



Item Number: {{item.number}}

City Council / Board of Directors

Written Communications

Meeting of: January 21, 2025

Submitted By:

Alex Jauregui, City Planner

Subject:

Caltrans Sustainable Transportation Planning Grant Program

Recommendation:

That the Honorable City Council:

- (1) Authorize the City Manager or his designee to finalize and complete the Caltrans Sustainable Transportation Planning Grant Program application as presented, including the adjustment, modification and/or updating of application materials necessary to prepare a competitive application; and
- (2) Authorize the City Manager or his designee to apply for and execute all documents deemed necessary to apply for funding provided by the Caltrans Sustainable Transportation Planning Grant Program.

Fiscal Impact:

There is no fiscal impact associated with this item. If the City is successful in securing grant funding, staff will bring a subsequent item before the City Council to formally request acceptance of the award and appropriate grant funds accordingly.

The Caltrans Sustainable Transportation Planning Grant Program also requires an 11.47 percent local match of the total project cost where the total project cost is comprised of the grant amount plus required local match amount. As the City is requesting \$700,000.00, this would require a local match of \$90,692.00 from cash or in-kind contributions if the City is successful in securing the full amount of funding requested. This local match requirement can be fulfilled via City staff wages, which is the proposed source of matching funds. Additionally, environmental reviews associated with projects are ineligible expenses for this grant; however, staff notes that over \$33,000 is available in collected General Plan Surcharge fees that can be used to complete any necessary environmental review related to a General Plan update. If awarded, this project is expected to be initiated next fiscal year and related revenues and expenditures will be included in a proposed budget amendment for Fiscal Year 2025/2026, as necessary.

Strategic Plan Goal:

The subject grant opportunity aligns with Goals A and E of the 2023-2026 Strategic Plan as follows:

- Goal A (Financial Stability) – The grant will provide reimbursement for necessary updates to the Circulation and Resource Elements of the General Plan, which are required by recent changes to State law.
- Goal E (Invest in Infrastructure) – The grant provides a funding opportunity for local jurisdictions to support and implement the Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG) Regional Transportation Plan/Sustainable Communities Strategy (Connect SoCal), which emphasizes enhancing bikeway networks and improving the existing roadway system, as outlined in Goal E of the City’s Strategic Plan.

Background:

The Sustainable Transportation Planning Grant Program was created to support the California Department of Transportation’s (Caltrans) Mission: Provide a safe and reliable transportation network that serves all people and respects the environment.

The State-funded Sustainable Communities grants provide over \$29 million intended to support and implement Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) Sustainable Communities Strategies, such as SCAG’s Connect SoCal, and to ultimately achieve the State’s greenhouse gas (GHG) reduction target of 40 and 80 percent below 1990 levels by 2030 and 2050, respectively. Additionally, the subject grants are intended to address the needs of under-resourced communities, and assist in achieving the Caltrans Mission and Grant Program Objectives of:

- Safety
- Sustainability
- Preservation
- Accessibility
- Innovation
- Economy
- Health
- Social Equity

Of the over \$29 million dedicated to Sustainable Communities Grants, approximately \$17 million is available to local and regional jurisdictions in amounts of up to \$700,000 through a competitive grant process and funding provided on a reimbursement basis. The deadline to apply for the subject grant is January 22, 2025, and if awarded, Staff anticipates conducting grant activities for 18 months beginning in November 2025 and completing the project in the first half of 2027, prior to the grant’s requirement of completion by June 2028. All additional grant specifics are outlined in the Grant Application Guide (Attachment A) for reference as needed.

Discussion:

As proposed and included in the draft grant application (Attachment B), City staff is seeking authorization to seek funding of \$700,000 through Caltrans Sustainable Transportation Planning Grant Program in order to fund updates to the Circulation and Resource elements of the General Plan. These elements of the General Plan have not had a major update since 2008, and with the recent adoption of an updated Housing

Element, Land Use Element, and Safety Element as well as a new Environmental Justice Element, the subject grant opportunity will allow the City to complete a revision to the last remaining elements of the General Plan that require reexamination and updating. Additionally, various State Assembly and Senate Bills (Attachment C) have recently been adopted that amend State law and mandate revision to the subject Circulation and Resource elements of the General Plan. A synopsis of the applicable State laws is provided as follows.

Circulation Element Related

- *Senate Bill (SB) 932* – Upon a substantive revision of the Circulation Element after January 1, 2025, requires that cities incorporate the principles of the Federal Highway Administration’s Safe System Approach and that they develop bicycle plans, pedestrian plans, and traffic calming plans based on the policies and goals in the Circulation Element while setting goals for initiation and completion of all actions identified in the plan within 25 years of the date of adoption of the modified Circulation Element. Due to the requirements of Assembly Bill 98, these bills will be required to be address simultaneously.
- *Assembly Bill (AB) 98* – Requires by January 1, 2028, that cities update their Circulation Element and identify and establish specific travel routes for the transport of goods, materials, or freight for storage, transfer, or redistribution to safely accommodate additional truck traffic and avoid residential areas and concentrations of sensitive receptors. Since this bill requires an update to the Circulation Element, it will constitute a substantive revision and simultaneously require an update to address the noted requirements of SB 932.

Resources Element Related

- *Senate Bill (SB) 1425* – Requires by January 1, 2026, that cities review and update the open space element of their General Plan in order to include plans and an action program that address issues such as, equitable access to open space within the City, climate resilience and other co-benefits of open space, and opportunities to enhance/expand an integrated network of open space. Although the City’s required Open Space Element of the General Plan is included in the Resource Element, this element nonetheless requires revision to comply with SB 1425.

Included in the draft grant application (Attachment B) is a project narrative that details specific project components and addresses community and project indicators that will assist Caltrans in scoring the application. As previously noted, staff is seeking authorization to proceed with applying for this funding in order to complete the required updates to the Circulation and Resource Elements of the City’s General Plan, which would necessitate the procurement of a consultant to prepare the draft documents as well as a robust public outreach campaign to ensure all members of the community are heard and their input incorporated into a final product. Additionally, as noted in the “Fiscal Impact” section of this report, a local match requirement can be fulfilled by staff wages and any fee’s associated with the environmental review process can be funded with collected General Plan Surcharge fees that have been collected specifically to update and implement the various aspects of the City’s General Plan.

At this time, the attached draft grant application represents a portion of the entire grant application that details the overall intent of the request; however, other application items such as a completed scope of work with individual line items and a total cost schedule are incomplete at the time while City staff awaits a technical assistance meeting with Caltrans staff to complete these steps. As proposed, should the City Council authorize the City Manager to proceed with application for this funding source, they would also authorize the completion of the noted items in an effort to provide a complete and competitive application.

- Attachments:**
- A. Grant Application Guide
 - B. Draft Caltrans Sustainable Transportation Planning Grant
 - C. State Assembly and Senate Bills