



CITY OF SALINAS COUNCIL STAFF REPORT

DATE: MAY 16, 2023

DEPARTMENT: PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT

FROM: DAVID JACOBS P.E., L.S., PUBLIC WORKS DIRECTOR

BY: ANDREW EASTERLING, TRAFFIC ENGINEER

TITLE: HARDEN PARKWAY PATH AND SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOL PROJECT

RECOMMENDED MOTION:

A motion to:

- 1) Authorize the acceptance of Active Transportation Grant funds in the amount of \$8,079,000;
- 2) Authorize the establishment of a new CIP project, “Harden Parkway Path and Safe Routes to School Project,” with appropriations totaling \$9,635,000, a transfer of \$8,079,000 from the Special Const Assist – Fed & St Fund to the CIP fund and a corresponding revenue budget, plus a transfer of \$1,556,000 matching funds from the Measure X Transportation and Safety Fund to the CIP Fund for the Harden Parkway Path and Safe Routes to School Project; and
- 3) Authorize the Public Works Director to execute all agreements and any required paperwork with Caltrans for the Active Transportation Grant Program.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

The City recently developed a Safe Routes to Schools Plan over a three-year process involving extensive community outreach and public engagement. As part of the Safe Routes to Schools planning effort, the City implemented a pop-up demonstration project for Harden Middle School. After the pop-up demonstration project, the team conducted a survey and found that the majority of the participating students and parents supported the project. Input received from the community helped form the final Salinas Safe Routes to Schools Plan adopted by City Council Resolution on December 6, 2022. In partnership with the Transportation Agency for Monterey County the City submitted an application to the Active Transportation Grant Program and successfully secured \$8,079,000 in funding for the Harden Parkway Path and Safe Routes to School Project.

BACKGROUND:

On December 6, 2022, the City of Salinas adopted the Salinas Safe Routes to Schools Plan as a strategic planning document by Resolution No. 22533 (Attachment 1). Public input was the foundation of the process to create the Safe Routes to Schools Plan. The planning team developed an outreach plan and sought input from community members to understand school transportation needs and barriers and refine the draft recommendations. Parent and student surveys, presentations at parent meetings, and walking audits with school staff all contributed input on the barriers to walking and biking to schools in Salinas and the types of improvements that community members would like to see.

According to the 2021 city-wide Safe Routes to Schools survey, the top barriers to children walking and bicycling in Salinas are “driver behavior” and “traffic speed”. These concerns have been validated through school site audits, speed surveys and photos. The feedback from the parent community clearly expresses a need for routes with slower traffic or more space and protection from motorized vehicles. This means that on certain streets, bicycle lanes are not comfortable enough to encourage children and less confident riders to take the trip by bicycle instead of by car. Harden Parkway and McKinnon Street both currently have bicycle lanes and sidewalks but have safety issues that need to be addressed to encourage higher levels of bicycling and walking in Salinas.

Harden Parkway provides access to the Northridge Mall and Harden Ranch Plaza, major shopping and employment hubs on busy North Main Street, a 6-lane arterial street which runs north-south through the community. Just a 10-minute bike ride to the south-side of the community is the Sherwood Park neighborhood. In combination with several other streets and paths, Harden Parkway and McKinnon Street provide one of the only routes for students and residents of the Sherwood Park neighborhood and Harden Plaza affordable housing complex to access Harden Middle School, higher education and the Northridge Mall while minimizing travel on dangerous North Main Street.

The intersection of Harden Parkway and McKinnon Street is currently controlled by an all-way stop with crosswalks on all four approaches. During the school hours the intersection can be congested with both vehicular traffic, and platoons of students crossing the intersection. The City Public Works Department routinely monitors intersections, and every few years brings a report to Council to prioritize intersection improvements. The last intersection improvements priority list was presented to Council in 2020, whereas the City Council approved Resolution No. 21915 (Attachment 2) prioritizing the intersection of Harden Parkway at McKinnon Street for improvements. The City developed a draft Intersection Control Evaluation (Attachment 3) to test the benefit and cost performance of different intersection improvements for Harden Parkway at McKinnon Street over a 20-year period. The analysis found a roundabout-controlled intersection would be the preferred alternative. The draft Intersection Control Evaluation would be finalized as part of the project approval and environmental document phase of the project.

As part of the Safe Routes to Schools planning effort, the City implemented a pop-up demonstration project for Harden Middle School. The pop-up event temporarily installed some of cost-effective infrastructure recommendations from the Safe Routes to School Plan. These events were an opportunity for the community to try out recommendations from the Safe Routes to Schools Plan and provide feedback before the City takes steps to install more permanent

infrastructure. Feedback from the community was used to help refine the recommendations in the Safe Routes to School Plan, before taking the Plan to City Council for adoption. After the pop-up demonstration project, the team conducted a survey (Attachment 4) and found that 60% wanted to see the changes made permanent, 9% wanted to see the changes made permanent with some changes, 20% did not support the changes, and 11% were undecided. Additionally, students from California State University Monterey Bay (CSUMB) conducted a study (Attachment 5) to analyze how the pop-up demonstration project influenced student behavior. The study found that the pop-up demonstration project increased overall pedestrian traffic during the month the temporary improvements were installed. The data seems to suggest with the improvements more students would feel safe and comfortable walking to school, which could encourage a more active and sustainable transportation behaviors.

