



City of Arts & Innovation

# Transportation Board

**TO: TRANSPORTATION BOARD** **DATE: AUGUST 5, 2015**

**FROM: PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT** **WARDS: 3, 5, AND 6**

**SUBJECT: UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA RIVERSIDE WALK RIVERSIDE NEW URBANISM IN ACTION WALKABILITY PLAN – ARLINGTON AND RAMONA NEIGHBORHOODS**

## **ISSUE:**

The issue for Transportation Board consideration is to receive and file the attached University of California Riverside (UCR) prepared report summarizing their walkability assessment and recommendations for the Arlington and Ramona neighborhoods.

## **RECOMMENDATION:**

That the Transportation Board receive the UCR prepared Walk Riverside New Urbanism in Action Walkability Plan for the Arlington and Ramona Neighborhoods report.

## **BACKGROUND:**

The Center for Sustainable Suburban Development, UCR School of Public Policy received grant funding to provide a walkability plan for the Arlington and Ramona Neighborhoods (Attachments 1 and 2). UCR collaborated with City, County, Riverside County Transportation Commission (RCTC), community leaders, residents, and Riverside Transit Agency (RTA) to assess walking and transit facilities, sidewalk connectivity, lighting, and community based problem solving processes to improve pedestrian safety and facilitate and encourage increased walking in lower income communities.

The new urbanism approach focuses on making walkability a centerpiece of affordable and equitable transportation. Further, it provides a set of principles for urban planners to organize and design the layout of buildings and open spaces to encourage increased walking. The new urbanism approach supports many of the City's policies that promote integrated neighborhoods where residents have all amenities within walking distance, thereby shifting away from the current reliance on vehicles for these shorter trips. UCR shared the draft report entitled, "*Walk Riverside New Urbanism in Action Walkability Plan for the Arlington and Ramona Neighborhoods*" with the City in early 2014 and the Public Works Department implemented some of the recommendations.

In support of the walkability report, the City applied for Active Transportation Program (ATP) Cycle II grant funding to propose new sidewalks near the Ramona High School neighborhoods and High-Intensity Activated Crosswalk Beacon (HAWK) signalization at several uncontrolled crossings including the crosswalk at Magnolia Avenue at Farnham Place located within the

study area. UCR's walkability report was finalized on February 28, 2015 (Attachment 3), presented to the City Council on March 10, 2015, and outlined many of the recommendations including:

1. Invest in high-visibility crosswalks.
2. Add crossing aides where pedestrian traffic is high to improve safety and encourage increased pedestrian traffic.
3. Ensure walkway continuity and widen sidewalks.
4. Improve roadway and pedestrian scale lighting.
5. Increase bikeways and connectivity.
6. Reduce street lanes.
7. Remove and/or relocate on-street parking.
8. Provide Arlington/Ramona communities bicycle training and safety education programs.
9. Facilitate routine walk audits.
10. Introduce or add locally appropriate streetscape elements.
11. Pursue economic development which aims at improving walkability.
12. Streamline permitting processes for walkability improvements.
13. Collaborate with RTA to make transit stops safer and more comfortable.
14. Enforce leash laws and improve animal control.
15. Change consciousness through popular education for sustainability.

The report details many general concepts that the Public Works Department currently utilizes to encourage increased walking and biking. Other recommendations may be under the authority of different departments, agencies, driven by neighborhood groups, or have limited applicability such as:

1. High-visibility crosswalks – this type of treatment is typically used at midblock unprotected crosswalks.
2. Crossing aides – crossing guard placement for City schools is determined by the school districts.
3. Bicycle training and safety education programs are typically overseen by the Police Department or the respective elementary school.
4. State and/or Federal programs have guidelines and processes to award biking and walking grant funds; the permitting/awarding process is typically administered by the State or Federal agency.
5. RTA evaluates transit facilities and stops to determine applicable improvements.
6. Enforcement of leash laws and improved animal control is conducted by the County and/or Police Department.

The Public Works Department supports the general findings of the walkability report and will continue to engage residents, neighborhood groups, community leaders, and City departments to improve the connectivity of walking and biking facilities. The State recently consolidated existing Federal and State transportation grant programs into a single program under the ATP to make California a national leader in active transportation. The City has actively pursued these grant opportunities to install additional bike and pedestrian facilities and thereby expand and improve the non-motorized network. Further, the Public Works Department evaluates the Bicycle Master Plan and walking facilities when designing roadway projects or assessing new developments to incorporate improvements which broaden the City's network of active transportation alternatives.

**FISCAL IMPACT:**

There is no fiscal impact associated with this report.

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**Attachments:**

1. Location Maps
2. Walk Riverside New Urbanism in Action Walkability Plan for Arlington and Ramona Neighborhoods Report, dated February 28, 2015