



Legislation Text

File #: 1653-2024, **Version:** 1

1. BACKGROUND

The Transportation Review Advisory Council (TRAC) annually accepts applications to fund projects as part of the Ohio Department of Transportation's (ODOT's) Major New Capacity Program. TRAC was established by Ohio Revised Code 5512 to oversee the selection process for the priority and approval for funding projects that are part of the Major New Capacity Program. To be eligible for TRAC funding, a project must have an overall cost greater than \$12 million; increase capacity or reduce congestion; and be critical to the mobility, economic development, and quality of life for the citizens of Ohio. Projects may be submitted by public agencies such as: ODOT District Offices, Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs), Regional Transportation Planning Organizations (RTPOs), Municipalities, County Commissioners, County Engineers, Transit and Port Authorities, and Transportation Improvement Districts (TIDs). Applications for the current application due to TRAC by May 31, 2024.

The City of Columbus is eligible to submit a TRAC application, and the Department of Public Service is has submitted a TRAC application to support the SR 315-North Knot project. The initial construction of SR 315 freeway and subsequent growth have created significant mobility, system linkage, and access issues that now hamper significant economic development and transportation infrastructure investments being made by the City of Columbus, Franklin County, The Ohio State University, JobsOhio, and others in and around the project area. These investments include:

- The Columbus Innovation District (aka Carmenton), which is one of three innovation districts in the state identified by JobsOhio;
- The LinkUS Northwest Corridor Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) project; and
- The Ohio State University Wexner Medical Center expansion.

The City of Columbus, Franklin County Engineer's Office, and The Ohio State University are partnering on a project - the SR 315-North Knot project - to identify a series of infrastructure improvements to ultimately address these issues, as well as support multi-modal transportation connections that will be provided by the LinkUS Northwest BRT Corridor. Columbus, The Ohio State University, and Franklin County Engineer have already invested \$1.2 million to begin the project's preliminary engineering. TRAC funding will help Columbus, Franklin County, and the Ohio State University complete the planning and preliminary engineering that is essential for fully analyzing the transportation issues and potential improvements required to address them. Preliminary estimates indicate the cost of planning, designing, and constructing all improvements conceptualized to date would be approximately \$250,000,000. One specific goal for the planning and preliminary engineering will be to determine fundable phases of construction that can be delivered in coordination with the regional development. Once these phases have been identified, Public Service would continue to pursue TRAC funding for future project phases, as well as other funding sources, including federal discretionary grant funds, community project funds, SCIP/LTIP funds, and MORPC attributable funding.

2. EXPECTED PROJECT

The Department of Public Service has submitted an application seeking TRAC funding to complete the SR 315-North Knot's preliminary engineering phase. The project area has been identified as an area bounded approximately by North Star Road to the west, Ackerman Road to the north, Olentangy River Road/Cannon Drive to the east, and 5th Avenue to the south. Within this area, significant work ultimately is expected on multiple roads, including SR-315, Olentangy River Road, Lane Avenue, and Kinnear Road. The total estimated cost for the preliminary engineering phase is approximately \$13.2 million, of which \$7.8 million is being requested from TRAC. The total local match for this phase is approximately \$5.4 million, which includes a new local funding commitment from Columbus of approximately \$4,214,050.

(This listing is meant to be illustrative and is believed to be accurate and complete; however, last minute project additions

and substitutions are at the discretion of the Director of Public Service.)

3. FISCAL IMPACT

No financial participation is required at this time. City funds will be approved in the form of design contracts, right of way acquisition, and/or construction contracts that will be submitted for Council's approval.

To authorize the Director of Public Service to accept grant funding provided through the Transportation Review Advisory Council funding application to the Ohio Department of Transportation; to authorize the execution of grant and other requisite agreements with the Ohio Department of Transportation and other entities providing for the acceptance and administration of said grant award on behalf of the City of Columbus Department of Public Service; to authorize the expenditure of any awarded funds; and issue refunds if necessary after final accounting is performed. (\$0.00)

WHEREAS, the Transportation Review Advisory Council is accepting applications for funding projects as part of the Ohio Department of Transportation's Major New Capacity Program; and

WHEREAS, it is necessary to authorize the Director of Public Service to submit an application, execute grant agreements, accept and expend grant funds, and issue refunds if necessary after final accounting for approved projects; and

WHEREAS, City Council approval is needed to accept the grant funding and execute agreement with Ohio Department of Transportation and other entities relative to the project; **now, therefore**

BE IT ORDAINED BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF COLUMBUS:

SECTION 1. That the Director of Public Service, on behalf of the City of Columbus, Department of Public Service, is hereby authorized to prepare, execute, and submit an application to the Transportation Review Advisory Council and the Ohio Department of Transportation seeking Major New Capacity Program funds for the SR 315-North Knot project.

SECTION 2. That the Director of Public Service be and is hereby authorized to execute agreements and documents necessary to accept TRAC funds and/or other ODOT funds if awarded.

SECTION 3. That the Director of Public Service be and is hereby authorized to accept and expend the funds for the approved projects.

SECTION 4. That, at the end of the grant period, any repayment of unencumbered balances required by the grantor is hereby authorized and any unused City match monies may be transferred back to the City fund from which they originated in accordance with all applicable grant agreements.

SECTION 5. That this ordinance shall take effect and be in force from and after the earliest period allowed by law.