

City of Sacramento

Legislation Details (With Text)

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Title:
Fiscal Year (FY) 2021/22 Caltrans Sustainable Transportation Planning Grant Applications

File ID: 2020-01529

Location: Citywide

Recommendation:

Adopt a Resolution: 1) approving the Reimagining Connections to and through 12th Street Project, the Sacramento 15-minute Neighborhoods Plan Project, the Mixed-Income Housing VMT Analysis for CEQA, and the Truxel Bridge Feasibility Study for submission to the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) Fiscal Year (FY) 2021/22 Sustainable Communities within the Sustainable Transportation Planning Grant Program for \$270,000, \$570,000, \$48,500, and \$550,000 respectively; 2) authorizing the City Manager or the City Manager’s designee to submit any related documents necessary to support the grant applications; and 3) authorizing the City Manager or the City Manager’s designee to execute the grant agreements and any related grant documents upon award of the Caltrans Sustainable Communities Grant fund within the Sustainable Transportation Planning Grant Program.

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Presenter: None

Attachments:

1-Description/Analysis

2-Attachment 1 - Caltrans Sustainable Transportation Planning Grant Objectives
3-Resolution

Description/Analysis

Issue Detail: Caltrans has issued a call for projects for the FY2021/22 Sustainable Transportation Planning Grant Program. Applications are due February 12, 2021. Staff considered several projects that meet the goals and purpose of this grant program (See Attachment 3- Exhibit A) for which the City is eligible to apply. Based upon the stated goals of the grant programs, City priorities, and prior experience, staff recommends submittal of four projects: 1) the Reimagining Connections to and through 12th Street Project, 2) the Sacramento 15-minute Neighborhoods Plan Project, 3) the Mixed-Income Housing Vehicle Miles Travelled (VMT) Analysis for CEQA, and 4) the Truxel Bridge Feasibility Study as the most competitive candidates for funding.

Policy Considerations: On December 10, 2019, the City Council adopted Resolution No. 2019-0475 which established guidelines for considering transportation funding opportunities which were considered in connection with grant recommendations. In addition, the following Sacramento 2035 General Plan policies support the analysis proposed to be completed by the recommendation:

H 1.3.4 A Range of Housing Opportunities - The City shall encourage a range of housing opportunities for all segments of the community.

H 2.2.5 Review and Reduce Fees for Affordable Housing - The City shall work with affordable housing developers as well as other agencies and districts to review and reduce applicable processing and development impact fees for very low- and low-income housing units.

H 2.3.1 Avoiding Unnecessary Costs to Housing - The City shall ensure that its policies, regulations, and procedures do not add unnecessary costs to housing and do not act as an obstacle to new housing development.

M 1.1.1 Right-of-Ways - The City shall preserve and manage rights-of-way consistent with: the circulation diagram, the City Street Design Standards, the goal to provide Complete Streets as described in Goal M 4.2, and the modal priorities for each street segment and intersection established in Policy M4.4.1: Roadway Network Development, Street Typology System.

M 1.1.3 Emergency Services - The City shall prioritize emergency service needs when developing transportation plans and making transportation network changes.

M 1.2.1 Multimodal choices - The City shall develop an integrated, multimodal transportation system that improves the attractiveness of walking, bicycling, and riding transit over time to increase travel choices and aid in achieving a more balanced transportation system and reducing air pollution and greenhouse gas emissions.

M 1.2.4 Multimodal Access - The City shall facilitate the provision of multimodal access to activity

centers such as commercial centers and corridors, employment centers, transit stops/stations, airports, schools, parks, recreation areas, medical centers, and tourist attractions.

M 1.3.2 Eliminate Gaps - The City shall eliminate “gaps” in roadways, bikeways, and pedestrian networks. To this end:

- a. The City shall construct new multi-modal crossings of the Sacramento and American Rivers.
- b. The City shall plan and pursue funding to construct grade-separated crossings of freeways, rail lines, canals, creeks, and other barriers to improve connectivity.
- c. The City shall construct new bikeways and pedestrian paths in existing neighborhoods to improve connectivity.

