



CITY OF HOUSTON

Interoffice

Office of the Mayor

Correspondence

To: Mayor Sylvester Turner &
Members of City Council

From: Bill Kelly
Director of Government Relations

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Subject: IIJA Update

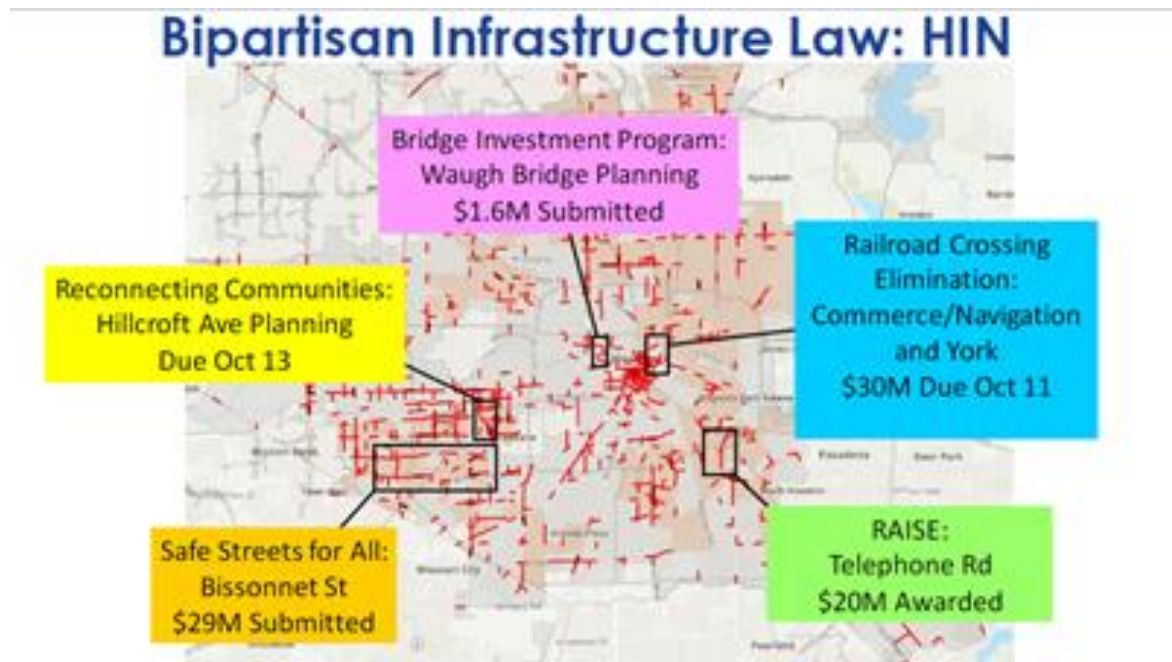
On November 15th, 2021, Mayor Turner joined President Biden at the White House to celebrate the signing of the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA, also known as the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law), a sweeping \$1 trillion bipartisan infrastructure package, capping weeks of intense negotiations and debate. The IIJA is the largest federal investment in the nation's public works system in more than a decade.

On December 2nd, Susan Lent joined the Government Relations team for a briefing on the IIJA in front of Council Member David Robinson's TTI City Council Committee.

Upon attending the Winter Conference Meeting of the US Conference of Mayors in January of 2022, Secretary Pete Buttigieg addressed the assembled municipal leaders. When asked what his advice would be for city leaders after seeing the IIJA signed into law, he quickly replied, "Apply for a RAISE Grant." The Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability & Equity (RAISE) program under the US DOT was funded with \$7.5 billion over 5 years and was the first major program of the IIJA to accept applications.

- On August 9th, the Department of Transportation announced the City of Houston would receive \$20.96 million in federal funding through the RAISE grant program for the Telephone Road: Main Street Revitalization Project.

The Telephone Road project bridges the gap between two projects led by Tax Increment Reinvestment Zones (TIRZ), TIRZ 23 – Harrisburg Redevelopment Authority and TIRZ 8 – Gulfgate Redevelopment Authority. The City's project begins at the intersection of Lawndale Drive and Telephone Road and extends 2.8 miles to Interstate 610.



In addition to the successful RAISE grant, the City of Houston has several applications for funding under the IIJA submitted to the federal government all based on the City's Vision Zero program which identified the High Injury Network (6% of streets where 60% of major crashes occur), including:

- Bridge Investment Program (BIP) grant application for the realignment of Waugh Drive Bridge that will reconfigure a critical link in the transportation network into a complete street that is accessible, efficient, and safe for users of all modes of transportation
 - The City of Houston was informed the application was not awarded grant funding
- Safe Streets and Roads for All (SS4A) grant application for funding construction of new designs along Bissonnet Street from Hillcroft Avenue to South Dairy Ashford Road, transforming one of the most dangerous corridors on the Houston High Injury Network into a safe street for all.
 - The Bissonnet Corridor Safe Streets application was submitted on September 13th requesting \$28.79 million with an announcement expected in Q1 of 2023
- Railroad Crossing Elimination Grant for the West Belt Phase 1 project was submitted by the City of Houston in partnership with the Gulf Coast Rail District to the Federal Railroad Administration. It funds the construction of two railroad

underpasses at Commerce Street/Navigation Boulevard and York Street in the East End neighborhood of Houston.

- The West Belt Phase 1 application was submitted on October 11th requesting \$36.9M with an announcement expected in Q1 of 2023
- Reconnecting Communities: Gulfton and Beyond planning grant application submitted by the City of Houston to study design connections across the high-speed roadways encircling Houston's most dense, diverse, and transit-dependent neighborhood to Hillcroft Transit Center, Wisdom High School, and Bray's Bayou.
 - The Reconnecting Communities: Gulfton and Beyond planning application was submitted on October 13th requesting \$690,200 with an announcement expected in Q1 of 2023

The joint Public Works/Planning & Development team has taken the lead in crafting applications, while the Government Relations team has worked on the advocacy efforts. This has included weekly coordinating calls with Susan Lent, other local governmental entities such as METRO & Harris County, as well as letters of support from stakeholders like Council Members and the Greater Houston Partnership.

Additionally, the Government Relations Team has been working with Solid Waste Management Division on submitting two letters of intent for Recycling Education and Outreach as well as Solid Waste Infrastructure for Recycling and will work with the department to submit applications for funding once a notice of funding opportunity is posted.

- For Education, the City will concentrate Recycling Education and Outreach efforts in economically disadvantaged areas of the City that require the most improvements as well as targeting education in neighborhoods with the highest documented contamination rates.
- For Infrastructure, the City will look to modify an existing structure and add equipment to assist with transfer of recyclable materials to its final processing destination.
 - The City is initially investing \$2,000,000.00 to acquire the property via an expired agreement. This recycling processing facility will greatly improve the operational efficiencies of the current residential recycling program by supporting routes in the southwest and northwest quadrants of the city, greatly reducing the miles driven for recycling collection.

While an emphasis on these direct allocations to the city is the focus of this update, the GR Team will continue work in supporting other entities (such as METRO's successful

“No-Low Emissions” grant for electric buses) and formula funding through the State of Texas (such as broadband funding) to bring resources to Houstonians.

The GR Team will continually monitor when the notice of funding opportunities are published and coordinate with city departments in crafting applications for these competitive grant programs. The IIJA has the potential to provide significant funding for projects, and we look forward to Houston’s continued success in capitalizing on these opportunities.