



*City of Arts & Innovation*

# City Council Memorandum

**TO: HONORABLE MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL** **DATE: FEBRUARY 27, 2024**

**FROM: PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT** **WARDS: ALL**

**SUBJECT: APPROVAL OF A GRANT APPLICATION TO THE CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION FOR FISCAL YEAR 2024 SUSTAINABLE TRANSPORTATION PLANNING GRANT PROGRAM FOR A GRANT AMOUNT OF \$398,400 WITH A \$51,617, LOCAL MATCH REQUIREMENT FOR A TOTAL FUNDING AMOUNT OF \$450,017**

## **ISSUE:**

Authorize the submittal of a grant application of \$398,400 in funding for a Fiscal Year 2024 Sustainable Transportation Planning Grant Program offered by the California Department of Transportation to conduct a series of pilot studies that will assess successful traffic-calming measures and create an improvement plan to facilitate safer streets for all roadway users. The total project cost is estimated at \$450,017 with a total grant funded component of \$398,400 and a required 11.47% local match of \$51,617.

## **RECOMMENDATION:**

That the City Council authorize the Public Works Department to submit a funding application for the Fiscal Year 2024 Sustainable Transportation Planning grant offered by the California Department of Transportation for a total estimated project cost of \$450,017 (including \$51,617 in required local matching funds), to conduct a series of pilot studies that advance the active transportation and traffic safety priority projects that are included in the Riverside PACT and Riverside Local Roadway Safety Plan (LRSP).

## **BACKGROUND:**

On October 5, 2023, the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) announced the Sustainable Transportation Planning Grant Call for Projects. The Sustainable Transportation Planning Grant is expected to include approximately \$29.5 million in State grant funds.

The Sustainable Transportation Planning Grant Program was created to support the Caltrans' Mission: Provide a safe and reliable transportation network that serves all people and respects the environment.

The California Legislature passed Bill 1 – The Road Repair and Accountability Act of 2017, a transportation funding bill that provides a reliable fund source to maintain and integrate the State's multi-modal transportation system. In addition to the \$9.5 million in traditional State and federal

grants, approximately \$25 million in SB 1 funds for Sustainable Communities Grants is available for each grant cycle.

The State-funded Sustainable Communities grants (\$29.5 million) are intended to support and implement Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) Sustainable Communities Strategies/Alternative Planning Strategies (SCS/APS) (where applicable) and to ultimately achieve the State's greenhouse gas (GHG) reduction target of 40 and 80 percent below 1990 levels by 2030 and 2050, respectively.

According to the California Energy Commission's website, California's transportation sector accounts for about 50 percent of the state's greenhouse gas emissions.

Eligible planning projects must have a transportation nexus per Article XIX Sections 2 and 3 of the California Constitution. Therefore, successful planning projects are expected to directly benefit the multi-modal transportation system. These grants will also improve public health, social equity, environmental justice, the environment, and provide other important community benefits. The period of grant fund availability spans over three fiscal years (FYs) and approximately 32 months for grant project activities after the grant agreement is executed and Caltrans issues a Notice to Proceed.

The Fiscal Year 2024 Caltrans Sustainable Transportation Planning grant application is due by January 18, 2024.

## **DISCUSSION:**

The City of Riverside (City) has participated in several Caltrans Sustainable Transportation Planning (CSTP) 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 CSTP state grants benefitting the City and its residents by constructing critical vehicular, pedestrian and cyclist safety enhancements.

The City's commitment towards improving active transportation infrastructure is evident in the work already completed thus far on identifying multi-modal transportation issues, crash reduction factors, improvements, and countermeasures, as well as specific potential project locations for the pilot program. This initial analysis' locations are documented within the Riverside P.A.C.T Plan and the Riverside Local Roadway Safety Plan (LRSP).

### **Riverside Active Transportation Pilot Program Improvement Initiative – Sustainable Communities Competitive Planning Grant**

The project is intended to establish a program to prioritize the pre-determined active transportation projects and advance project-specific outreach efforts for the prioritized active transportation locations and proposed traffic safety countermeasures. These pilot project locations could potentially result in, but are not limited to, curb extensions, art crosswalks, pavement murals, new bike lanes/bikeways, sidewalks, pedestrian crossing enhancements, lighting, high visibility crosswalks, roundabouts, and more. The proposed Active Transportation Pilot Program Improvement Initiative is the interim step to build off prior citywide existing Active Transportation Plan and Local Roadway Safety Plan, and seeks further community engagement, prepares preliminary exhibits, updates collision data specific to each proposed active transportation project and analyze disadvantaged community designations. Additionally, this pilot program can help the City envision modifications to the forthcoming General Plan (Circulation Element) Update.

