



City of Arts & Innovation

City Council Memorandum

TO: HONORABLE MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL DATE: MARCH 7, 2023
FROM: PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT WARDS: ALL

SUBJECT: APPROVAL OF A SUSTAINABLE TRANSPORTATION PLANNING GRANT PROGRAM GRANT APPLICATION OFFERED BY THE CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION – RIVERSIDE SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOL PLAN - IN THE AMOUNT UP TO \$700,000

ISSUE:

Authorize the submittal of a grant application up to \$700,000 in funding for the Sustainable Transportation Planning Grant Program offered by the California Department of Transportation to develop individual pedestrian and bicycle circulation plans (Safe Routes to School Plan) for fifty (50) elementary and middle schools citywide. The total project cost is estimated at \$790,692 in grant award and required matching funds.

RECOMMENDATION:

That the City Council authorize the Public Works Department to submit a funding application for the Sustainable Transportation Planning Grant Program offered by the California Department of Transportation in an amount up to \$700,000 for the Riverside Safe Routes to School Plan Project, a comprehensive plan for each individual elementary and middle school in the city of Riverside.

BACKGROUND:

The City of Riverside has participated in several Caltrans grant programs, seeking funding for important active transportation planning documents and capital projects through the submission of multiple grant applications. To date, the city has been successful in securing millions of dollars in federal and state grants through these efforts.

On June 7, 2022, the City Council authorized that staff prepare and submit five (5) ATP Cycle VI grant applications reflective of the community's needs and supportive of the Active Transportation Program initiatives. Of the five projects submitted, one of the applications was the Safe Routes to School Project. The initial results of the ATP Cycle VI review show that the City's Safe Routes to School grant application was not selected for funding. However, the City is scheduled to have a debrief meeting to receive helpful feedback to strengthen applications for other funding programs (such as the Sustainable Transportation Planning Grant).

On January 18, 2023, Caltrans announced a Sustainable Transportation Planning Grant Call for Projects. The Sustainable Transportation Planning Grant is expected to include approximately \$29.5 million in State grant funds.

DISCUSSION:

In prior meetings with the Riverside Unified School District (RUSD), Alvord Unified School District (AUSD), and individual elementary and middle schools, there has been a longstanding vision to establish and develop pedestrian and bicycle safety circulation plans to encourage both active transportation modes to school as well as increase the safety of pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure paths to school via operational, physical, and program improvements.

Riverside Safe Routes to School Plan – Sustainable Communities Competitive Planning Grant

This Public Works grant application will request up to \$700,000:

The City of Riverside Safe Routes to School (SRTS) Project will result in fifty (50) individualized SRTS studies and fifty (50) pedestrian and bicycle safety circulation plans for each public K-8 schools. Each plan will be tailored for each individual school with detailed operational and physical improvements intended to promote walking, biking, and safety. These improvements align with programmatic recommendations for each school for safer, more convenient walking and bicycling options for Riverside's more than 26,000 K-8 students, their families, and residents. These identified recommendations will be used to pursue implementation funding and resources through the Caltrans Sustainable Transportation Planning Grant Program.

If awarded, the project tasks include:

- Contract professional consultant services to evaluate each participating elementary and middle school within the City and develop a comprehensive SRTS Plan for each individual site.
- Extensive public outreach efforts for the SRTS plans including distribution via newsletters, websites, surveys, etc. and encourage non-vehicular transportation to school.
- Evaluate pedestrian, bicycle, vehicular, collision data, and crossing guard data as well as coordination with the schools, school districts, and Parent-Teacher Associations (PTA) for each school.
- Prepare the City for future SRTS Infrastructure Improvement Grant Applications which result from recommendations from each individualized SRTS Studies.

The City is actively working with AUSD, RUSD, and Riverside University Health Systems to garner letters of support from each school that wishes to be included in the plan. Completion of the SRTS plan will realize Goal 4.1.5 within the Riverside PACT Plan, which is to "Coordinate the implementation of the Active Transportation Plan with implementation and creation of a SRTS Plan so that children are encouraged to bike and walk to school."

Grant Matching Strategy & Development

The full scope of the project is pending final estimates; however, in order to stay within the defined project size ranges and to remain competitive for local funds, the Riverside SRTS Plan will be capped at \$700,000 in total project costs for the Sustainable Communities Competitive and Technical Category projects.

The proposed projects will benefit citywide school communities by making vital improvements which will elevate safety levels, create pedestrian & equestrian facilities, and heighten driver awareness.

City Staff is requesting authorization from the City Council for the grant application in an amount up to \$700,000.

STRATEGIC PLAN ALIGNMENT:

This item supports **Strategic Priority 1 – Arts, Culture and Recreation** and **Goal 1.5 – Support programs and amenities to further develop literacy, health, and education of children, youth and seniors throughout the community** and **Strategic Priority 2 – Community Well-Being** and **Goal 2.4 – Support programs and innovations that enhance community safety, encourage neighborhood engagement, and build public trust**. As well as **Strategic Priority 6 – Infrastructure, Mobility & Connectivity Goals 6.1, 6.2, and 6.4**.

This item aligns with each of the five Cross-Cutting Threads as follows:

1. **Community Trust** –The project is supported by the priority objectives of the Riverside PACT. The City will submit this application with the goal of serving public interest, benefiting the City’s diverse populations, and meeting the needs of the school community based on their feedback.
2. **Equity** –. The proposed application will serve pedestrians and bicyclists across the City including the targeted school communities.
3. **Fiscal Responsibility** – Riverside is a prudent steward of public funds and ensures responsible management of the City’s financial resources by awarding consultant services contracts to the lowest responsive bidders and utilizing available grant funding from the Sustainable Transportation Planning Grant Program.
4. **Innovation** –The City will partner with several entities to develop comprehensive plans, and policies for each school to deliver a successful safe route to school program.
5. **Sustainability & Resiliency** – The proposed plans aim to increase the proportion of biking and walking to connect residents to educational opportunities, improve community resilience, and reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

FISCAL IMPACT:

The total estimated fiscal impact of this recommendation is \$790,692 which is a combination of grant funding and required City match, to complete the Riverside Safe Routes to School Plan (Table 1).

Table 1 – Project Costs:

Project Name	Caltrans Sustainable Transportation Planning Grant Program Funds Requested	Match Funds (11.47%) / Non-Participating Funds	Total Project Cost
Riverside Safe Routes to School Plan	\$700,000	\$90,692	\$790,692

If successful, the Caltrans Sustainable Transportation Planning grant funding will be used for consulting services for the development of the Riverside SRTS Plan.

If awarded, staff will return to Council with a definitive recommendation for allocating matching funding in the amount of \$90,692 from the potential funding sources, including bond proceeds, surplus reserves, Measure A, or other funding as available.

Prepared by: Gilbert Hernandez, Public Works Director
 Certified as to
 availability of funds: Edward Enriquez, Interim Assistant City Manager
 and Chief Financial Officer/City Treasurer
 Approved by: Kris Martinez, Assistant City Manager
 Approved as to form: Phaedra Norton, City Attorney