

ARLINGTON COUNTY, VIRGINIA

County Board Agenda Item Meeting of June 12, 2021

DRAFT FOR TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION

DATE: May 21, 2021

SUBJECT: Approval of Transmittal of and Resolution of Support for a Grant Application to the United States Department of Transportation for the Fiscal Year 2021 Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity (RAISE) Program for the Arlington National Cemetery Wall Trail

C. M. RECOMMENDATION:

1. Approve the transmittal of an application to the United States Department of Transportation (USDOT) for the Fiscal Year (FY) 2021 RAISE Program for \$15 million in federal funding for the Arlington National Cemetery (ANC) Wall Trail.
2. Approve the resolution of support for the RAISE program application (Attachment A).

ISSUES: None at the time of this report.

SUMMARY: This is a request for the County Board to approve a grant application to USDOT for the FY 2021 RAISE program for the ANC Wall Trail and to approve a resolution of support to be submitted with the grant application.

BACKGROUND: The FY 2021 RAISE Program¹ has \$1 billion in appropriated funds “for capital investments in surface transportation that will have a significant local or regional impact” and a smaller subset of funding for planning and design of such projects. This core USDOT discretionary funding program is the next generation of TIGER, BUILD, and INFRA. The \$1 billion total program is split evenly into separate funding pools for urban (\$500 million) and rural and tribal (\$500 million) projects.

Capital funding award limits are a minimum of \$5 million to a maximum of \$25 million; no more than \$100 million can be awarded to a single state. RAISE is a cost-reimbursement

¹ The program is identified by the Federal fiscal year in which funds are appropriated. The Federal fiscal year runs from October 1 to September 30. The County’s fiscal year runs from July 1 to June 30.

County Manager:

County Attorney:

Staff: Rich Roisman, DES-Transportation

program and not a lump sum grant award. Previous programs have been highly competitive, with 680 projects funded out of over 9,700 applications (a seven percent success rate). It is one of the few USDOT discretionary programs for which regional and local governments can directly compete for multimodal transportation funding. The federal share of funding on a RAISE award is 80 percent in urban areas, requiring a 20 percent local match.

The RAISE primary selection criteria are safety, environmental sustainability, quality of life, economic competitiveness, and state of good repair. The secondary selection criteria are partnership and innovation. This application cycle also focuses on climate change impacts, environmental justice, resiliency, and advancing racial equity; applications must clearly demonstrate consideration of those factors. A robust benefit-cost analysis (BCA) is required for each application. RAISE applications are due on July 12, 2021. RAISE awards will be announced no later than November 22, 2021.

DISCUSSION: County staff recommend submitting one application to the RAISE Program due to the time and cost required to complete a RAISE application combined with the low likelihood of a funding award compared with other external transportation capital funding programs. Following a review of projects in the County’s Capital Improvement Plan (CIP), staff identified two projects for consideration of RAISE program funding. However, staff has determined that the seeking a RAISE award for the ANC Wall Trail, connecting Columbia Pike and Memorial Avenue, would best respond to RAISE selection criteria, offering the likeliest success for the County to take advantage of this opportunity. The other project considered for an RAISE application, the Ballston-MU Metrorail Station West Entrance, was removed from consideration after determining that placing Federal funding on the project (which is currently undergoing an update of its 35 percent design plans) would result in delayed project delivery and increased project costs. In addition, Ballston West Entrance is well-positioned to compete for other external funding sources, such as Northern Virginia Transportation Authority (NVTA) regional funds, major capital funding from the Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transportation (DRPT), and funding from the Northern Virginia Transportation Commission (NVTC) I-66 Commuter Choice Program.

The \$25 million ANC Wall Trail will compete well on the RAISE primary selection criteria of safety, environmental sustainability, and economic competitiveness. It will also be able to clearly demonstrate project impacts on advancing racial equity.² Bicycle and pedestrian access from Arlington into the District of Columbia via Memorial Bridge is impeded by the growing footprint of Arlington National Cemetery. For security reasons, the Department of Defense has prohibited movement through the cemetery and adjacent Joint Base Myer-Henderson Hall following the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, making the installation and cemetery grounds effective barriers to demand for non-motorized travel to and across Memorial Bridge. Currently, direct connections are either nonexistent or include unsafe desire line footpaths for bicycle / pedestrian

² For example, the ANC Wall Trail, when combined with the trail segment constructed as part of the ANC Southern Expansion (ANCSE) and Defense Access Road (DAR) projects, would complete direct linkages to the Rosslyn-Ballston (R-B) Corridor and to Washington, D.C. for several minority communities along Columbia Pike including Foxcroft Heights and Arlington View, which have historical ties to the black communities that were displaced by construction of the Pentagon and Navy Annex. For economic development, the path would provide an excellent connection between regional activity centers, as well as to popular tourism sites such as the existing Air Force Memorial, the existing National 9/11 Pentagon Memorial, and the future 9/11 Pentagon Visitor Education Center.

connections across uncontrolled traffic on the high-speed George Washington Memorial Parkway.

