

REPORT FROM

OFFICE OF THE CITY ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER

Date: September 15, 2023

CAO File No. 0220-06133-0000

Council File No. None

Council District: All

To: The City Council

From: *Yolanda Chaniz*
for Matthew W. Szabo, City Administrative Officer

Subject: **AUTHORITY TO APPLY FOR THE RECONNECTING COMMUNITIES AND NEIGHBORHOODS (RCN) GRANT**

RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Council, subject to approval of the Mayor:

1. Authorize the General Managers of the Port of Los Angeles (POLA), the Bureau of Engineering (BOE), the Los Angeles Department of Transportation (LADOT), Department of Recreation and Parks (RAP) or designees, to prepare and submit a grant application for the proposals outlined in the Attachment 1; and,
2. Instruct the General Managers of the POLA, BOE, LADOT, RAP or designees, to report back if the City is awarded the grant, to request authority to accept the grant award, and to identify match and front funding.

SUMMARY

The Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) and the Inflation Reduction Act establish the Reconnecting Communities and Neighborhoods (RCN) grant to help build transportation infrastructure to reconnect communities to economic opportunities. The RCN Grant opportunity combines two Notices of Funding Opportunities (NOFO) into one Grant Program - the Reconnecting Communities Pilot Program (RCP) and the Neighborhood Access and Equity Program (NAE) - to make it easier to apply and to increase opportunities for communities that are seeking funding for projects that address harm from past infrastructure planning decisions, to accelerate equitable community revitalization, and to improve access to everyday destinations.

The RCN grant is administered by the U.S. Department of Transportation (USDOT). Funding available is \$198 million for the RCP Program and \$3.155 billion for NAE program. Applicants can apply for both RCP and NAE grants with one application.

A lead applicant may submit no more than three applications for Community Planning Grants, two applications for Capital Construction Grants, and one application for NAE Regional Partnerships Challenge Grants. The application due date is September 28, 2023.

This Office received five project proposals:

Capital Construction Grant Applications (limit two)

- POLA – The Port of Los Angeles Rail Mainline/Wilmington Community and Waterfront Pedestrian Grade Separation Bridge (will apply under both the RCP and NAE Capital grant type). A \$5 million Grant will be requested;

Community Planning Grant Applications (limit three)

- BOE – The Taylor Yard Community and Wildlife Access Project (will apply under both the RCP and NAE Community Planning grant type). A \$1.33 million Grant will be requested;
- BOE - Reconnecting MacArthur Park (will apply under both the RCP and NAE Community Planning grant type). A \$2 million Grant will be requested;
- RAP - Hollywood Central Park (will apply under RCP and NAE Community Planning grant). A \$2 million Grant will be requested; and

NAE Regional Partnership Challenge Grant Application (limit one)

- LADOT/Metro - Removing Barriers and Creating Legacy - A Multimodal Approach for Los Angeles County (will apply under NAE Regional Partnerships Challenge Grant). A \$86 million Grant will be requested.

Eligible Entities

Below are the eligible entities for the RCN grant:

- County governments;
- State governments;
- Native American tribal governments (Federally recognized);
- Nonprofits that do not have a 501(c)(3) status with the IRS, other than institutions of higher education; and,
- City or township governments.

Grant Types

Under the combined RCN Grant Program, USDOT offers three grant types:

- Capital Construction;
- Community Planning; and,
- Regional Partnerships Challenge.

Cost Sharing or Matching Fund Requirements

The following table shows the cost sharing based on the grant type:

Grant Type		
RCP - Community Planning Grants	RCP - Capital Construction Grants	NAE - Community Planning, Capital Construction, and Regional Partnerships Challenge Grants
20% local match	50% local match Other Federal funds may be used to bring the total Federal share up to a maximum of 90% of the total cost of the project.	20% local match Project in a disadvantaged or underserved community do not require a local match.

Grant recipients may use in-kind contributions toward local match requirements. In-kind contributions may include compensation for community members’ time, materials, pro bono work provided to the project by third parties, and donations from private sponsors.