The project establishes priority needs and project options to test active transportation mode-shift in a vehicle-dominant community, which will allow the City to implement complete streets, first-last mile connections within neighborhoods, housing projects, transit, employment centers, parks, schools, and more. The City of Riverside recognizes the importance of active transportation and its role in reducing air pollutants, improving air quality, and enhancing quality of life for residents. By conducting pilot studies oriented towards pedestrian safety, the City will be able to identify solutions to its residents' safety concerns surrounding active transportation. The implementation plan that will be a part of the final planning document will enable the City to reduce barriers to active transportation and promote greater active transportation usage throughout the community.

If awarded, the initial project tasks include:

- Contract professional consultant services to administer the citywide active transportation pilot program improvement initiative.
- Establish a stakeholder advisory committee to identify a list of potential pilot study locations that have been identified as areas of concerns and to evaluate locations for the citywide program.
- Extensive public outreach efforts for the citywide pilot program including distribution via flyers, newsletters, websites, surveys, etc. and encourage non-vehicular transportation to destinations.
- Evaluate existing conditions of pedestrian, bicycle, vehicular, and collision data as well as coordination with the local residents, community-based organizations, and stakeholders.
- Identification of disadvantaged community status of pilot project locations using Healthy Places Index, CalEnviroScreen, free or reduced priced meals (FRPM), and more.
- Procurement of enhanced crash analysis and safety improvement software that integrates multiple data sets, develops a high-injury network, layering of equity considerations, provides before & after analysis of countermeasures, & produce a variety of public reports.
- Prepare draft and final reports that incorporate input from the community, technical data, evaluation of existing and proposed conditions, and provide infrastructure and non-infrastructure programmatic recommendations.
- Prepare the City for future infrastructure improvement grant applications which result from recommendations from each pilot study location.

The City has received letters of support for the grant application from the following local entities: Riverside County Transportation Commission (RCTC), Western Riverside Council of Governments (WRCOG), Riverside Transit Agency (RTA), Alvord Unified School District (AUSD), and Riverside Bicycle Club (RBC).

#### 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 Active Transportation

Pilot Program Improvement Initiative will be capped at \$450,017 in total project costs for the Sustainable Communities Competitive and Technical Category projects.

The proposed projects will benefit the underserved community and vulnerable road users by developing improvement plans to elevate safety levels, create pedestrian & bicycle facilities, and heighten driver awareness.

City Staff is requesting authorization from the City Council for the grant application in an amount not to exceed \$400,000.

### **STRATEGIC PLAN ALIGNMENT:**

This item supports **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 and Riverside LRSP. The City will submit this application with the goal of serving the public interest, benefiting the City’s diverse populations, and meeting the needs of the community based on their feedback.
2. **Equity** –. The proposed application will serve pedestrians and bicyclists across the City including the targeted active transportation and underserved disadvantaged 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 qualified bidders and utilizing available grant funding from the Caltrans Sustainable Transportation Planning Grant Program.
4. **Innovation** –The City will partner with several entities to develop pilot studies, comprehensive safety recommendations and preliminary concept plans for each study to assess feasibility, obtain community input and prioritize future infrastructure improvement strategies.
5. **Sustainability & Resiliency** – The proposed pilot studies aim to increase the proportion of biking and walking to connect residents to their destination, improve community resilience, and reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

### **FISCAL IMPACT:**

There is no immediate fiscal impact related to this report as this is for the application only. Should the grant be awarded to the City, Staff will bring forward another report for acceptance and appropriations related to the grant, including the City match portion of the grant.

If awarded, the total estimated fiscal impact of this grant is \$450,017, which is a combination of grant funding and required City match, to complete the Riverside Active Transportation Pilot Program Improvement Initiative project (Table 1).

Table 1 – Project Costs

<b>Project Name</b>	<b>Caltrans Sustainable Transportation Planning Grant Program Funds Requested</b>	<b>Match Funds (11.47%) / Non-Participating Funds</b>	<b>Total Project Cost</b>
Citywide Riverside Active Transportation Pilot Program Improvement Initiative	\$398,400	\$51,617	\$450,017

If successful, the Caltrans Sustainable Transportation Planning grant funding will be used for consulting services for the development of the Riverside Active Transportation Pilot Program Improvement Initiative.

If awarded, staff will return to City Council with a recommendation for allocating matching funds of \$51,61.

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