



Item Number: 1

City Council / Board of Directors

Public Hearing(s)

Meeting of: September 19, 2023

Submitted By:

Fredy Bonilla, Acting City Engineer

Subject:

Seventh Street Traffic Signal Modifications – Approve Notice of Exemption

Recommendation:

That the Honorable City Council:

- 1) Open and conduct a public hearing, receive testimony regarding the proposed project;
- 2) Close the Public Hearing; and
- 3) Approve the Notice of Exemption for the Seventh Street Traffic Signal Modifications project.

Fiscal Impact:

The recommended action will not result in a fiscal impact. The funding for this project was included in the Fiscal Year 2022/2023 and 2023/2024 Budgets.

Strategic Plan Goal:

This project aligns with “Goal E Invest in Infrastructure” in the City of Victorville Strategic Plan 2023-2026 by increasing vehicular and pedestrian safety with the proposed modifications of five (5) traffic signals on Seventh Street.

Background:

In October of 2020, City staff submitted an application to Caltrans for a Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP) grant to fund the modification of five (5) traffic signals along Seventh Street at the intersections of Lorene Drive, Victor Street, Mojave Drive, Forrest Ave, and B Street. Please refer to Attachment A, a vicinity map showing the location of the existing traffic signals. To be eligible for the grant, Engineering staff identified deficiencies common to all five intersections to come up with a scope of work. In general, the project scope includes upgrading the traffic signals and lighting to meet current City standards. Traffic signal poles and equipment will be replaced for the east and west cross streets facing Seventh Street to include a pole hanging over the street with a signal light

where none currently exist for improved visibility. Other improvements will include upgraded emergency vehicle detection systems, video detection for automobiles and bicycles, and pedestrian crossing systems. Upgrades to curb ramps will be made to meet current City accessibility standards. On March 26, 2021, Caltrans notified the City that the application for the HSIP Cycle 10 grant was selected for funding for the requested amount of \$680,500 of State funds.

In April 2022, Engineering staff submitted a request to the City Council to approve an agreement with AGA Engineers, Inc., for the preparation of the traffic signal modification plans and received that approval. The draft plans and specifications for the project were received in August of 2023.

Discussion:

To move this capital improvement project forward, the next step required by Caltrans is an action by the City to obtain environmental clearance per the guidelines established by the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). This is a routine item performed for all construction projects. Once complete, Caltrans can allocate the grant funds to the City, which will allow the City to proceed with advertising the project for construction.

CEQA requires that public agencies review all projects to consider their potential direct or indirect environmental impacts on the environment and to establish whether such impacts can be reduced or avoided through mitigation or by pursuing other alternatives. The California Code of Regulations Title 14, Division 6, Chapter 3 provides guidelines for implementation of CEQA. Article 19 of the guidelines identifies certain types of projects which have been determined not to have a significant effect on the environment and which are exempt from the provisions of CEQA.

City staff has evaluated the scope of this project and has determined this work is Categorically Exempt from CEQA under Article 19, Section 15301(c): Existing Facilities (Class 1) of the CEQA guidelines. This determination was based on the following criteria:

- All five locations are considered minor alterations that will involve no expansion of existing use/capacity as their scopes aim to improve the safety of existing streets by adding elements to existing infrastructure.
- None of the following exceptions considered under Section 15300.2 apply for the reasons stated below:
 - a) Location: The proposed project elements will be installed within the existing City's right of way within no particularly sensitive environments.
 - b) Cumulative Impact: The signals will be fully functional upon completion and will not require any successive projects for which cumulative impacts must be considered.
 - c) Significant Effect: Even under unusual circumstances there is no reasonable possibility that the activities to be performed to complete these projects will have a significant effect on the environment.
 - d) Scenic Highways: None of the projects are located within scenic highways.
 - e) Hazardous Waste Sites: None of the projects are listed on any list compiled pursuant to Section 65962.5 of the Government Code.

- f) Historical Resources: None of the projects will affect any historical resources as they will be installed within existing streets.

Pursuant to Article 5, Section 15061, after determining that a project is exempt from CEQA, and once the project is approved by its governing body, a Notice of Exemption may be recorded to initiate a 35-day statute of limitations for any appeals submitted from a party feeling a categorical exemption is being improperly used to limit the possibility of legal challenge. Please refer to Attachment B, the Notice of Exemption for the project.

After the allocation of construction funds, the next steps for the project will be to advertise for construction and recommend an award of a construction contract at a future City Council meeting. Assuming that there are no unforeseen delays, an award of a construction contract could be made as early as fall of 2023.

Staff recommends that the City Council open and conduct a public hearing to receive testimony regarding the proposed project and approve the Notice of Exemption for the Seventh Street Traffic Signal Modifications project.

Staff is available to answer any questions the Council may have.

Attachments: A. Location Map
 B. Notice of Exemption