Economically Disadvantaged Community

The NAE Statute defines economically disadvantaged communities as a community that:

- Is economically disadvantaged, underserved, or located in an area of persistent poverty;
- Has entered or will enter into a community benefits agreement with representatives of the community;
- Has an anti-displacement policy, a community land trust, or a community advisory board in effect; or,
- Has demonstrated a plan for employing local residents in the area impacted by the activity or project proposed under this section.

Merit Criteria (Attachment 2)

Below are the merit criteria for the RCN Grant:

- Equity and Environmental Justice;
- Access;
- Facility Suitability;
- Community Engagement and Community-based Stewardship, Management, and Partnerships;
- Equity Development;
- Climate Environment; and,
- Workforce Development and Economic Opportunity.

FISCAL IMPACT STATEMENT

Approval of the report recommendations will not result in a General Fund impact. For the POLA's project, all the matching funding has been identified: \$10,207,000 from LA Metro, \$42,080,000 from State's Port and Freight Infrastructure Program (PFIP) and \$5,333,000 from POLA fund. For the Taylor Yard Community and Wildlife Access project, existing funding allocation of \$332,000 to the Taylor Yard Paseo Del Rio Project can be used as the matching funding. For the Reconnecting MacArthur Park project, a \$500,000 grant awarded from the Southern California Association of Government's (SCAG) Civic Engagement, Environmental Justice and Equity Grant will be used as the matching fund. For the LADOT/Metro's project, there is no matching fund requirement as the project is located in disadvantaged or underserved communities. For the Hollywood Central Park, a match of \$500,000 will need to be identified by RAP should a grant awarded.

FINANCIAL POLICIES STATEMENT

The recommendation in this report complies with the City's Financial Policies.

MWS:JSL:06240015

ATTACHMENT 1 - PROPOSED GRANT PROJECTS

Grant Administrator: U.S. Department of Transportation (USDOT)

Name of Grant: Reconnecting Communities and Neighborhoods (RCN) Program

NOFO Release Date: July 25, 2023

Due date: September 28, 2023

Performance Period: RCP Program grant funds are available until expended. NAE funds are available to be obligated until September 30, 2026

Maximum award for Community Planning Grant Type: RCP - \$2 million; NAE - no restrictions

Minimum award for Capital Construction Grant Type: RCP - 5 million; NAE - no restrictions

Lead Department	Project Name	Project Description	Total Project (Budget)	Total Grant Request	Planned Completion Date
Port of Los Angeles (POLA)	Port of Los Angeles Rail Mainline/Wilmington Community and Waterfront Pedestrian Grade Separation Bridge	This project includes the construction of a pedestrian bridge over two freight mainline tracks that can accommodate emergency vehicles, with the following elements/activities: - Demolition of underlying Avalon Boulevard between Harry Bridges Boulevard and the rail mainline tracks; - Soil remediation of former City of LA Department of Water & Power Marine Tank Farm; - Bridge substructure (pre-stressed concrete piles, concrete pile caps, abutments, wingwalls, approach slab); - Bridge superstructure (deck and stay cables; approximate 400' length); - Bridge approaches on both sides on soil fill, with sidewalk and landscaping; - Retaining wall (including piles); and, - Drainage & Electrical.	\$ 62,620,000	\$ 5,000,000	April 2027
Bureau of Engineering (BOE)	Taylor Yard Community and Wildlife Access Project	This project will improve connections for the communities and wildlife over long-standing barriers between San Fernando Road and the existing Metrolink/Union Pacific and future High-Speed Rail Lines. This application will allow the City to evaluate and develop concepts with community engagement for connections for the disadvantaged communities of Glassell Park, Cypress Park, and Elysian Valley to access the LA River, schools, and parks by providing pedestrians, bicycle, and wildlife with potential safe crossings and strategies to address equity, climate, and environmental justice.	\$ 1,660,000	\$ 1,328,000	December 2026
Bureau of Engineering (BOE)	Reconnecting MacArthur Park	This project will reconnect MacArthur Park to its historic state by permanently closing off Wilshire Blvd to all vehicular traffic, between S. Parkview Street. and Alvarado St. to reverse an environmental injustice and cede 1.7 of parkland back to open space. The project scope will also extend the closure of adjacent streets flanking the park to car traffic in order to uniquely enhance transit, bike and pedestrian connectivity	\$ 2,500,000	\$ 2,000,000	June 2027
Los Angeles Department of Transportation (LADOT)/Metro	Removing Barriers and Creating Legacy - A Multimodal Approach for Los Angeles County	This project will provide the following investments: 1. Bus corridor enhancements from 1st Street to Martin Luther King Jr Blvd; 2. Mobility hub investments at the Metro G line and Metrolink Chatsworth Station, Metro E/K Line Expo/Crenshaw Station, Metro B/G line North Hollywood Station; 3. First/Last Mile enhancements such as pedestrian and bicycle quick-build infrastructure improvements in Downtown Los Angeles and the San Fernando Valley; and, 4. Metro Bike Share - 60 bike share stations between Downtown LA and Venice Beach.	\$ 95,000,000	\$ 86,000,000	June 20230
Los Angeles Department of Recreation and Parks (RAP)	Hollywood Central Park	This project will conduct a feasibility study on the construction of a park, over the 101 freeway, through Hollywood, from Santa Monica Blvd to Bronson Ave. This will connect a community divided by a major freeway.	\$ 2,500,000	\$ 2,000,000	July 2027