The southernmost portion of a bicycle and pedestrian connection between Columbia Pike and Memorial Avenue will be constructed as part of the ANCSE and DAR projects, within those project limits.³ The ANC Wall Trail project would then complete the trail to Memorial Avenue, where travelers can proceed to the District of Columbia. North of Memorial Avenue, a trail along VA 110 already exists to connect non-motorized travelers to the National Marine Corps Memorial (“Iwo Jima” Memorial) complex, where further connections can be made to the robust bicycle and pedestrian network of the Rosslyn-Ballston (R-B) Corridor. In addition, at the southern end of the ANC Wall Trail, not only will cyclists and pedestrians be able to connect to Columbia Pike, they will also be able to connect to Pentagon City via South Joyce Street following the reconstruction of the Columbia Pike / VA 27 / Joyce Street interchange. Accordingly, the ANC Wall Trail is providing a missing link in the County and regional non-motorized network that will complete a bicycle and pedestrian connection between all three of the County’s major development corridors.

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT:

Level of Engagement: Communicate

On April 29, the Transportation Commission (TC) heard an information item on the RAISE Program and the two projects that staff was evaluating for application, the ANC Wall Trail and the Ballston-MU Metrorail Station West Entrance. The TC provided verbal concurrence to proceed with the project evaluation. On May 27, the TC heard an action item on the RAISE grant application for the ANC Wall Trail and voted X to Y to _____.

FISCAL IMPACT: A grant application for \$15 million in federal funding will be submitted to USDOT. The federal share of funding on a RAISE award is 80 percent in urban areas. The County will provide the 20 percent local match and the balance of the total project funding (\$10 million), which would be split evenly between the Commercial and Industrial (C&I) Tax and NVTa Local accounts within the Transportation Capital Fund (TCF). FY 2021 RAISE funds must be obligated through execution of a grant agreement with USDOT by September 30, 2024. FY 2021 RAISE funds must be fully expended by September 30, 2029. The obligation schedule is consistent with the BikeArlington program included in the County Manager’s proposed FY 2022 – FY 2024 Capital Improvement Program.

³ The ANCSE and DAR project limits are fully described in the project [multi-party Memorandum of Agreement \(MOA\)](#) that the County Board approved in January 2021. That MOA also identifies a separate Trail MOA between the County and the Federal Highway Administration, Eastern Federal Lands Highway Division (EFLHD). Under the terms of both MOAs, the County has committed \$500,000 to be used for the environmental documentation and design of the ANC Wall Trail, with the work to be performed by an A/E design contractor procured by EFLHD.

**RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING APPLICATION TO THE
UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
FOR THE FISCAL YEAR 2021
REBUILDING AMERICAN INFRASTRUCTURE WITH
SUSTAINABILITY AND EQUITY (RAISE) PROGRAM
FOR THE ARLINGTON NATIONAL CEMETERY WALL TRAIL**

WHEREAS, on April 13, 2021, the United States Department of Transportation (“USDOT”) issued a Notice of Funding Opportunity (“NOFO”) for the Fiscal Year 2021 Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity (“RAISE”) Program; and

WHEREAS, RAISE is one of the few USDOT discretionary programs for which local governments can directly compete for multimodal transportation funding; and

WHEREAS, the RAISE primary selection criteria are safety, environmental sustainability, quality of life, economic competitiveness, and state of good repair, and the secondary selection criteria are partnership and innovation; and

WHEREAS, this RAISE application cycle also focuses on climate change impacts, environmental justice, resiliency, and advancing racial equity; and

WHEREAS, the County Board of Arlington, Virginia (“County Board”) desires to apply to the USDOT for an allocation of up to \$15 million in federal funding from the Fiscal Year 2021 RAISE program for the Arlington National Cemetery Wall Trail; and

WHEREAS, the Arlington National Cemetery Wall Trail project will compete well on the RAISE program evaluation criteria, will connect Memorial Avenue to Columbia Pike, and will provide a missing link in the County and regional non-motorized network that will complete a bicycle and pedestrian connection between all three of the County’s major development corridors.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT the County Board hereby supports the making of an application and authorizes and directs the County Manager to make an application to the USDOT for an allocation of up to \$15 million in federal funding from the Fiscal Year 2021 RAISE program for the above described project.