



*City of Arts & Innovation*

# City Council Memorandum

**TO: HONORABLE MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL      DATE: NOVEMBER 5, 2019**

**FROM: COMMUNITY & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT      WARDS: 1, 2**  
**DEPARTMENT**  
**PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT**

**SUBJECT: APPLICATION FOR CALTRANS SUSTAINABLE TRANSPORTATION  
PLANNING: SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES GRANT FOR THE INNOVATION  
DISTRICT STRATEGIC PLAN PROJECT IN THE AMOUNT OF \$280,000 –  
SUPPLEMENTAL APPROPRIATION**

## **ISSUE:**

Authorize the submission of an application for funding through the Caltrans Sustainable Transportation Planning: Sustainable Communities Grant Program for the preparation of an Innovation District Strategic Plan, in the amount of \$280,000, and authorize the City Manager to execute all necessary documents to secure grant funds and implement the approved grant project.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS:**

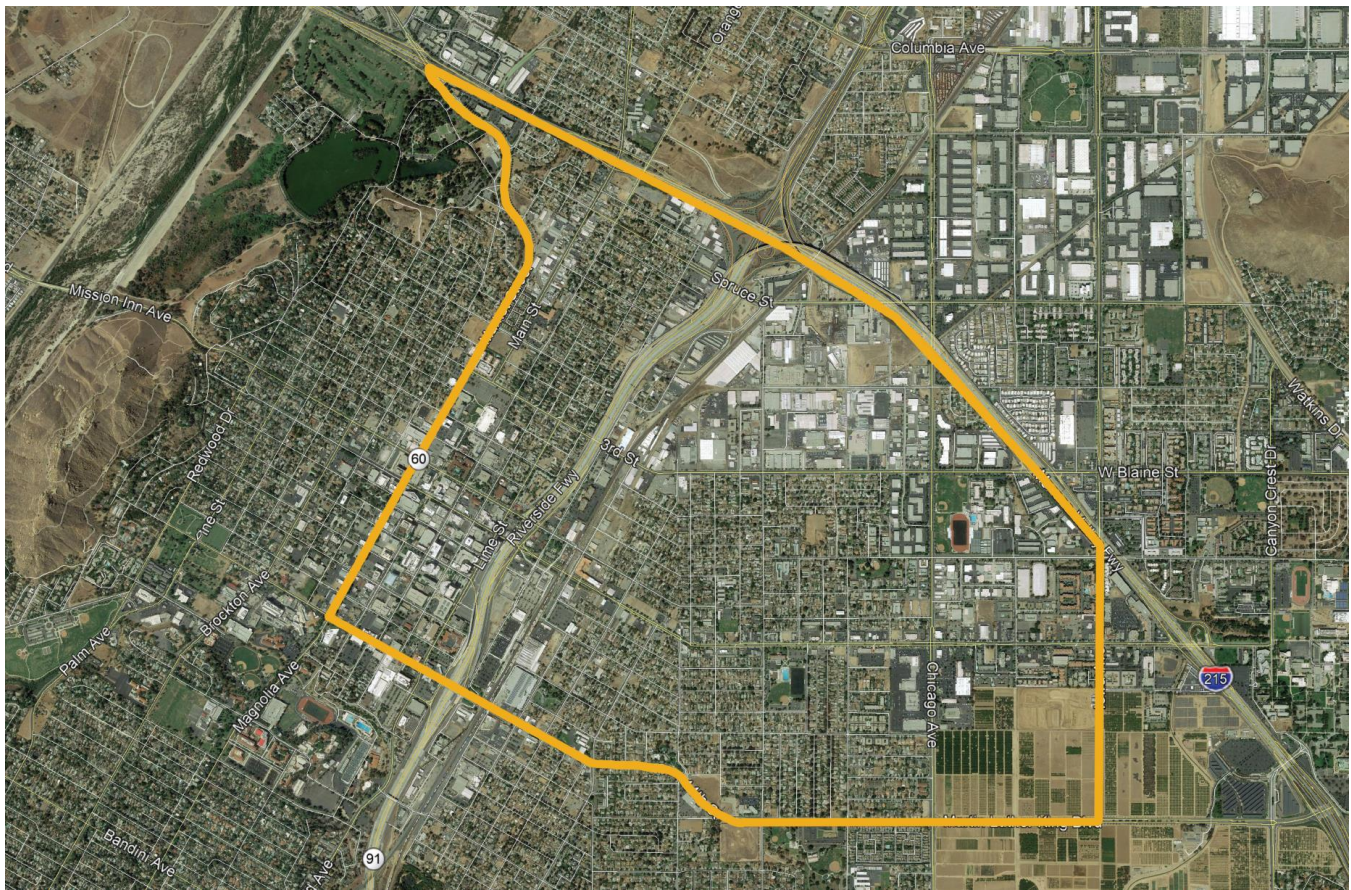
That the City Council:

1. Authorize the submission of an application for the Caltrans Sustainable Transportation Planning: Sustainable Communities Grant Application to prepare an Innovation District Strategic Plan;
2. Authorize the City Manager, or his designee, to execute all necessary documents and agreements pertaining to the acceptance of grant funds in the amount of \$280,000, or the actual amount awarded, with a local agency match of \$40,000; and
3. Authorize an increase in estimated revenues in the amount of \$280,000, or the actual amount awarded, to the Innovation District Strategic Planning account 9341000-334100 and appropriate expenditures in the same amount to account 9341000-440210. The Community & Economic Development Department will provide the local agency match of \$40,000 from Innovation District account 2815001-450063.

