

STAFF REPORT

TO: Planning & Economic Development Committee **DATE:** 3/17/16
FROM: Cathy Ball, PE, ED of Planning and Multimodal Transportation
SUBJECT: Tourism Development Product Fund (TPDF) Process

Summary: The City would like to submit an application for a multi-year funding from TPDF. The application is due June 1, 2016.

Background: The City of Asheville has been successful in securing several million dollars in matching grant funds from TPDF annual cycles over the course of the past five years. City projects that have benefitted include the US Cellular Center, French Broad River Greenway Trailhead at Craven Street, and 14 Riverside Drive, amongst others.

The TPDF program was expanded this year to include the public sector's ability to request multi-year funding for "Major Works" projects- those with a minimum \$5 Million construction cost. While secured award amounts would still be approved on an annual basis, as required by state legislation, the new multi-year process allows the TPDF committee to prioritize (ie. pledge) future annual cycle awards to the multi-year projects, as new hotel tax receipts are actually received. This new multi-year program better aligns with the City's multi-year CIP process. Staff reports that TDA continues to demonstrate interest in being flexible and responsive to working with its established partners like the City of Asheville, and staff is meeting regularly with them to explore additional opportunities for this grant program to help support the fiscal sustainability of the City's investment.

Staff has worked closely with the TDA staff to identify shared objectives that would meet the TPDF criteria for multi-year projects. Generally, these projects include the following:

- Reconstructing streets in the Central Business District (CBD) to increase downtown's authentic and vibrant atmosphere to include: widening sidewalks and developing streetscapes, and place making in the CBD to spotlight busking areas, public art, and beloved destinations (the design would comply with the multimodal transportation plan - Asheville In Motion);
- Constructing structured parking in the south slope area;
- Renovating Thomas Wolfe Auditorium; and, (may be submitted in a subsequent year); and,
- Constructing a gateway into the CBD at Haywood Street/Patton Avenue/Clingman Avenue or in the south slope.

Staff will bring more specific information on the grant request to PED and Finance Committee in the April 2016 meetings.

The request for funding will be in the range of \$20 million over a 5-year period. Staff will be provided more detail on the projects and the percent of City match recommended.

Recommendation:

Staff would recommend the proposed schedule for applying for the TPDF grant:

- PED - March 2016
- PED and Finance - April 2016
- City Council – May 2016
- Submit application – June 1, 2016
- Announcement of award – October 2016

Staff is also requesting general feedback from the PED Committee on the projects listed above.