On June 15, 2022, following the feedback the Safe Routes to Schools team received from the pop-up temporary project, the City in partnership with the Transportation Agency for Monterey County (TAMC) submitted an application to the Active Transportation Grant Program to request funding for improvements identified in the Salinas Safe Routes to Schools Plan, including a 0.77-mile multi-use path with a road diet on Harden Parkway from El Dorado Drive to Regency Circle. The reconfiguration will transform a 4-lane roadway to a 2-lane roadway with a roundabout at McKinnon Street, 2-way multiuse path separated by a bioswale and accessible sidewalks. Connecting to Harden Parkway, the project includes safe routes to school improvements on McKinnon Street including protected bike lanes connecting the proposed multiuse path on Harden Parkway to newly installed bike facilities on East Alvin Drive, high-visibility crosswalk in front of Harden Middle School and curb extensions along Westminster Drive connecting McKinnon Street to El Dorado Park. As part of this effort the City and TAMC also secured \$1,548,000 of grant funding for outreach and education tasks to help encourage and promote safe walking and biking to school.

Following the acceptance of the grant, the City will need to submit paperwork to Caltrans and execute a supplemental agreement under the State master agreement. Staff recommends that the City Council authorize the Public Works Director to execute any necessary agreements any required paperwork with Caltrans for the Active Transportation Grant Program. Staff also recommends that the City Council approve a Resolution to authorize the establishment of a new CIP project, "Harden Parkway Path and Safe Routes to School Project," with appropriations totaling \$9,635,000, a transfer of \$8,079,000 from the Special Const Assist – Fed & St Fund to the CIP fund, plus a transfer of \$1,556,000 matching funds from the Measure X Transportation and Safety Fund to the CIP Fund and a corresponding revenue budget for the Harden Parkway Path and Safe Routes to School Project. Once accepted the City will be able to begin the environmental, design, and non-infrastructure phases. The City will need consultant support for the environmental, design and construction support. The item will be brought back to Council to approve a professional service agreement for consultant support following a request for proposals. The item will also be brought back to Council to approve a professional service agreement with TAMC for the non-infrastructure components. Once the plans and specifications are finalized the item will come back again to City Council to approve the plans and specifications and authorize staff to advertise the project.

CEQA CONSIDERATION:

The City of Salinas has determined that the proposed action is not a project as defined by the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) (CEQA Guidelines Section 15378). The City of Salinas will need to certify a CEQA document when the final plan is approved, prior to construction.

STRATEGIC PLAN INITIATIVE:

This item supports the City Council's goals of "infrastructure and environmental sustainability", "public safety", and "youth and seniors".

DEPARTMENTAL COORDINATION:

The Public Works Department and Finance Department manage the project accounting. The Public Works Department manages construction contract, inspection, and final acceptance of construction projects.

FISCAL AND SUSTAINABILITY IMPACT:

There is no cost to the General Fund. This Council action authorizes the establishment of a new CIP project, "Harden Parkway Path and Safe Routes to School Project," with appropriations totaling \$9,635,000, a transfer of \$8,079,000 from the Special Const Assist – Fed & St Fund to the CIP fund and a corresponding revenue budget, plus a transfer of \$1,556,000 matching funds from the Measure X Transportation and Safety Fund to the CIP Fund for the Harden Parkway Path and Safe Routes to School Project.

The full project cost for the Harden Parkway Path and Safe Routes to School Project is estimated to be \$15,562,000. The grant application requested \$14,006,000 in grant funding with a 10% local match of \$1,556,000. The California Department of Transportation's Active Transportation Program's budget this cycle was roughly \$650 million. 434 applications were submitted by local agencies totaling over \$3.1 billion. The City successfully secured two grant applications, the Alisal Safe Routes to School Project and the Harden Parkway Path and Safe Routes to School Project. The Harden Parkway Path and Safe Routes to School Project was at the cusp for funding recommendations, and the remaining ATP budget for cycle 6 was only able to award \$8,079,000 of the requested grant funds. The state ATP budget currently shows a \$5,927,000 shortfall in the construction phase of the project's budget. City staff is coordinating with Caltrans staff to ensure the project is fully funded, but there is still some risk that the City may need to find additional funding sources either in future ATP cycles or other grant programs.

ATTACHMENTS:

Resolution

Attachment 1 Resolution No 22533

Attachment 2 Resolution No 21915

Attachment 3 Salinas ICE Harden-McKinnon

Attachment 4 Summary Report of Bicycle & Pedestrian Counts for Temporary Installations on McKinnon Street & Westminster Drive

Attachment 5 Temporary Demonstration Survey Results