ATTACHMENT 2 - PROJECT MERIT CRITERIA

Merit Criteria	Name of Project				
	Port of Los Angeles Rail Mainline/Wilmington Community & Waterfront Pedestrian Grade Separation Bridge	Taylor Yard Community and Wildlife Access Project	Reconnecting MacArthur Park	Removing Barriers and Creating Legacy - A Multimodal Approach for Los Angeles County	Hollywood Central Park
Equity and Environmental Justice	<p>This project is located in, and part of the "LA Waterfront" that includes the City of Los Angeles communities of Wilmington and San Pedro. The Wilmington community is a federally designated "Area of Persistent Poverty and Historically Disadvantaged Community." This project will reduce vehicular trips via a potential mode of transportation shift. These trip reductions will reduce 583 metric tons (over 20 years) of emissions in a community that is one of the most disadvantaged communities in the State. The Wilmington community has a high level of poverty and more dependency on walking/biking. This pedestrian bridge will connect the Wilmington community (which has eight schools within one mile) to the POLA's Wilmington Waterfront and Banning's Landing Community Center. This project addresses equity by removing a physical barrier to access the community's waterfront.</p>	<p>This project will address the equity and environmental justice for the disadvantaged communities of Elysian Valley, Glassell Park, and Cypress Park. This project will help to improve the environmental condition in the area by providing direct active transportation access to schools and parks and reducing the need to use indirect polluting vehicles around the river to get to the same schools and parks. The project will also help provide better links to the Sonia Sotomayor Learning Academies which may help improve the education score and give better access to existing and planned outdoor learning opportunities. In addition, access to open spaces and nature has been shown to improve health, reduce stress, and improve test scores in students.</p>	<p>The reconnection of MacArthur Park represents an opportunity to elevate public health in a deeply disadvantaged community according to indicators at the local, regional, state and federal level, as a key policy and community milestone while reversing an environmental injustice. It can potentially improve safety by enhancing open space resources in a community that is sorely lacking, by bridging the gap between the heart of a community that is physically divided by a street, and socioeconomically divided from the surrounding areas of opportunity.</p>	<p>This project creates proportional impacts for Angelenos, of whom 91% reside in disadvantaged communities within a half-mile radius. Metro will implement the Equity Planning and Evaluation Tool. The tool assists staff in identifying disparities that impact how Metro's services, programs, and projects are experienced, understanding the root causes of those disparities and developing and implementing projects, programs, plans, policies, and initiatives in a manner that provides more equitable outcomes. This will ensure that Metro develops and implements this Project in a way that eliminates racial and social disparities to enable all people to have enhanced mobility.</p>	<p>This project will allow for community engagement and opportunities for growth. It also encourages a sustainable and sensible economic path for the future.</p>
Access	<p>This project will provide an alternative mode of transportation for the communities of Wilmington and San Pedro other than using vehicles. The pedestrian bridge will allow residents to walk and bike to close by schools and the Banning's Landing Community Center.</p>	<p>These crossings will also incorporate habitat crossings for wildlife that will ensure more linkages between the existing habitat at Rio de Los Angeles State Park, the planned habitat at Taylor Yard, and the existing habitat in the LA River. In addition, the wildlife crossings will greatly help the birds that migrate in this area avoid collisions with the existing trains and planned high-speed rail trains.</p>	<p>By removing lanes of traffic that bisect a park in a park poor and dense community, and ceding 1.7 acres of vehicle lanes back to open space, we are enhancing the environment by adding open space in a community that has the least amount of open space per resident. This corner of the City contains the lowest open space per resident Citywide, averaging only .5 acres per 1k of residents, compared to 8.9 acres per 1k of residents citywide.</p>	<p>This project proposes more than 15 miles of new bus priority lanes throughout LA County, providing invaluable travel time savings for transit-dependent communities while reprioritizing road space for transit users. This project proposes enhanced mobility hubs throughout LA County and enhanced bus/rail interface stations along the Vermont corridor, which will provide new active-mobility options at Metro stations, offering a more seamless connection between transit modes.</p>	<p>This project will re-connect a divided neighborhood and heal the edges of a vibrant community. In addition, it will create spaces that complement and encourage participation, reinforce walkability, bike-ability, and well-being for all.</p>

