



City of Arts & Innovation

City Council Memorandum

TO: HONORABLE MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL DATE: MAY 21, 2024

FROM: PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT WARDS: ALL

SUBJECT: AUTHORIZATION OF A GRANT APPLICATION TO THE UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION FOR FISCAL YEAR 2024 SAFE STREETS AND ROADS FOR ALL FUNDING FOR A TOTAL PROJECT COST OF \$9,300,000 INCLUDING A 20% REQUIRED LOCAL MATCH OF \$1,860,000

ISSUE:

Authorize the submittal of a grant application requesting up to \$9.3 million in grant funding for a Fiscal Year 2024 Safe Streets and Roads for All (SS4A) Grant Program offered by the United States Department of Transportation to construct various traffic safety infrastructure improvements within a project area boundary consisting of Arlington Ave to the north, Adams St to the east, SR-91 Fwy to the south, and generally La Sierra to the west along with Citywide supplemental safety action planning studies. The total project cost is estimated at \$9.3 million with a grant funded component of \$7.44 million and a required 20% City match of approximately \$1.86 million.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

That the City Council:

1. Authorize the submittal of a Fiscal Year 2024 SS4A grant application to the United States Department of Transportation for a total estimated project cost of \$9.3 million (including approximately \$1.86 million in required City match funds), to construct the City of Riverside Neighborhood Safety Investment Project along with additional project components including protected bike lanes, high-visibility crosswalks, audible pedestrian push button systems, sidewalks, traffic calming elements, and supplemental planning activities consisting of the Marketplace District (SR-91) Pedestrian & Bike Bridge Plan, Citywide Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS) Master Plan, and Citywide American Disabilities Act (ADA) Transition Plan; and
2. Authorize the City Manager, or designee, to sign grant related documents, including making minor and non-substantive changes as necessary.

BACKGROUND:

Section 24112 of the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (also referred to as the “Bipartisan Infrastructure Law” or “BIL”) established the discretionary SS4A Grant Program with \$5 billion dollars in advanced appropriations that are intended to be appropriated equally over the five-year period of 2022 through 2026. One billion dollars of grant funds are authorized and appropriated for the current Fiscal Year (FY) 2024 which is the second year of the five-year grant program.

The purpose of SS4A grants are to improve roadway safety by significantly reducing or eliminating roadway fatalities and serious injuries through safety action plan development, refinement and implementation focused on all users, including pedestrians, bicyclists, public transportation users, motorists, personal conveyance and micro mobility users, and commercial vehicle operators.

The SS4A grant program provides funding for two main types of grants: 1.) Planning and Demonstration Grants for comprehensive safety action plans, including supplemental safety planning, and/or safety demonstration activities; 2.) and Implementation Grants to implement strategies or projects that are consistent with an existing Action Plan.

The Federal share of a SS4A grant may not exceed 80% of total eligible activity costs. Recipients are required to contribute a local matching share of no less than 20% of eligible activity costs. Unless otherwise authorized by statute, all matching funds must be from non-Federal sources.

The City of Riverside has successfully pursued Safe Streets for All funding. In February 2024, the City accepted \$11.1M in SS4A funds for the construction of the South Main Complete Streets project, along with the preparation of Citywide safety action plans. The Public Works Department plans to implement a similar strategy with this round of funding.

The FY 2024 SS4A grant application submittal has a deadline of May 16, 2024 at 5:00 PM (Eastern Time). Three separate planning and demonstration grant application deadlines are on April 4, 2024, May 16, 2024, and August 29, 2024 all at 5:00 PM (Eastern Time).

DISCUSSION:

The Public Works Department is requesting authorization from the City Council to submit a grant application requesting a total of up to \$9.3 million in USDOT FY 2024 SS4A grant funding. The project components are proposed to include both infrastructure improvements and three separate planning efforts, mirroring Riverside’s previously successful efforts with this grant program. Projects and programs included in the grant application align with the City’s Strategic Plan and the Riverside PACT.

