

Mayor and Council Communication

DATE: 09/27/22

M&C FILE NUMBER: M&C 22-0790

LOG NAME: 17TAFB

SUBJECT

(ALL) Authorize the Execution of a Contract with the Tarrant Area Food Bank in an Amount up to \$3,200,000.00 to Acquire the Property and Building at 205 N. Vacek Street, in Order to Expand its Capacity for Food Acquisition and Distribution in its Service Area

RECOMMENDATION:

It is recommended that the City Council:

1. Authorize the Execution of a Contract with the Tarrant Area Food Bank in an Amount up to \$3,200,000.00 to Acquire the Property and Building at 205 N. Vacek Street, in Order to Expand Its Capacity for Food Acquisition and Distribution in its Service Area.
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DISCUSSION:

The purpose of this Mayor and Council Communication is to authorize a contract with The Tarrant Area Food Bank (TAFB) for the capital acquisition of the property and building located at 205 N. Vacek Street, Fort Worth, TX 76107. The acquisition of the property will total \$8,000,000.00 with the City's portion of the contract totaling \$3,200,000.00 and the remaining \$4,800,000.00 provided from Tarrant County. The investment by the City and County will be matched with an addition \$8,000,000.00 - \$12,000,000.00 secured by TAFB to fund the renovation and outfitting of the facility.

As the population in the Tarrant County region continues to grow, the demand for the TAFB's services will also continue to grow, and the agency needs the ability and capacity to grow with it. Currently, one in four children in the region faces food insecurity, and across the entire population, one in six individuals needs assistance accessing food, representing over 540,000 people who are hungry and in need. The acquisition of this property represents a unique opportunity to ensure that TAFB remains in a centralized location within Tarrant County and the City of Fort Worth far into the future. The TAFB moved to its current location over 30 years ago and has since invested in constructing an administration building and renovating the distribution center. This new building is located at the same intersection as the agency's administration building and distribution center.

The purchase of the property at 205 N. Vacek St. will double the capacity of the TAFB and allow the agency to respond to the needs of the ever-growing community. The proposed purchase will provide an additional 80,000 square feet of facility space which will allow TAFB to accomplish multiple goals within one location. The top priorities for this facility are: 1) Expand capacity for TAFB's primary mission of food acquisition and distribution to address population growth in its service area, 2) Establish an Agricultural Hub to support the local community with fresh produce, and 3) Increase access to vulnerable communities through new distribution models.

Capacity Building:

TAFB experienced a massive spike in demand with the onset of the pandemic; however, the agency continues to operate at 75% above pre-pandemic levels to meet the community's needs. This increase is due to the area's population growth and the TAFB building stronger connections within the community to reach families it previously did not support. As Fort Worth is the second fastest growing city in the country, continued growth is expected and the increase in the number of hungry families is directly proportional to the population growth.

Agricultural Hub:

TAFB is developing plans to establish an Agricultural Hub (Ag-Hub) in Fort Worth to ensure a continuous supply of fresh produce for area residents facing hunger. The Ag-Hub will serve as a produce mixing center, which will receive truckloads of produce directly from wholesalers and farmers. This concept will work on economies of scale to drastically reduce the cost of purchasing produce and increase its buying power to improve local access to these nutritious foods. TAFB will also leverage any surplus inventory of produce to form trading partnerships with other food banks to access additional types of food. Most food banks face a limited supply of fresh produce because they cannot accept large shipments as would be capable at an Ag-Hub. This program will allow TAFB to share its excess produce supply with other food banks in exchange for other hard-to-access items such as fresh/frozen protein.

With the purchase of the property, TAFB plans to retrofit a portion of the facility with climate control systems to maintain appropriate temperatures for receiving and processing fruits and vegetables. Initially, the approximate amount of produce that will remain locally is 3.6 million pounds, which would be a 24% increase in fruit/vegetables to be distributed by TAFB.

Increase Access:

Two of the agency's newest initiatives will require the expanded capacity, and specialized refrigerated space to be constructed at 205 N Vacek to serve more clients. TAFB's Home Delivery program began as a partnership between TAFB, Meals on Wheels, and Catholic Charities Fort Worth. TAFB provides boxes of fresh produce and pantry items delivered by the other agencies to ensure these clients had access to food beyond the

provided meals. The value of this program and importance of providing older adult clients with nutritious food has led TAFB to start operating a Commodity Supplemental Food Program (CSFP) throughout its service area. This federal program works to improve the health of low-income elderly persons by supplementing their diets with nutritious USDA Foods.

TAFB's distributions through Meals on Wheels and CSFP only serve older adults and does not address the needs of other individuals that are homebound. Therefore, TAFB is expanding its Home Delivery program to all clients with mobility issues. This is being conducted in partnership with Door Dash and Amazon and will provide delivery of this food at no cost and ensure that these neighbors have food for multiple meals each day. The average age of current participants is 45-55 years old.

Summary:

The total estimated budget for the proposed acquisition and renovation of the property at 205 N. Vacek Street is \$16,000,000.00 - \$20,000,000.00. TAFB has already secured \$3,500,000.00 from the Texas Department of Agriculture for a new facility and will seek other government and philanthropic support to fund the entire project. While the physical building is in the City of Fort Worth, the impact will be county-wide. As the nexus of relief efforts in the Fort Worth region, this expansion of capacity is required to fulfill the vision of "communities where no one has to go hungry."

American Rescue Plan Act Funding for this project is being authorized by City Council through Mayor and Council Communication 13ARPA AMERICAN RESCUE PLAN ACT PROJECT ALLOCATIONS on the September 27, 2022 agenda.

FISCAL INFORMATION / CERTIFICATION:

The Director of Finance certifies that upon approval of the above recommendations, funds are available in the current operating budget, as appropriated, of the Grants Operating Federal Fund. The Economic Development Department shall be responsible for ensuring that only expenditures allowable under the American Recovery Plan Act are charged to this funding source.

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Expedited