Exhibit for Recommendation to not enter into MOU with RGISC for Additional Air Monitoring at Bridges 2 & 3.

8/13/2024
Email from City Manager

Good morning Mayor and City Council,

Please see the included email string with the City, through my office and RGISC. It will be my recommendation to you that the City postpone entering into another MOU with RGISC for additional air monitoring at Bridges 2 and 3. I was incorrect for Bridge 4. However, we have 13 (plus this tentative one) projects already in the queue with RGISC and I believe that we should focus on the current relationship first. I am also confused on the need for additional air monitoring at Bridge 2 when there are already plans through a US EPA grant for approximately 14 air monitoring stations. Both of these bridges also have TCEQ monitors already located at them. Why can't they serve in this capacity?

I have asked staff to stop work on preparing this MOU pending any additional directive from the City Council. It is my understanding that RGISC has been reaching out to each of you regarding this decision which prompted this email at this time.

If you wish to adjust my recommendation to move forward with the project, I do ask for further consideration of the following:

1. who and how the information will be utilized?
2. who owns the data?
3. How does it improve our understanding and operation of the bridges?
4. Should we include additional voices into the discussion such as Port of Entry committee and carriers' association to determine full scope of the work?
5. As the city must manage the relationship, there is a cost associated with the relationship even though the grant covers the capital. If not directly financial, there is a resource allocation cost. We are already spending time on preparing the MOU over the past 2 weeks.

My goal as always is to keep our vendors, partners and staff focused on the work already approved rather than continue to spread our limited resources further.

Take care,

Joe Neeb

From: tricia <tricia@rgisc.org>
Sent: Wednesday, June 12, 2024 6:12 PM
To: Joseph W. Neeb

Good afternoon Mr. Neeb:

Thank you for the information.

If I may, I have included Dr. Richard Peltier from the University of Massachusetts at Amherst on this thread, who helped design the technical framework for this Border 2025 proposal to help get a better understanding of PM2.5 in both Laredo and Nuevo Laredo.

He is a professor Environmental Health Sciences and holds a PhD in Atmospheric Chemistry from Georgia Tech, and a MPH in Environmental Health Sciences at Columbia University. He leads an active research lab that is focused on particle speciation, particle monitoring with low cost applications, field work, and science communication. His team will help to install the sensors in and assist with the online data dashboard and help interested citizens and decision-makers understand how to interpret the data, in both Laredo and Nuevo Laredo.

For background, Dr. Peltier was also part of the fenceline air monitoring project that we did for ethylene oxide issue around Midwest Sterilization Corp. He didn't collect the data or build the QAPP for us with the U.S. EPA, but he did run the Quality Assurance/Quality Control on the data, and is finalizing the analysis of that data.

Regarding the Border 2025 NADBANK/EPA/BECC air quality project, a couple of points for clarification:

The scope of work only involves two bridges: Bridge 2 (Juarez Lincoln) and Bridge 3 (World Trade Bridge). It didn't Bridge 4 (Colombia).

2. My understanding from Dr. Peltier is that there is a specific purpose to installing a sensor at the EPA/TCEQ site at World Trade Bridge – low cost sensors are inherently less certain than their more sophisticated and expensive EPA/TCEQ monitors. Co-locating a less certain sensor at the EPA/TCEQ site lets us calibrate a low-cost sensor (LCS) to local conditions, which are reported hourly by the TCEQ monitor. And this can be used to correct all of the other LCS sensors spread across the region. If the other projects that you mentioned are not co-locating at the TCEQ/EPA stations, then most scientists will question the accuracy of this data and it would be very difficult to draw any meaningful conclusions. It's critical that the data from the entire study be valid. This is a common way that government sites lend support to community monitoring initiatives – co-location is used to validate sensors and data. The intention isn't to double monitor at Bridge 3 but to validate the information from the rest of the study, which we are pleased to know that you support.

Kindly let me know if you'd like to discuss further, and we can invite Dr. Peltier so that he can explain why the co-location at both bridges is important for the scientific and technical aspect of the project.

Thank you,

Tricia

From: Joseph W. Neeb <jneeb@ci.laredo.tx.us>
Sent: Wednesday, June 12, 2024 9:47 AM
To: tricia <tricia@rgisc.org>

Good morning Ms. Cortez,

Let me start by saying thank you to you and your team for all of the efforts RGISC provides assistance for. The City is lucky to have the commitment from your organization to improve our city. However, I will be requesting the City Council to not enter into an MOU to add air monitoring to bridges 3 and 4. This recommendation is based upon 2 reasons.

The first is that TCEQ already has a monitoring device at Bridge 3. I believe any duplication is problematic with our bridge system. The second reason is that we currently have over 14 joint projects between the City and RGISC. I believe it is appropriate to focus on these relationships prior to expanding new projects further.

Within the projects that we have partnered with, there are 3 other air monitoring projects on-going including a substantial plan for Bridge 2 at the 4 blocks. It makes more sense to me to focus on this bridge for air monitoring due to one of the primary reasons of the Border 2025 initiative. It is to assist with improvements that affect disadvantaged neighborhoods. We consider the older neighborhoods around Bridge 2 to potentially meet those conditions. Conversely, the neighborhoods near Bridges 3 and 4 are considered differently.

Thank you for your commitment to our city and the RGISC vision. I know we have a meeting coming up in the near future and I would be happy to discuss this matter further at that time.

Take care,

Joe Neeb
Laredo City Manager