City of Arts & Innovation

Transportation Committee

TO: **TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE MEMBERS** **DATE: DECEMBER 8, 2016**

FROM: **PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT** **WARD: 2**

SUBJECT: **COMPLETE, GREEN AND SMART STREET CONFIGURATION OF IOWA AVENUE - DIRECT SUBMITTAL**

ISSUE:

Recommend that City Council support the *Complete, Green, and Smart Street* configuration of Iowa Avenue, to be completed in conjunction with construction of the new Air Resources Board campus.

RECOMMENDATION:

That the Transportation Committee recommend that the City Council support the concept of installing *Complete, Green and Smart Street* improvements along Iowa Avenue.

BACKGROUND:

After consideration of several Southern California locations, the Air Resources Board (ARB) has elected to consolidate the ARB's regional administrative offices, motor vehicle / engine emission testing facilities and laboratories, from leased and state-owned space in El Monte, California to a new campus facility within the City of Riverside. The new 300,000 square foot campus, plus parking, will be located adjacent to the University of California, Riverside campus on an approximate 18 acre parcel on the west side of Iowa Street mid-way between University Avenue and Martin Luther King Boulevard. The proposed facility will support up to 460 employees, including field-testing technicians, engineers, researchers, and administrative personnel.

Within the vicinity of the project site, Iowa Avenue is largely a two lane road with no existing curb, gutter, and sidewalk or associated underground facilities, and currently lacks the amenities to accommodate the anticipated vehicular, pedestrian, and bicycle traffic associated with the ARB campus. In order to accommodate this significant project, it will be necessary to improve Iowa Avenue fronting the proposed project from Everton Place on the north to Martin Luther King Blvd. on the south.

DISCUSSION:

Complete & Smart Street Features

The Public Works department proposes that a *Complete Streets* approach is taken during the expansion of Iowa Avenue, meaning that every mode of transportation is given due consideration when designing the proposed cross section. In order to ensure continued maintenance of service

levels along Iowa Avenue, Public Works is also proposing various 'smart street' measures to enhance safety and move traffic more efficiently through the corridor by using intelligent transportation systems. The Circulation and Community Mobility Element of the General Plan (Attachment 1) establishes that, "interconnectivity of land uses, coupled with the provision of adequate pedestrian and bicycle facilities, is an important component of Riverside's future circulation network." A focus on alternative transportation modes is also in line with the ARB's mission "to promote and protect public health, welfare and ecological resources through the effective and efficient reduction of air pollutants." Because ARB is seeking to design and build its research facility to the highest standards of sustainability, staff is recommending that the City build its streets in a commensurate standard.

Additionally, the Governor's Office of Planning and Research has issued amended California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) CEQA guidelines requiring that environmental impacts are offset by reducing the total Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT) associated with projects. The State has provided recommended mitigations to reduce VMT, which coincide with Public Works' proposed improvements to Iowa Avenue.

Iowa Avenue is designated as a 110-foot right-of-way, 4 lane arterial within the Circulation Element Master Plan of Roadways, however; Iowa was previously only planned to provide vehicular throughput between Martin Luther King Boulevard and University Avenue.

Because of the proposed ARB facility, it is desirable to construct the road at full width while allocating some of the planned vehicular space to alternative uses such as buses, bicycles, neighborhood electric vehicles, and pedestrians (Attachment 2). Such improvements could include:

1. Buffered bicycle lanes
2. Landscaped median and parkway
3. A dedicated transit / electric vehicle lane
4. Electric vehicle charging facilities and parking
5. Bus stops and pedestrian walkways with solar energy harvesting shade features
6. Signalized pedestrian crossings

Provisioning for alternative modes of transportation will allow ARB employees, along with employees of any development that is attracted to Iowa Avenue following the construction of the ARB campus, to more easily access nearby amenities, be it dining, housing, nearby bus stops, or transit facilities, such as the Hunter Park or Downtown Metrolink stations.

In order to maintain capacity along Iowa, Public Works proposes to also install:

1. Connected & autonomous vehicle infrastructure at nearby signalized intersections
2. Smart street lights or radios to provide enhanced traffic data collection and camera connectivity
3. Reduced width median where appropriate to increase available roadway space
4. Potential roundabout at the intersection of ARB at Iowa Ave., with pedestrian signals and in-pavement sensors to provide connected vehicle testing & long term efficiency

The proposed cross section of Iowa Avenue is being studied by the ARB as part of their environmental documentation. Their study will help to provide additional recommendations regarding vehicle lane and traffic control configurations.

Green Street Features

City staff also proposes the use of several *Green Street* best practices along Iowa Avenue, including water wise and drought tolerant landscaping. The landscaping would feature remotely monitored rain, moisture and line failure sensors to ensure efficient operation of the irrigation system. City staff would further study the implementation of water retention features within the right-of-way to help offset the need to irrigate during rainy seasons. Several benefits of green streets treatments are highlighted in the Environmental Protection Agency's discussion on the topic (Attachment 3) and include:

1. Minimize stormwater impacts
2. Reduce energy costs
3. Improve aesthetics of a roadway and increase livability

FISCAL IMPACT:

The report is a request for support of the concept of installing Complete, Green and Smart Street improvements along Iowa Avenue. The total estimated cost of the proposed roadway improvements along Iowa Avenue is estimated to be between $3.5M and $5.5M, depending on the final scope of the improvements. This project would likely be funded by a combination of Transportation Uniform Mitigation Fee (TUMF), Measure A, Gas Tax and other potential grant funds. Any contracts for construction will be brought to the City Council for approval. There would be no General Fund Impact.

Prepared by: Kris Martinez, Public Works Director
Certified as to availability of funds: Scott G. Miller, PhD, Chief Financial Officer/City Treasurer
Approved by: Al Zelinka, FAICP, Assistant City Manager
Approved as to form: Gary G. Geuss, City Attorney

Attachments:

1. General Plan: Circulation and Community Mobility Element
2. Complete Street Cross Section
3. Environmental Protection Agency Green Streets Article
4. Presentation