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	Port of Los Angeles Rail Mainline/Wilmington Community & Waterfront Pedestrian Grade Separation Bridge	Taylor Yard Community and Wildlife Access Project	Reconnecting MacArthur Park	Removing Barriers and Creating Legacy A Multimodal Approach for Los Angeles County	Hollywood Central Park
Facility Suitability	The rail crossings/roadway closures and pedestrian bridge are needed because the POLA freight rail line extends southwesterly through the Wilmington waterfront area and bifurcates the community to the north and the waterfront area to the south. By constructing a pedestrian bridge over two freight mainline rail tracks that can accommodate emergency vehicles can help to improve air quality, address equity and create jobs.	This project will provide the community and wildlife connections between Cypress Park, Glassell Park and the Elysian Valley to Rio de Los Angeles State Park, Taylor Yard and the LA River. The connections are essential to ensure access to existing and future recreation, open space areas, and nature. The existing San Fernando Road, Southern California Regional Rail Authority (Metrolink) rail corridor and planned High-Speed Rail lines create unsafe barriers for the communities to adequately access these parks and open space.	This project is in alignment with the awarding agency's goals since it reconnects a once complete, but now fragmented, community resource. This project also addresses goals to restore community connectivity, utilize community/public engagement, and reduce environmental impacts in underserved communities.	This project will facilitate significant investment in LA through a regionally coordinated approach. Metro, with its 13 partner agencies and facility owners will enhance regional mobility by facilitating investment into the region's extensive bus network, which will facilitate improved mobility across LA County's freeway system. In addition, for the first-last mile enhancements, it will mitigate the dangerous conditions for pedestrians and bicyclists. For the mobility hubs, it will leverage existing transit infrastructure with new technology and mobility options to move Angelenos from transit to their final destinations safely and quickly.	The proposed park will provide green open space and recreational facilities within walking distance for more than 15,000 families and 25,000 children, a majority of whom live in apartments. It will also help to prevent "green gentrification" through social impact investment in existing neighborhoods and revitalizing low-income disadvantaged communities by uplifting and not uprooting them.
Community Engagement and Community-based Stewardship, Management, and Partnerships	The Port of Los Angeles (POLA) will coordinate with Los Angeles Department of Water and Power (LADWP) on the decommissioning of their tank farm, located on the site. Community outreach has been done with the communities of Wilmington and San Pedro.	The Bureau of Engineering will partner with LA Sanitation, Recreation and Parks, General Services Division, and the CAO to host bi-weekly and monthly meetings with these departments to discuss the Taylor Yard efforts. In addition, the City has a formal collaboration with CA State Parks and the Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority known as the 100-Acre Partnership. The City is also collaborating with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to implement the Taylor Yard project to achieve the goals of the LA River Ecosystem Restoration Project.	The Bureau will coordinate with CD 1 to outreach to the communities and non-profit organizations regarding the project.	This project will include regularly scheduled public meetings on various project scope construction elements that are accessibly located within the communities. This project will be staffed with multi-lingual expertise staff, reflective of the ethnicity and population of the project area. The goal will be to understand the cultural resources and inventory of community assets by using diverse methods for reaching stakeholders in advance of major project milestones. Diverse outreach methods will be employed.	RAP will coordinate with Hollywood residential and business communities, CAL-Trans, LA County, CA State Parks, etc. on this project.