M 1.3.4 Barrier Removal for Accessibility - The City shall remove barriers, where feasible, to allow people of all abilities to move freely and efficiently throughout the city.

M 1.5.7 Freeway Improvement Coordination - The City shall work with Caltrans and adjacent jurisdictions to identify funding for improvements that address cumulative effects of planned development on the freeway system.

M 2.1.3 Streetscape Design - The City shall require that pedestrian-oriented streets be designed to provide a pleasant environment for walking and other desirable uses of public space, including such elements as shade trees; plantings; well-designed benches, trash receptacles, news racks, and other furniture; pedestrian-scaled lighting fixtures; way finding signage; integrated transit shelters; public art; and other amenities.

M 2.1.7 Safe Pedestrian Crossings - The City shall improve pedestrian safety at appropriate intersections and mid-block locations by providing safe pedestrian crossings.

M 3.1.2 Increase Transit Service - The City shall work with transit operators and community partners to increase public transit service (i.e., frequency, number of lines and stops, dedicated transit lanes) above and beyond what is already planned in the MTP/SCS, as funding is available.

M 3.1.9 Transit Amenities - The City shall work with transit providers to incorporate features such as traffic signal priority, queue jumps, and exclusive transit lanes to reduce transit passenger delay, and improve transit speed, reliability, and operating efficiency.

M 3.1.12 New Facilities - The City shall work with transit providers and private developers to incorporate transit facilities into new private development and City project designs including incorporation of transit infrastructure (i.e., electricity, fiber-optic cable, etc.), alignments for transit route extensions, new station locations, bus stops, and transit patron waiting area amenities (i.e., benches, real-time traveler information screens).

M 3.1.15 Light Rail Extensions and Enhancements - The City shall support the extension of light rail service to Sacramento International Airport, further extension in South Sacramento, and other improvements to facilities such as the 65th Street, Royal Oaks, and Swanston stations.

M 4.1.1 Emergency Access - The City shall develop a roadway system that is redundant (i.e., includes multiple alternative routes) to the extent feasible to ensure mobility in the event of emergencies.

M 4.1.2 Balancing Community, Social, Environmental, and Economic Goals - The City shall evaluate and strive to address community, environmental, and citywide economic development goals when adding or modifying streets, roads, bridges, and other public rights-of-way. (MPSP/PSR)

M 4.1.3 Community Outreach - The City shall conduct public outreach to community organizations and members of the general public in corridor planning early in the project development process to identify feasible opportunities to provide community benefits and to lessen any potential impacts of modifications to local streets and roadways.

M 4.1.5 Bridge Crossings - The City shall continue to work with adjacent jurisdictions and other agencies (i.e., Regional Transit) in the context of multimodal corridor planning to determine the appropriate responsibilities to fund, evaluate, plan, design, construct, and maintain new river crossings.

M 4.2.5 Multi-Modal Corridors - Consistent with the Roadway Network and Street Typologies established in this General Plan, the City shall designate multi-modal corridors in the Central City, within and between urban centers, along major transit lines, and/or along commercial corridors appropriate for comprehensive multimodal corridor planning and targeted investment in transit, bikeway, and pedestrian path improvements if discretionary funds become available.

M 4.2.6 Identify and Fill Gaps in Complete Streets - The City shall identify streets that can be made “complete” either through a reduction in the number or width of travel lanes or through two-way conversions, with consideration for emergency vehicle operations. The City shall consider including new bikeways, sidewalks, on-street parking, and exclusive transit lanes on these streets by re-arranging and/or re-allocating how the available space within the public right of way issued. All new street configurations shall provide for adequate emergency vehicle operation.

M 5.1.5 Motorists, Bicyclists, and Pedestrian Conflicts - The City shall develop safe and convenient bikeways, streets, roadways, and intersections that reduce conflicts between bicyclists and motor vehicles on streets, between bicyclists and pedestrians on multi-use trails and sidewalks, and between all users at intersections.

The action is also consistent with the adopted Vision Zero goal to work collaboratively in a data-driven effort to eliminate traffic fatalities and serious injuries by 2027. Finally, leveraging local funds with state funding is consistent with Council priorities of fiscal soundness.

