



CITY OF HOUSTON - CITY COUNCIL

Meeting Date: 7/5/2017

District D

Item Creation Date: 6/13/2017

HCD17-70 William A. Lawson Institute for Peace and Prosperity
(WALIPP)

Agenda Item#:

Background:

The Housing and Community Development Department (HCDD) requests the approval of an amendment that would allow The William A. Lawson Institute for Peace and Prosperity (WALIPP) to use New Market Tax Credits (NMTC) for the construction of The Lawson Academy charter school campus located at 5012 Scott Street.

In April 2016, Council approved an Agreement between the City and WALIPP to provide \$4,730,000 in Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds for acquisition of 5.5 acres of land at 5012 Scott Street to construct The Lawson Academy's charter school campus. The proceeds from the NMTC will support the previously approved \$9,335,916 total project budget to complete the construction of The Lawson Academy charter school campus.

The William A. Lawson Institute for Peace and Prosperity (WALIPP) has operated The Lawson Academy since 2002. The land acquired will be used for the construction of campuses for boys' and girls' schools for middle school grade levels. The new campus will include classrooms, a cafeteria, and a field for student athletics. The campus will also have administrative offices, a parking lot and land for expansion to include high school grades. All 40 modular structures for the campus have been delivered and are pending construction completion. The Academy plans to open at the new location for school operations in August 2017.

The school currently has 150 students and leases space from a church. As a result, the Academy is unable to expand to serve a larger student body. WALIPP estimates that it will be able to serve an additional 150 students, for a total of 300 middle school students at the new campus. The Texas Education Agency approved The Lawson Academy to add high school grades in 2011, and the acquisition of this parcel of land will allow the school to expand to include grades 9-12 in the future. The Academy projects that it will have as many as 900 students with the addition of a high school campus.

The revised total project budget is approximately \$11,225,535.20 of which \$2,077,318.74 will be net proceeds from NMTC to complete the construction of The Lawson Academy's charter school. No additional City funds will be granted on this project.

This item was reviewed by the Housing and Community Affairs Committee on March 21, 2017.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Tom McCasland", written over a horizontal line.

Tom McCasland, Director

Prior Council Action:

4/6/16, (O) 2016-253

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