

Description

The Technical Assistance Grant to Communities, Demonstration Grant, offered through the Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration (PHMSA), as part of the Department of Transportation (DOT), will be used to develop and process pipeline information into a format that will enable accurate and efficient retrieval. The City currently has hard copy engineering plans and right-of-way agreements on file for pipeline crossings. With the large volume of paper information, the City cannot review and make decisions on potentially impacting developments in a timely manner. The intent is to make this information available to other City departments, citizens, developers and private contractors as accurately and efficiently as possible.

The pipeline agreement information includes City parks, streets, public right-of-way, City fee-owned properties, and properties in tax foreclosure where the City acts as the trustee for the other local taxing entities. Planning for and initiating development around these existing and proposed pipelines has the potential to pose health and safety hazards to both citizens and construction personnel. Currently, developers, planners, and City staff have a difficult time researching the existence and extent of these pipelines. Teaming Fort Worth's rapid growth over the last 15 years with the boom in natural gas production due to the Barnett shale, it has never been more important for City departments to quickly and accurately view this information.

The City proposes to use this grant to incorporate the existing paper data into the City's Geographic Information System (GIS) and make this information available through a public map viewer. This information will be available to contractors, developers and City departments – including the Fire, Police, and Emergency Management Departments - which will be the first responders to incidents nearby or concerning these pipelines. Converting this data to the City's GIS will enable users to view not only location information but information about depth, type of materials being transported, control points and emergency operator contact information.

The second attachment provided in the application is a copy of the City of Fort Worth pipeline ordinance which became effective January 1, 2009. This ordinance requires the operators to provide pipeline plan and agreement information to the City in order to continuously update these proposed GIS pipeline layers. This ordinance was the result of a year and a half long process of working with the development community, City staff, and natural gas industry. The resulting requirements outlined in this ordinance reflect the concerns of not only the City, but, the development and natural gas community.

Due to the amount of pipeline data needing to be converted and the current economic conditions facing the City of Fort Worth, this grant is a much needed resource toward accomplishing the goals set out in the City's pipeline ordinance. Leveraging this grant with the City's own data conversion effort -outlined in the budget section - will enable the City to utilize and provide this information during this time of rapid growth.