AN ACT

RELATING TO STATE AFFAIRS AND GOVERNMENT -- RHODE ISLAND MUNICIPAL INFRASTRUCTURE GRANT PROGRAM

Introduced By: Representatives Edwards, Cunha, Solomon, Price, and Casimiro

Date Introduced: March 09, 2017

Referred To: House Finance

It is enacted by the General Assembly as follows:

SECTION 1. Title 42 of the General Laws entitled "STATE AFFAIRS AND GOVERNMENT" is hereby amended by adding thereto the following chapter:

CHAPTER 11.4

THE RHODE ISLAND MUNICIPAL INFRASTRUCTURE GRANT PROGRAM

42-11.4-1. Establishment.

The Rhode Island municipal infrastructure grant program is hereby created within the department of administration. The department of administration is authorized to:

(1) Issue public infrastructure grants to municipalities and other public instrumentalities for design, construction, building, land acquisition, rehabilitation, repair and other improvements to publicly-owned infrastructure including, but not limited to, sewers, utility extensions, streets, roads, curb-cuts, parking, water treatment systems, telecommunications systems, transit improvements, and pedestrian ways; and

(2) Assist municipalities to advance projects that support job creation and expansion, housing development and rehabilitation, community development projects in areas or districts that communities have determined are best suited to efficiently accommodate future growth and redevelopment, largely in previously developed areas with some level of existing or planned infrastructure.

42-11.4-2. Eligibility.
Eligible public infrastructure projects authorized by this chapter shall be located on public land or on public leasehold, right-of-way or easement. A project that uses grants to municipalities for public infrastructure provided by this chapter shall be procured by a municipality in accordance with chapter 55 of title 45.

42-11.4-3. Solicitations.

(a) There shall be at least one open solicitation period each year to accept and consider new applications. Not less than twelve (12) weeks before the annual open solicitation period, the department of administration shall release the criteria upon which the applications shall be judged including, but not limited to, a minimum project readiness standard, overall spending targets by project type, preferences for projects that align with the state's prevailing economic development plan and other preferences applying to that funding round. Grants may be made outside of the open solicitation period at the discretion of the director of administration subject to the provisions of this section. All grant awards shall be made after consultation with the Rhode Island statewide planning program and the Rhode Island infrastructure bank.

(b) An eligible city or town, acting by and through its municipal officers or by and through any agency designated by such municipal officers to act on their behalf, may apply to the program for a grant in a specific amount to fund a specified project. Two (2) or more municipalities may apply jointly, with one municipality acting as fiscal agent. The grants may be made in addition to other forms of local, state, and federal assistance. Receipt of a grant which is part of a joint application shall not preclude a municipality from receiving additional funds under a separate application.

42-11.4-4. Rules and regulations.

The director of administration may establish reasonable rules and regulations to govern the application and distribution of grants under the program, to include, but not be limited to, provisions for joint applications by two (2) or more eligible municipalities for a single project serving those municipalities.

42-11.4-5. Reports.

The director of administration shall report annually to the governor, speaker of the house, president of the senate, and the chairs of the house committee on finance, senate committee on finance, house committee on oversight, senate committee on government oversight, house committee on municipal government, senate committee on housing and municipal government, and the permanent joint committee on economic development. The report shall include a list and description of all projects that received grant funds under the program, the amount of the grant awarded to the project, other sources of public funds that supported the project, a detailed
analysis of the economic impact of each project including, where applicable, the number of
collection and full-time equivalent jobs to be created, number of housing units to be created,
the private investment in the project, and the expected tax revenue generated from the project.

SECTION 2. This act shall take effect upon passage.

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This act would create a municipal infrastructure grant program within the department of administration (DOA) to issue grants and provide assistance for municipal and other public infrastructure projects that support job creation and expansion, housing development and rehabilitation, community development, and for the accommodation of future growth and redevelopment.

This act would take effect upon passage.