



**CITY OF SALINAS
COUNCIL STAFF REPORT**

DATE: SEPTEMBER 20, 2022

DEPARTMENT: COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT
PUBLIC WORKS

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TITLE: AUTHORIZATION TO SUPPORT CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT
OF TRANSPORTATION RECONNECTING COMMUNITIES
PILOT PROJECT DISCRETIONARY GRANT

RECOMMENDED MOTION:

Motion authorizing the Mayor to submit a letter of support for California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) Reconnecting Communities Grant and approving the City's commitment to fund a portion of the required local match contribution, if awarded.

RECOMMENDATION:

It is recommended that the City Council approve a resolution authorizing the Mayor to provide a letter of support for the Caltrans' Reconnecting Communities Grant application to fund a feasibility study of key bicycle and pedestrian barriers.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

Caltrans, the City of Salinas, and the Transportation Agency for Monterey County (TAMC) are collaborating on a 2022 Reconnecting Communities Grant application requesting funding to conduct a feasibility study of key bicycle and pedestrian barriers along US 101 at Alvin Drive, State Route 183 and Union Pacific Railroad (UPRR) adjacent to Chinatown. Caltrans is the lead agency, and the City and TAMC are co-applicants. The objective of the proposed study is to increase pedestrian and bicycle accessibility and connectivity to employment areas, shopping, restaurants, medical providers, and public transportation through evaluating current barriers, crossing alternatives and enhanced safety and connectivity features for bicyclists and pedestrians. If awarded, City participation would include a portion of the local match commitment of up to \$100,000. The recommended funding source of the City's portion of the local match is CIP 9070 (Chinatown Revitalization Plan) and Traffic Fee Ordinance funds (2306-Development Fees-Arterials). A draft letter of support is provided as an attachment to this report.

BACKGROUND:

Recent community-driven plans (Downtown Vibrancy Plan, 2015 and Chinatown Revitalization Plan, 2019), city studies (Vision Zero Action Plan, 2021), and regional plans (Regional Transportation Plan, 2022) identify infrastructure and safety barriers that divide low-income communities from employment, retail destinations, medical providers, and rail and bus transit facilities. Currently, there are no bicycle or pedestrian facilities that allow the community to cross at along US 101 at Alvin Drive, State Route 183 and Union Pacific Railroad (UPRR) adjacent to Chinatown, safely and conveniently. The only existing routes require very long, out-of-direction trips that are not ADA (Americans Disabilities Act) compliant and impose high levels of traffic stress for non-automobile modes.

DISCUSSION:

The feasibility study will identify and evaluate the feasibility of new and improved connectivity over and across the State Highway System (Route 183 and US101), Main Street, and an active rail line (UPRR), where pedestrians and cyclists currently have no viable alternative to cross. In summary the study will

- 1) examine the existing behavior of bicyclists and pedestrians in and around the Chinatown and Alvin/US 101 transportation barriers,
- 2) identify all probable right of way impacts, environmental impacts, and nonstandard design features at each barrier location,
- 3) develop and evaluate design alternatives and select a preferred alternative at each barrier location, and
- 4) conduct public engagement during the process.

The City of Salinas will be a project partner throughout the study process to ensure coordination of planning efforts, as well as to build upon the foundation of community engagement that has already been undertaken through past planning efforts. Continued robust community engagement methods will include Walk and Talk Audits, pop ups at community events, and small group conversations (home visits) and surveys.

CEQA CONSIDERATION:

The proposed action is not a project as defined by the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) (CEQA Guidelines section 15378). If the proposed scope or actions progress to a “project” level, further CEQA analysis will be required to address potential environmental impacts of the proposed project.

STRATEGIC PLAN INITIATIVE:

The proposed study furthers the City Council 2022-2025 Strategic Plan Goals of Infrastructure and Environmental Sustainability and Public Safety. If awarded, grant funds would be used to conduct technical and feasibility studies that further implement actions identified in the Chinatown Revitalization Plan, Vision Zero Action Plan, 2002 General Plan, 2010

City of Salinas Traffic Improvement Program, and 2022 Regional Transportation Plan to increase pedestrian and bicycle safety and access to commercial retail, community services and educational institutions by removing infrastructure barriers that currently divide neighborhoods.

DEPARTMENTAL COORDINATION:

Public Works and Community Development staff are partnering with Caltrans and TAMC on the preparation and submission of the RCP grant application and collaborated on the preparation of this staff report.

FISCAL AND SUSTAINABILITY IMPACT:

The estimated cost of the proposed study is approximately \$500,000. RCP requires a twenty percent (20%) local match of approximately \$100,000. If awarded, Caltrans, TAMC and the City would each contribute a proportional amount towards the local match. If awarded, City participation would include a portion of the local match commitment of up to \$100,000. The recommended funding source of the City's portion of the local match is CIP 9070 (Chinatown Revitalization Plan) and Traffic Fee Ordinance funds (2306-Development Fees-Arterials).

ATTACHMENTS:

1. Resolution authorizing letter of support and local match commitment for California Department of Transportation Reconnecting Communities Planning Grant
2. Draft Letter of Support
3. Reconnecting Communities Grant Application Fact Sheet