## **BACKGROUND:**

As one of the most diverse and fastest growing cities in the state, Riverside is projected to have significant growth over the next few years, including the relocation of the California Air Resources Board's (ARB) Southern California operations adjacent to the University of California-Riverside (UCR) campus, which will transform the economic complexion of the City, especially along University Avenue and the Eastside/Downtown areas. On December 19, 2017, the City Council designated this area – a highly disadvantaged district where congestion, air pollution, and underutilized space is abundant – as Riverside's first Innovation District to spark innovation, spur economic development, inspire investment, provide quality jobs, and enhance quality of life.

The Innovation District's boundaries encompass the space between downtown and UCR, including portions of the Eastside and University Avenue neighborhoods (see map below with Innovation District boundary demarcated in yellow). This geographic area was selected due to its proximity to an expanding transit and alternative transportation network, research institutions associated with UCR, and the ever-expanding entertainment destinations in the downtown region. There are two Metrolink stations bordering two edges of the district. This area of the City is also currently home to several under-utilized former packing houses and industrial buildings which have the potential to serve as ideal co-working space for startup firms. Moreover, firms that focus on researching and bringing to market green transportation solutions could, given close proximity, find ideal partnerships with the nearby UCR Center for Environmental Research & Technology (CE-CERT) and the coming ARB campus.



In order to faithfully and efficiently implement the Innovation District, staff has concluded that the preparation of a Strategic Plan is required. With limited General Fund dollars available to pay for

the preparation of the required Strategic Plan, staff has determined that seeking grant funding, such as through the Caltrans Sustainable Transportation Planning: Sustainable Communities Grant Program, as outlined below, is essential.

The Sustainable Communities Grant Program supports the California Department of Transportation's mission to provide safe, sustainable, integrated and efficient transportation to enhance California's economy and livability. The Sustainable Communities Grant Program is funded through the Senate Bill 1 Road Repair and Accountability Act of 2017, and allows local municipalities to seek funding for planning efforts that aim to directly enhance the mobility system in a sustainable fashion. Planning grants awarded through this program focus on key transportation corridors and hubs. These plans are encouraged to incorporate land use planning within the first/last mile range of the multimodal corridor.

## **DISCUSSION:**

An interdepartmental team including the Economic Development Division, Planning Division, and Traffic Engineering Division are partnering in the submittal of a request for Sustainable Communities Grant Program funds in order to develop an Innovation District Strategic Plan.

The Innovation District Strategic Plan would:

- Be informed by ongoing efforts to establish the City's economic development, mobility, and sustainability goals for the Innovation District;
- Identify, assess, and build community consensus around next-generation mobility options;
- Develop land use change recommendations to be codified alongside the General Plan Update;
- Address concerns of neighborhood displacement;
- Evaluate the Greenhouse Gas reduction potential of plan components;
- Envision the form of buildings and streetscapes along with growth hubs well suited to encourage cross-pollination amongst future new companies within the Innovation District; and
- Establish a set of short-term objectives to advance the City's goals within the Innovation District, and the State's Goals as part of the Sustainable Communities Program.

A strategic plan is needed to align the objectives of the City, its residents, and additional stakeholders within the Innovation District. The plan must produce actionable objectives that can be executed on a short timeline but have a visible positive impact on the Innovation District. Long-term objectives identified as part of the planning process are intended to be discussed and codified within the General Plan Update.

If the City's bid for funding is approved, preparation of the Innovation District Strategic Plan would likely begin in fall of 2020. The estimated time to prepare and approve the plan is one year.

**FISCAL IMPACT:**

The estimated total project cost is \$320,000. Grant revenues in the amount of \$280,000, or the actual amount awarded, will be appropriated to the Innovation District Strategic account 9341000-334100 and the same amount will be appropriated to expenditure account 9341000-440210. The Community & Economic Development Department will provide the local agency match of \$40,000 from Innovation District account 2815001-450063.

Prepared by: David Welch, Community & Economic Development Director  
Kris Martinez, Public Works Director

Certified as to  
availability of funds: Edward Enriquez, Chief Financial Officer/Treasurer

Approved by: Rafael Guzman, Assistant City Manager

Approved as to form: Gary G. Geuss, City Attorney

Attachment: Grant Program Application