

November 19, 2009

The City of Erie, Bureau of Engineering has been participating in three ARRA funded projects at various stages of development, ranging from strategy development to substantial completion.

Parade Street Phase II, (\$800,000)

Parade Street Phase II is a transportation enhancement project funded and let through PennDOT. The Bureau of Engineering provided design and inspection services. The project included concrete curb and sidewalk, curb ramps, asphalt paving, bulbouts, crosswalks, drainage, tree planting, trash receptacles and benches and traffic signals. The project was an extension of Parade Street Phase I, which predated ARRA, which also included pedestrian lighting in addition to a similar scope. Both projects are now substantially complete.

A goal of both projects was to provide infrastructure improvements to encourage growth, redevelopment and economic development in a commercial corridor in need of revitalization. There has been positive feedback from property owners who are pleased with the project and hope to reinvest in the area.

State Street Enhancement (\$1,100,000)

State Street Enhancement is similar in scope to Parade Street. The project includes concrete curb and sidewalk, curb ramps, asphalt paving, bulbouts, crosswalks, boulevards, drainage, tree planting and landscaping, and lighting for the street and pedestrians. A goal is to provide a gateway to Presque Isle Bay and access to recent development of the Convention Center and Sheraton Hotel and future waterfront development. Project design was completed by the Bureau of Engineering and Dahlkemper Landscape Architects. The project was funded as well as let through PennDOT with ARRA funds and supplemented with \$200,000 from the Erie Western PA Port Authority through a grant from PA DCED. The contract has been awarded. Construction is scheduled to begin in the Spring of 2010 and to be completed by Fall of 2010.

Energy Efficiency and Conservation Block Grant (EECBG) (\$1,031,500)

The City of Erie received a formula grant from the US DOE and recently executed the Assistance Agreement for the EECBG. The Bureau of Engineering along with CLT, ETG, Inc. (an Energy Services Company) is developing the Energy Efficiency and Conservation Strategy (EECS) for submittal by December 28, 2009. The Bureau of Engineering and CLT have previously performed a Guaranteed Energy Savings Contract predating ARRA under Act 57 which included lighting, HVAC system improvements and LED Traffic signals. The project resulted in a successful payback period generating over \$200,000 savings per year. The City plans to perform a Phase II Guaranteed Energy Savings project using EECBG funds under Act 77 to guarantee savings generated by stimulus funding and to achieve optimal and sustainable energy savings. The proposed strategy for the project will include a combination of building HVAC systems improvements, insulation, roofing, doors, windows and energy efficient street lighting.

Comments

The City of Erie recognizes the great need for funding at the state level for state roads and bridges. But, it appears that about 90-95% of the ARRA transportation dollars in District 1 went directly to state projects, leaving a small portion of funds available for municipal projects such as local roads. The City of Erie also recognizes the benefits of paving state highways within the city limits. But, the City of Erie and other municipalities struggle to fund upgrades and maintenance to local roads and would appreciate future consideration regarding possible direct funding to municipalities for these purposes. Our transportation infrastructure needs are tremendous.

The current system of application and reporting, although at times confusing and challenging, has been workable. Some of the information requested and forms provided have been unclear, but I was able to find help rather quickly when necessary. I have registered on and must monitor many websites. One central website for all projects and agencies, although maybe not possible, may be more desirable. The Bureau of Engineering has worked diligently to develop and deliver projects quickly to meet the goals of ARRA funding. The Bureau of Engineering has been able to meet published deadlines in certain cases where others have not and extensions were granted. The jobs created and retained by these projects have been short term well paying construction jobs, but the projects will promote private redevelopment and economic development and will result in sustainable energy efficiency and conservation.