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Equity Development	This project will improve safety for pedestrians in/around the parking areas, the crossing of Harry Bridges Boulevard for visitors to and from the waterfront that don't own a vehicle. This will avoid needing to walk or bike a longer and more circuitous route via the adjacent Rail Mainline/South Wilmington Roadway Grade Separation.	This project will provide direct active transportation access to schools and parks and reduce the need to use vehicles.	The reconnection of MacArthur Park represents an opportunity to elevate public health in a deeply disadvantaged community according to indicators at the local, regional, state and federal level, as a key policy and community milestone while reversing an environmental injustice. It can potentially improve safety and create open space resources in a community that is sorely lacking, and bridge the gap between the heart of a community that is physically divided by a street, and socioeconomically divided from the surrounding areas of opportunity.	This project elements will support the development of sustainable communities by taking a holistic approach to modifying the surface transportation system. By including multimodal scope elements, this project has a greater opportunity for mode shift to the sustainable alternatives of transit and active transportation, which lead to healthier communities.	The existing park space is disproportionately concentrated in the region's wealthy neighborhoods. This project will reconnects diverse communities and dense neighborhoods, separated for more than 65+ years, by the Hollywood Freeway.
Climate Environment	This project will help to reduce 583 metric tons of emissions (over 20 years) and improve air quality in the neighborhood.	This project will address climate change, improve biodiversity, by increasing habitat and reducing green house gas emissions This project will also increase safe active transportation access to the schools, parks, open spaces, nature, and other communities which will help to reduce vehicle miles driven and greenhouse gas emissions.	This project will increase tree canopy, provide for additional shade structures to create a cooler environment in a dense urban environment of disadvantaged neighborhoods. The additional tree canopy will help to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.	This project's elements such as enhanced mobility hubs with micromobility options, improved first/last mile connections and bus priority lanes will all directly impact the daily travel decisions for LA County residents. To meet the state's goal of reducing greenhouse gas emissions 40% below 1990 levels by 2030, this project will encourage modal shift through investments such as new bus priority lanes, which will increase the speed and reliability of transit service through priority lanes, allowing buses to bypass delays in car traffic. First/last mile improvements will contribute to making transit a more accessible and seamless transportation option, coupled with new micromobility options proposed at the five mobility hub locations and 60 bike share stations.	This project will provide public open space for Hollywood and the City of Los Angeles and create habitat for native plants and wildlife. This will help to improve the environment around the Hollywood area.

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Workforce Development and Economic Opportunity	The construction of this project will create an estimated 400 direct/indirect/induced jobs (one year per full-time equivalent) in an "Economically Distressed Area" (EDA) with 13 percent unemployment. An EDA, as established by 42 U.S.C. § 3161 and used by the Federal Highway Administration, are areas where unemployment is one percent or more above the national average, or where the per capita income is 80 percent. For the construction contracts, the POLA will utilize a port-wide Project Labor Agreement, with local hire and apprenticeship requirements.	The work will be completed by the City and Contractors and is anticipated to provide eight full-time equivalent jobs.	This project will create 14 Full time equivalent (FTE) jobs, 4 FTE for City Staff and 10 FTE for consultant staff. City staff will manage the consultant contracts for design and environmental clearances as well as coordination between City departments and elected offices.	Contractors chosen to work on this project will be required to adhere to Metro's Project Labor Agreement (PLA). The PLA requires 40% participation of construction workers residing in economically disadvantaged areas, 10% participation of disadvantaged workers and a 20% participation of apprentices. In addition, 28% of capital work will be awarded to disadvantaged business enterprises, minority-owned businesses and/or women-owned firms.	This project will create economic opportunities that allow for longevity and growth both in and around the park. It will create approximate 5,100 good paying union building and construction trades jobs with a 30% entry level and apprenticeship program; 30,000 direct and indirect jobs over 10 year.