Infrastructure Component

The infrastructure portion of the proposed SS4A grant project aims to improve traffic safety for vulnerable road users, decrease traffic collisions, and encourage active transportation for residents and business patrons within the project area. For the purposes of the grant application, it is referred to as the City of Riverside Neighborhood Safety Investment Project. The project will include new bikeways, high visibility crosswalks, audible pedestrian push buttons, sidewalks, and traffic calming treatments. The projects are supported by the Riverside PACT, Riverside Local Roadway Safety Plan (LRSP), and both Community Pedestrian Bicycle Safety Training (CPBST) School Reports prepared for Arlanza and Liberty Elementary Schools.

The project area was carefully selected to maximize grant program eligibility, while also targeting areas of the City which will greatly benefit from the addition of pedestrian and bicycle friendly infrastructure. Staff considered recent grant awards in the City, and in the interest of geographic equity sought funding within eligible areas of central & western Riverside. The project components will boost connectivity to schools, shopping, employment, and recreation for residents, and help make the Arlington, La Sierra, Arlanza and Ramona neighborhoods more inviting to visitors and future (unplanned) development. As evidenced by interest surrounding the South Main Complete Streets project, comprehensive investment in neighborhood infrastructure can be of interest to both residents and the business community. Widescale execution of the City’s infrastructure planning documents can serve as an engine for catalytic change.

Figure 1 illustrates the project boundary area surrounded by Arlington Avenue to the north, Adams Street to the east, SR-91 Freeway to the south, and generally La Sierra Avenue to the west. The project area falls entirely within disadvantaged community areas as defined by the USDOT Equitable Transportation Community (ETC) Explorer Tool which is expected to greatly increase the competitiveness of the grant application.



Figure 1: Project Area Map
Source: USDOT Equitable Transportation Community (ETC) Explorer Tool.

A full list of improvements within the project location area is shown below:

- 16.2 miles of Bike Paths, Buffered Bike Lanes & Bike Routes from Riverside P.A.C.T.
- 85 signalized intersection improvements (high visibility crosswalks & audible ped push buttons)
- 8 unsignalized intersection enhancements (ADA ped ramps and high visibility crosswalks)

- 0.6 miles of new sidewalks
- 0.9 miles of traffic calming treatments (speed humps or neighborhood traffic circles and curb extensions)

While the recommended components have been discussed with the community as part of the Riverside PACT and LRSP planning processes, staff plans to engage the community to discuss the project specifics if the grant application is successful.

The project locations are close to schools, parks, medical facility, employment centers, and commercial retail shopping centers. The recommended improvements support community requests received from public outreach efforts to improve traffic safety and sidewalk connectivity.

If the project is awarded, the safety countermeasures are expected to reduce the frequency and/or severity of traffic collisions as well as improve sidewalk connectivity, enhance safety and mobility for residents, and improve public health by encouraging increased walking, biking, and a more active lifestyle. The combined effects would also reduce greenhouse gas emissions as residents would be afforded amenities to walk or bike for the shorter trips.

Planning Component

The three proposed supplemental safety action planning components are consistent with the National Roadway Safety Strategies (NRSS), align with the SS4A Grant Program Initiatives for Safer People, Safer Vehicles, Safer Speeds, Safer Roads and Post-Crash Care, and are comparable to other projects awarded from the two previous rounds of the SS4A Grant Program.

1. The proposed Marketplace District (SR-91) pedestrian and bicycle bridge report is consistent with the city's Riverside Marketplace District Vision Plan and aims to connect the downtown area with the Vine Street mobility hub while increasing safety for non-motorized vehicles. Funds would be used to conduct extensive public outreach and examine potentially opportunities for the bridge connection and determine the City's approach to implementation.
2. The proposed Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS) Master Plan will provide a citywide traffic signal system network and technology deployment plan to improve traffic flow efficiency, reduce congestion on roadways through signal coordination operations, and provide motorists with real-time information on road conditions. The proposed plan aligns with the Safer Roads initiative of the SS4A Grant Program and NRSS.
3. The proposed update to the citywide American Disability Act (ADA) Transition Plan fulfills the requirement for local agencies to submit updates to the ADA transition plans and remain compliant with current state and federal regulations. The proposed plan aligns with the Safer Roads initiative of the SS4A Grant Program and NRSS. Comparable plans from other local agencies have been awarded in previous rounds of the SS4A Grant Program.

