

CITY COUNCIL STUDY SESSION

Update on the Bellevue Safe Access for Everyone (B-SAFE) Safe Streets and Roads for All (SS4A) Grant Application

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DIRECTION NEEDED FROM COUNCIL**INFORMATION
ONLY**

No action is required. This is an informational briefing on the status of Bellevue's SS4A application for federal grant funding now pending before the United States Department of Transportation (USDOT).

RECOMMENDATION

N/A

BACKGROUND & ANALYSIS**Safe Streets and Roads for All (SS4A) Grant Program**

The Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL), signed into law late last year, established a wide range of formulas and new grant programs to distribute funds to programs and projects that support the intent of the law.

One of the programs under the USDOT is the Safe Streets and Roads for All, referred to as SS4A. Over the next five years, SS4A will provide \$5-6 billion in grants to regional, local, and Tribal initiatives through grants to prevent roadway deaths and serious injuries. The program supports the USDOT's National Roadway Safety Strategy and a goal of zero deaths and serious injuries on our nation's roadways.

The SS4A program provides funding for two types of grants:

- **Action Plan Grants** provide Federal funds to develop, complete, or supplement a comprehensive safety action plan. The goal of an Action Plan is to develop a holistic, well-defined strategy to prevent roadway fatalities and serious injuries in a locality, Tribe, or region. The maximum award for a single applicant is \$1,000,000 or a maximum of \$5,000,000 for a joint or Metropolitan Planning Organization applicant.
- **Implementation Grants** provide Federal funds to implement projects and strategies identified in an Action Plan to address a roadway safety problem. Projects and strategies may be infrastructure, behavioral, and/or operational activities. Implementation Grants may also fund associated planning and design and supplemental Action Plan activities in support of an existing

Action Plan. Applicants must have an existing Action Plan to apply for Implementation Grants or have an existing plan that is substantially similar and meets the eligibility requirements. The maximum award for a single applicant is \$30,000,000. For a joint application, the maximum award is \$50,000,000.

USDOT Grant Priorities

Successful grant applications will demonstrate engagement with public and private stakeholders and seek to adopt innovative technologies and strategies to:

- Promote safety;
- Employ low-cost, high-impact strategies that can improve safety over a wider geographic area;
- Ensure equitable investment in the safety needs of underserved communities, which includes both underserved urban and rural communities;
- Incorporate evidence-based projects and strategies; and
- Align with the USDOT's mission and with priorities such as equity, climate and sustainability, quality job creation, and economic strength and global competitiveness.

Bellevue's Application for SS4A

This summer, the City's BIL Interdepartmental Team assessed the SS4A criteria and made the decision to submit an **Implementation Grant** application for this round. The City's commitment to safety established a robust foundation that aligns with the SS4A priorities, including the Council's adoption of a Safe System approach to Vision Zero in 2020, the City Manager's approval of the Vision Zero Strategic Plan (2020), and the subsequent annually updated Vision Zero Action Plans beginning in 2021. Additionally, because this is the first year of the program, many applications may be for Action Plan Grants and there could be fewer applications for Implementation Grants.

The City's B-SAFE Implementation Grant is a joint application between the City of Bellevue and King County. It was submitted to USDOT on September 14 requesting \$39,700,000 toward a total \$49,700,000 estimated program cost. Components of the B-SAFE application include:

King County Eastrail Regional Trail Safety Connections

Improve high volume street crossings: Construct critical trail crossings within Bellevue including new signals and crosswalks. Bellevue's urban core is anticipated to be the busiest portion of the County's regional trail network.

Increase accessibility: Connect active trail users to transit and the urban core with paved paths and lighting to improve the user experience.

Complete Streets Installations

Crosswalk visibility: High visibility crosswalks and increased visibility of signal heads.

Pedestrian refuge: Pedestrian islands and pedestrian safety signal systems.

Bicycle enhancements: Bike lanes, speed management and safety audits.

Public education: Encouragement campaign, events and communications.

Innovative Practices & Technologies to Improve Safety

Pedestrian & bicycle safety: Integrate real-time signal technologies to detect pedestrians in and near crosswalks, providing more time to cross.

Light rail safety: Conduct real-time monitoring safety awareness at signalized intersections and street-level crossings near light rail.

Driver awareness: Leverage edge processing and cloud-based mobile apps to provide safety alerts for people driving, walking and rolling.

Partners in the Application

In addition to the two joint applicants, there are also several public and private sector partners providing either financial or in-kind support to the application. They include:

- Sound Transit
- Amazon Web Services
- T-Mobile
- Qualcomm
- Advanced Mobility Analytics Group
- Miovision

Meetings in Washington, D.C. in Early October

In early October, City of Bellevue officials made a brief visit to Washington, D.C. to share information about the B-SAFE application in advance of its consideration this fall. Bellevue met with leadership at USDOT, staff to the Congressional delegation members, and the National League of Cities. Feedback was very positive, and the City delegation mapped out follow-up items for the weeks and months ahead.

National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) Chair Hosted in Bellevue on October 31

Bellevue staff hosted a day-long profile of the B-SAFE application for Jennifer Homendy, Chair of the NTSB in late-October. As part of the visit, our grant partners were front and center, and Chair Homendy heard directly from community stakeholders and supporters about the interest in and support for the program's components. In addition to a brief downtown walking tour, the group also spoke about the technology components at T-Mobile's 5G headquarters in the Bel-Red corridor, and capped the day with a ride on Eastrail. The Seattle Times interviewed Homendy during the afternoon.

Internal BIL Interdepartmental Team

Following the BIL's passage, Bellevue assembled representatives from internal departments to analyze and assess federal funding opportunities. The group started meeting regularly in the spring to prioritize capital needs across internal departments, identify funding streams to target and determine which programs are the right fit for Bellevue.

The BIL Team has developed an applicable BIL Grant Program List and City Project Pipeline, updated regularly and consulted any time new federal funding becomes available. This is a critical asset and equips the City to anticipate funding opportunities so that projects can be well-positioned if deemed a good fit.

POLICY & FISCAL IMPACTS

Policy Impact

If successful, receipt of the SS4A grant would allow Bellevue to implement the Vision Zero Plan rapidly and bring online many safety treatments and tools to complement and capitalize upon burgeoning regional assets including Sound Transit East Link Extension and the Eastrail multimodal corridor.

Fiscal Impact

The SS4A award would fund the implementation of a wide range of safety components. Without this award, the components may become reality on a slower timeline, as additional funding resources are sought.

OPTIONS

N/A

ATTACHMENTS

A. B-SAFE One-pager

AVAILABLE IN COUNCIL LIBRARY

Bellevue 2022 Vision Zero Action Plan
Bellevue Vision Zero Strategic Plan (2020)