Economic Impacts: None

Environmental Considerations:

California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA): Under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) guidelines, continuing administrative activities do not constitute a project and are therefore exempt from review.

Sustainability: Attaining funding to plan for multimodal improvements furthers the City’s commitment to sustainability by laying the groundwork to significantly reduce the use of fossil fuels, to encourage less driving and engage in clean air practices, to reduce dependence on

the private automobile by working with community partners to provide efficient and accessible public transit and transit supportive land uses, and to foster behavioral change throughout the City.

Commission/Committee Action: On November 19, 2020, the Active Transportation Commission heard staff recommendations for the Reimagining Connections to and through 12th Street Project and the Sacramento 15-minute Neighborhoods Plan Project. The Commission moved to make a recommendation for City Council approval for the City of Sacramento to apply for the Caltrans Sustainable Communities Grant fund through the Sustainable Transportation Planning Grant Program for these two projects. Due to time constraints and the COVID-19 pandemic, staff was unable to present the Mixed-Income Housing VMT Analysis for CEQA, and the Truxel Bridge Feasibility Study projects to the Active Transportation Commission.

Rationale for Recommendation: As part of the Vision Zero program, City Council adopted an ambitious, yet important goal of zero traffic-related deaths and serious injuries by 2027. Additionally, City Council adopted the Climate Action Plan within the 2035 General Plan and more recently the Mayor's Commission on Climate Change both identified active transportation as important components to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and create healthier communities.

The grant applications for the Reimagining Connections to and through 12th Street Project and the Sacramento 15-minute Neighborhoods Plan Project will build on the City's momentum of focusing on safety and mobility on our roadways by expanding and enhancing accessibility to low-stress, connected infrastructure to enable more walking or biking trips. The applications provide independent benefit if only one is awarded, however can provide great collective benefit if both applications are successful. Staff has reviewed the Caltrans guidelines for the Sustainable Communities Grant fund within the Sustainable Transportation Planning Grant Program and found that these projects both meet the grant criteria and not only help the City reduce fatalities and serious injuries on our roadways toward the Vision Zero goal, but these projects will also help the City achieve its climate goals through prioritizing improvements in neighborhoods to enable more walking and biking trips.

Finally, SB743 (Steinberg) passed in 2013. This bill required local agencies throughout the State to replace level of service as the metric for significance in transportation analysis under CEQA. Consistent with technical guidance provided by the Governor's Office of Planning and Research, staff developed recommended thresholds of significance based on vehicle miles traveled (VMT) and has been using these thresholds on a case-by-case basis consistent with the CEQA Guidelines since the July 1, 2020 statutory deadline. Staff's recommended thresholds included a provision to screen housing developments from VMT analysis when all of the units proposed are affordable thereby streamlining the production of affordable housing within the City. The analysis for which grant funding is being sought could allow the City to extend this streamlining to housing projects that include a combination of affordable and market rate units if substantial evidence can be found to support the conclusion that these projects produce lower levels of VMT.

On August 8, 2013, City Council approved Resolution 2013-0267 which accepted the American River Crossing Alternatives Study Report as the guide for future crossings of the Lower American River and directed staff to seek funding to implement the study recommendations including the Truxel Bridge alternative.

Financial Considerations: Projects selected for Caltrans Sustainable Transportation Planning Grant funding require a minimum 11.47% cash and/or in-kind local match from non-State and non-Federal fund revenues. A total of \$17 million in grant funding for the competitive portion of the program is available statewide with a cap of \$700,000 per application. Of this total, \$3 million of the \$17 million has been set aside for technical projects such as the Mixed-Income Housing VMT Analysis for CEQA proposal. The four projects with the associated grant request and local match are as follows:

- Reimagining Connections to and through 12th Street
 - Grant request: \$270,000 / local match: \$131,000
- Sacramento 15-minute Neighborhoods Plan
 - Grant request \$570,000 / local match: \$200,000
- Mixed-Income Housing VMT Analysis for CEQA
 - Grant request: \$48,500 / local match: \$6,500
- Truxel Bridge Feasibility Study
 - Grant request: \$550,000 / local match: \$75,000

The source of local funds will be identified after determining which projects are awarded grants. It is presumed to come from existing programs (e.g., Active Transportation Program). Funding will be identified when the new CIP is established.