STRATEGIC PLAN ALIGNMENT:

This item supports **Strategic Priority 6 – Infrastructure, Mobility, and Connectivity** and aims to ensure safe, reliable infrastructure that benefits the community and facilitates connection between people, places, and information. The proposed USDOT FY 2024 SS4A funded projects align with the goals below:

Goal 6.1 – Provide, expand and ensure equitable access to sustainable modes of transportation that connect people to opportunities such as employment, education, healthcare, and community amenities.

Goal 6.2 – Maintain, protect, and improve assets and infrastructure within the City's built environment to ensure and enhance reliability, resiliency, sustainability, and facilitate connectivity.

Goal 6.3 – Identify and pursue new and unique funding opportunities to develop, operate, maintain, and renew infrastructure and programs that meet the community's needs.

Furthermore, this project aligns with each of the five Cross-Cutting Threads as follows:

1. **Community Trust** – The proposed improvements are part of a more significant endeavor to improve the City's transportation network and increase the traffic safety of residents and visitors along city streets. The proposed improvements are identified in the Local Roadway Safety Plan (LRSP), the Riverside P.A.C.T. Plan, and Community Pedestrian & Bicycle Safety Training (CPBST) Reports for both Arlanza Elementary School and Liberty Elementary School.
2. **Equity** – All Wards will benefit from the supplemental planning reports to improve the city's traffic signal communications master plan and ADA transition plan.
3. **Fiscal Responsibility** – The proposed traffic safety improvement projects would leverage various city funds to garner grant funding of an 80%-20% split for traffic safety improvements to a total up to \$9,300,000 (which includes the agency grant award of \$1,860,000).
4. **Innovation** – The proposed bundled safety action planning component aims to improve traffic flow, safety, air quality, and fuel efficiency when moving people and goods by improving the traffic signal system communications network and providing real-time data and monitoring capabilities directly from the Traffic Management Center (TMC).
5. **Sustainability & Resiliency** – The proposed City of Riverside Neighborhood Safety Investment Project will reuse existing rights of way creatively to designate roadway space for bicyclists and improved pedestrian access.

FISCAL IMPACT:

The total estimated fiscal impact of this recommendation is up to \$9,300,000, which is comprised of \$7,440,000 in USDOT grant funds, and an additional \$1,860,000 in local matching funds to complete the SS4A infrastructure and planning improvements as listed in Table 1.

Table 1 – Project Costs:

| Project Name | Safe Streets and Roads for All (SS4A) (FY 2024) Grant Program Funds Requested (maximum) | Local Match Funds (20%) | Total Project Cost |
|--|--|--------------------------------|---------------------------|
| <p><u>Implementation Grant:</u></p> <p>1. Project Area Boundary (Arlington Ave to the north, Adams St to the east, SR-91 Fwy to the south, and generally La Sierra Ave to the west):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Bikeways (bike path, buffered bike lanes & bike routes) - High visibility crosswalks - Audible pedestrian push buttons - Sidewalks & ADA ramps - Traffic calming treatments (speed humps or traffic circles & curb extensions) - Speed feedback signs | \$6,648,000 | \$1,662,000 | \$8,310,000 |
| <p><u>Bundled Supplemental Safety Action Planning Component:</u></p> <p>2. Marketplace District (SR-91) Pedestrian & Bike Bridge Study Report</p> <p>3. Citywide Intelligent Transportation System (ITS) Master Plan</p> <p>4. Citywide ADA Transition Plan</p> | \$792,000 | \$198,000 | \$990,000 |
| Estimated SS4A Grant Program (FY 2024) Total: | | | \$9,300,000 |

If awarded, staff will return to the City Council to receive and appropriate funding and will make a recommendation for allocating the required 20% matching funds in the amount of up to \$1,860,000, from potential funding sources that may include bond proceeds, Special Gas Tax, Measure A, or other funding sources.

Prepared by: Philip Nitollama, City Traffic Engineer
Approved by: Gilbert Hernandez, Public Works Director
Certified as to
availability of funds: Kristie Thomas, Finance Director/Assistant Chief Financial Officer
Approved by: Kris Martinez, Assistant City Manager
Approved as to form: Phaedra A. Norton, City Attorney

Attachments:

1. City of Riverside Neighborhood Safety Investment Project (Boundary Area)
2. Traffic Safety Project List of Improvements