



City of Arts & Innovation

City Council Memorandum

TO: HONORABLE MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL DATE: MARCH 17, 2020

FROM: PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT WARDS: ALL

SUBJECT: OFFICE OF TRAFFIC SAFETY GRANT APPLICATION IN THE AMOUNT OF \$205,625 FOR THE PURCHASE OF SPEED FEEDBACK SIGNS, RECTANGULAR RAPID FLASHING BEACONS, LED FLASHING STOP SIGNS, BICYCLIST AND PEDESTRIAN SAFETY ITEMS, AND EDUCATIONAL MATERIALS

ISSUE:

Approve the submittal of a \$205,625 grant application to the Office of Traffic Safety to purchase rectangular rapid flashing beacon devices, speed feedback signs, LED flashing stop signs, and bicyclist and pedestrian safety items to enhance bicyclist, pedestrian, and traffic safety, and create and print education materials to improve public awareness and understanding of a few of the newer and more innovative traffic improvements roadway users may encounter on our City streets.

RECOMMENDATION:

That the City Council retroactively approve the submittal of an Office of Traffic Safety grant application in the amount of \$205,625 for the purchase of rectangular rapid flashing beacon devices, speed feedback sign equipment, LED flashing stop signs, bicyclist and pedestrian safety items, and educational materials aimed at improving safety and fostering heightened recognition and knowledge of some of the latest traffic devices.

BACKGROUND:

The Public Works Department actively pursues grant funding as an alternative funding source or supplement to City funds to enable pursuit of education, traffic, and pedestrian and cyclist safety improvement projects. These grants offer valuable, unique opportunities for local jurisdictions to compete for funding sources available through State, Federal, or other agencies to aid in covering the costs of select projects.

The Office of Traffic Safety (OTS) is designated by the Governor to receive federal traffic safety funds for coordinating California's highway safety programs. On an annual basis, OTS develops a Highway Safety Plan (HSP) identifying the key highway safety problems statewide and the most effective countermeasures to address them. OTS then solicits grant proposals to address the identified problems and selects projects for allocation of funds to state and local government agencies to implement traffic safety programs and grants on non-federally funded streets. The agency's mission is to effectively and efficiently administer traffic safety grants while fostering

partnerships to deliver innovative programs that reduce traffic deaths, injuries, and economic losses with a vision of eliminating traffic fatalities altogether.

DISCUSSION:

The Public Works Department recently prepared and submitted an OTS grant application seeking funding for a pedestrian and bicycle safety project. Information regarding grant funding availability and guidelines was obtained in December 2019 and staff began working to formulate a competitive grant application, which could be ready for submission prior to the deadline of January 30, 2020. As all project details and budgetary quotes were not available until close to grant submittal date, staff was initially unable to meet the deadlines to seek City Council approval of the grant application prior to submittal, as required by the City Grant Administration Policy for grants over \$50,000. We are therefore requesting that City Council retroactively approve the submittal of the grant application.

The grant application seeks funding for the acquisition of rectangular rapid flashing beacon (RRFB) systems, speed feedback signs, LED flashing stop signs, and bicyclist and pedestrian safety items, and to create and print educational materials to improve pedestrian, cyclist, and traffic safety and operations at 32 locations near schools, on routes to schools, and near public parks which generate recurring pedestrian and cyclist activity. RRFB's are solar powered devices which would elevate safety at 4 existing uncontrolled crosswalks which serve one elementary school, two high schools, a City park, a community center, the Riverside Convention Center, and the Justice Center and Downtown areas. These crossings, which are currently equipped with standard crossing warning sign would be upgraded to RRFB systems which enable pedestrians to push a button to engage flashing LED lights prior to entering the crosswalk. The flashing LED lights serve to heighten driver awareness of crossing activity prior to pedestrians entering the crosswalks and are effective in improving driver attention and yield compliance creating safer routes to and from school and providing safer paths to City parks and other high activity facilities.

Speed feedback signs are solar powered devices, which both register and record vehicle speeds as motorists approach the sign informing drivers of their travel speeds and compiling data for the particular direction of travel. The signs display individual vehicle travel speeds and may be set to flash to alert motorists when their speeds reach or exceed the established speed limit. These signs are an effective traffic calming measure which inform motorists in real time, prompt drivers to reduce their speeds, and encourage better driver behavior. Reducing travel speeds where higher levels of bicyclist and pedestrian activity occur is important in lowering the potential for collisions and degree of injury when a collision occurs. The 7 locations selected for speed feedback sign installation will serve students and patrons of 6 local schools, 2 area churches, 3 City parks, a public library, and a community center and aid in improving safety for the numerous bicyclists, pedestrians, and motorists that utilize these roadways and the paths to these nearby facilities.

The solar powered flashing LED lit stop signs also include a radar detection system which engages LED lights set around the edge of the sign to flash as an approaching vehicle is detected. The flashing lights aid in gaining driver attention as they move toward the stop escalating recognition particularly at night or in in low light/visibility conditions and increasing stop compliance. The grant proposal includes installation of these devices on 21 roadways (42 stop signs) which serve 11 elementary schools, 4 middle schools, 5 high schools, the California School for the Deaf, 7 City parks, the Riverside Convention Center, the Downtown area, and a hospital. Improved stop compliance at these intersections makes crossing for pedestrians and cyclists

safer, promotes active transportation, and may correlate to reduced accident rates and lower severity injuries with pedestrian and bicyclist involved collisions.

Grant funding would provide funds needed to purchase the above described equipment, as well as bicyclist and pedestrian safety items, and allow for the creation and printing of educational materials as part of an ongoing effort to implement tangible improvements and foster improved behavior to create safer roadways and walking and cycling environments, reduce collisions and injuries, and preserve the well-being of all roadway users.

FISCAL IMPACT:

OTS funds awarded are provided on a reimbursement basis. Public Works will return to City Council to request appropriation of these funds upon notice of grant award. The estimated cost for speed feedback sign 1A 14-foot pole equipment, which is not funded by OTS, is \$4,550. Funding is available in the existing Public Works Department Misc. Signal Revisions – 2009 Measure A Account #9586133-440313. Installation and future maintenance of the devices will be performed by Public Works Department staff.

Prepared by: Kris Martinez, Public Works Director
Certified as to
availability of funds: Edward Enriquez, Chief Financial Officer/City Treasurer
Approved by: Rafael Guzman, Assistant City Manager
Approved as to form: Gary G. Geuss, City Attorney

Attachments:

1. RRFB Image
2. Speed Feedback Sign Image
3. LED Lit Stop Sign Image
4. Proposed Project Location Map