Local Business Enterprise (LBE): Not applicable

Background: The first two of the proposed grant applications (N12th and 15-Minute Neighborhoods) will build on the City's momentum of focusing on safety and mobility on our roadways and creating more livable communities. The applications provide independent benefit if only one is awarded, however, can provide great collective benefit if both applications are successful. Staff reviewed the Caltrans guidelines for the Sustainable Communities Grant fund within the Sustainable Transportation Planning Grant Program and found that these projects both meet the grant criteria and serve as an opportunity to help the City reduce fatalities and serious injuries on our roadways, but also to address equity in active transportation and create networks where all people can travel safely and easily, regardless of their geographic location, race, socioeconomic or immigration status, personal identify, or mobility needs.

The third proposed grant application (Mixed-Income VMT Analysis) would seek funding specifically identified in the program for technical analysis associated with the implementation of SB743. Caltrans has recognized that local jurisdictions are grappling with a litany of questions associated with the new CEQA requirements and has provided this funding to allow jurisdictions to answer some of those

questions. The provision of affordable housing is one of the highest priorities for the City. Conducting the analysis proposed in this grant application could make approval of more affordable housing easier while also maintaining the City's responsibility to contribute to Statewide goals to reduce Greenhouse Gas emissions.

The fourth proposed grant application (Truxel Bridge) would build upon a body of work that was previously funding through Caltrans in an effort to better connect the City across the American River with local infrastructure in order to lessen the existing condition which relies primarily on State highways.

Re-imagining Connections to and through 12th Street

On January 19, 2017, City Council adopted Vision Zero, a traffic safety philosophy, and a goal to eliminate traffic fatalities and serious injuries by 2027. The Vision Zero Action Plan, adopted in August 2018, identifies the High Injury Network (HIN) and over 40 actions by which to reach the Vision Zero goal. Staff recently completed a study that investigated the Vision Zero Top Five high injury network corridors and identified short and long-term proven safety countermeasures to address safety challenges. While staff work toward identifying funding to implement City Council adopted plans, staff also continue to find funding opportunities for studies and recommendations to address other HIN corridors.

12th Street from L Street to C Street falls on within the top 10 corridors of Sacramento's High Injury Network (HIN) - corridors within the City that have the highest numbers of fatal and serious injury crashes involving pedestrians, bicyclists, and drivers. This corridor is also home to some of Sacramento's most disadvantaged communities falling in the 85-90% percentile for disadvantaged communities. Recently, the City of Sacramento received funding for a two-way Class IV bikeway, on-street parking, and streetscape improvements as part of a Complete Street transformation of 12th Street from H Street to Richards Blvd.

The City of Sacramento proposes a safety and mobility study for 12th Street from L Street to C Street to expand on the current Complete Streets effort and look at ways to change the focus of the street to be about people and place and address critical safety issues. It will also identify strategies to improve walking and biking connections to and from the corridor to access transit, housing, jobs, and businesses. This project would also engage residents, businesses, and other stakeholders to understand the needs and experiences of those that live, work, and travel to, through and along this corridor.

The estimated total project cost is \$401,000.

Sacramento 15-minute Neighborhoods Plan

As a response to the global pandemic and as a way to physically distance while out in public,

cities across North America have created Slow Streets through temporary materials like cones and a-frames. These efforts had multiple aims:

- Create space to recreate outside while physically distanced, allowing people to use slow streets to walk and ride for their mental and physical health;
- Calm and slow drivers where people live, play, and shop at neighborhood retail; and
- Improve walking and bicycling access to daily, essential destinations such as schools markets, restaurants, pharmacies, and medical offices.

