA Assessment Coalition Grant in partnership with three South Dallas/Fair Park non-profits dedicated to reducing poverty and crime, improving education, and providing better housing and social services. While the project has been extremely successful, exceeding the goals and objectives and concluding nearly one year ahead of schedule, there are substantial additional assessment and cleanup planning needs within the target area.

The South Dallas/Fair Park target area is a large area south of downtown. It is comprised of seven census tracts (25, 27.03, 37, 115, 203, 208, and 209), and includes the historic Fair Park campus, home to the 1936 Texas Centennial Exposition, the Texas State Fair, and the Cotton Bowl Stadium. It is bounded by Interstate Highway 30 to the north and west, the Trinity River to the south, and the Great Trinity Forest to the south and east. By the 1920s, much of South Dallas had been settled by blue collar factory workers. As segregation was legal and growth continued, less desirable areas were set aside for African Americans, and housing sprung up alongside manufacturing plants and in areas prone to flooding. These areas were later bisected and isolated by freeways, one of many environmental justice issues which still plague the community. Additionally, the growth of the Fair Park campus displaced African American families with vast acreages of parking lots, contributing to inequities that greatly affect neighboring areas.

Over time upwardly mobile residents left seeking better conditions, particularly during the 1950s-1970s when racial tensions were heightened. While Dallas's population has grown by 75.00% since 1970, the target area's population has decreased by 50.00%. Decades of decline have resulted in hundreds of brownfields. These sites hinder investment, and the City incurs considerable costs associated with code enforcement, condemnation orders, and crime. Today many of Dallas's most economically distressed residents live in substandard conditions within the target area. 94.60% of residents are minorities, and nearly one-third did not graduate high school. Generational poverty and welfare issues make it extremely difficult to attain higher education and secure better employment.

The City will leverage \$1,000,000.00 of the FY 2023 EPA Brownfields RLF Grant funding to: 1) leverage the momentum generated by the FY 2020 grant, 2) to address the need for cleanup and abatement funding repeatedly expressed by the project partners and other stakeholders who are nearly all non-profits with limited financial resources, and 3) continue to engage stakeholders in a dynamic process focused on cleanup and redevelopment of priority brownfields for uses that will address the significant socioeconomic challenges facing residents in these areas. The City will use a collective governance structure to ensure the interests of each are represented throughout the project. A Brownfield Advisory Committee has also been established that includes Community representatives and other project partners that will guide the site prioritization process, inform cleanup/reuse planning, and assist with community engagement. The City and its partners will use their collective resources to leverage EPA funding with local funding and incentives, other state/federal grants, and revitalization strategies.

The City will manage all aspects of the project, including coordination with EPA and the QEP. The contract for environmental consulting services is being awarded to Stantec Consulting Services, Inc. in the amount of \$91,000.00. \$899,000.00 is designated for loans and subgrants, while \$10,000.00 is designated for supplies and training.

The EPA Brownfields RLF Grant will significantly benefit the City of Dallas by enhancing the local economy, increasing the tax base and improving the environment.

PRIOR ACTION/REVIEW (COUNCIL, BOARDS, COMMISSIONS)

The Parks, Trails, and the Environment Committee was briefed on the “Office of Environmental Quality & Sustainability Brownfields Redevelopment Program” on October 2, 2023.

Information about this item will be provided to the Parks, Trails, and the Environment Committee on November 6, 2023.

FISCAL INFORMATION

Fund	FY 2024	FY 2025	Future Years
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Grant Funds	\$500,000.00	\$500,000.00	\$0.00

PROCUREMENT INFORMATION

Stantec Consulting Services Inc. was selected through a competitive Request for Qualifications process to assist the City with implementing the Brownfields Program in accordance with the Cooperative Agreement with EPA for FY 2023-28, in an amount not to exceed \$91,000.00.

OWNER

Stantec Consulting Services, Inc.

Gord Johnston, President