At the same time, cities like Paris, Milan, Melbourne, and Barcelona are planning what they call 15-minute cities by making infrastructure mobility investments to make most daily trips accessible by a 15-minute walk or bike ride. See a video from the World Economic Forum here: <https://www.weforum.org/videos/paris-is-planning-to-become-a-15-minute-city-897c12513b>

Funding from this grant would allow the City of Sacramento to take the best of Slow Streets and the concept of a 15-minute city to realize 15-Minute Neighborhoods by Slow Active Streets. This effort will include working with a broad and diverse array of communities to identify a citywide network of traffic calmed, family friendly mobility neighborhood corridors that connect residents by walking and bicycling to their destinations. Rather than use of cones and a-frames, the City will use more permanent and attractive tools.

This effort will support the following:

- The City's Climate Action Plan and Mayor's Commission on Climate Change goals around active transportation.
- The City's commitment to equitable processes by engaging communities in their neighborhoods, about their needs. We will plan with them rather than for them.
- Economic vitality of our retail and restaurants within and next to our neighborhoods by connecting residents to them.
- Access to City parks and recreation.
- Access to schools.
- Healthy living by encouraging walking and bicycling.

The outcome will be transportation improvement plans that include traffic calming (diversions, curb extensions, etc.), walking infrastructure and biking infrastructure that will be ready to seek funding for implementation.

The estimated total project cost is \$770,000.

Mixed-Income Housing VMT Analysis for CEQA

SB743 (Steinberg) passed in 2013. This bill required local agencies throughout the State to replace level of service as the metric for significance in transportation analysis under CEQA. Consistent with technical guidance provided by the Governor's Office of Planning and Research, staff developed recommended thresholds of significance based on vehicle miles traveled (VMT) and has been using these thresholds on a case-by-case basis consistent with the CEQA Guidelines since the July 1, 2020 statutory deadline. Staff's recommended thresholds included a provision to screen housing developments from VMT analysis when all of the units proposed are affordable thereby streamlining the production of affordable housing within the City.

The analysis for which grant funding is being sought could allow the City to extend this streamlining to housing projects that include a combination of affordable and market rate units if substantial evidence can be found to support the conclusion that these projects produce lower levels of VMT.

At a minimum, this grant-funded project would purchase big data for a predetermined number of housing developments to compare the travel behavior of mixed-income housing residents to residents of comparable market rate housing developments. Key factors such as walkability score, proximity to high-quality transit, and availability of off-street parking will be used to develop the criteria necessary to identify mixed-income projects that are most likely to produce low levels of VMT in an effort to streamline the CEQA process for such projects.

The estimated total project cost is \$55,000.

Truxel Bridge Feasibility Study

In 2013, the City of Sacramento completed the American River Crossing Alternatives Study and adopted an all-modes (pedestrian, bicycle, auto, and light rail) Truxel alignment as one of the crossings to pursue for funding consideration. This work was funded through a Caltrans Partnership Planning Grant in cooperation with SACOG.

The multi-modal crossing at Truxel adopted by City Council for implementation in 2013 was based on its ability to address the following needs:

1. Limited connectivity across the American River creates a barrier to economic activity, land use development, social exchanges, and access to jobs within the Central City and South Natomas. The barrier causes longer trip lengths between origins and destinations that are physically close, which discourages walking and bicycling, reduces public health, creates inefficient transit routing, consumes more fuel, and generates higher levels of air pollutants and Greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions due to the reliance on automobiles.
2. Limited connectivity across the American River contributes to peak period travel delays on I-5.
3. Limited connectivity across the American River contributes to longer emergency response times and limits evacuation alternatives.
4. Limited connectivity across the American River creates a barrier to recreational opportunities

within the American River Parkway.

Caltrans Sustainable Transportation Grant Funding will allow the City to prepare a comprehensive Engineering Feasibility Study to move the project closer to construction. The Study will most likely include:

1. Project Management
2. Public Engagement
3. Preliminary Engineering / Alignment Alternatives
 - a. Constraints Analysis
 - b. Preliminary Alignments (3 max)
 - c. Traffic Analysis
 - d. Hydraulic Analysis
 - e. ROW Analysis
 - f. Preliminary Cost Estimates
 - g. Construction Methodology
4. Preliminary Environmental Analysis Report
5. Funding Strategy

The estimated total project cost is \$625,000.