



**TOWN OF LOS GATOS
COUNCIL AGENDA REPORT**

MEETING DATE: 02/02/2021

ITEM NO: 5

DATE: January 27, 2021
TO: Mayor and Town Council
FROM: Laurel Prevetti, Town Manager
SUBJECT: Authorize the Town Manager to Submit Grant Applications to the Caltrans Sustainable Transportation Planning Grant Program and the VTA Measure B Bicycle and Pedestrian Planning Grant Program

RECOMMENDATION:

Authorize the Town Manager to submit grant applications to the Caltrans Sustainable Transportation Planning Grant Program and the VTA Measure B Bicycle and Pedestrian Planning Grant Program.

BACKGROUND:

In December 2020, Caltrans released a call-for-applications for the Sustainable Transportation Planning Grant program. The program overview is included in Attachment 1. This program, with total grants of \$29.5 million statewide, will fund local and regional multimodal transportation and land use planning projects that further the region's and State's sustainable transportation goals. The grant application deadline is February 12, 2021.

The voter-approved 2016 Santa Clara County Ballot Measure B included a Bicycle and Pedestrian Program Category. The Town was successful in the capital program in early 2020. Staff is anticipating a call-for-projects in the Bicycle and Pedestrian Planning Program to be released in late January or early February. The Bicycle and Pedestrian Planning Studies Competitive Grant Program Criteria (Attachment 2) show that this program will occur every two years. Available funds for the first cycle (FY20 to FY21) will be \$1.66 million in total.

Planning grants are ideal opportunities to position longer term Town goals with future construction funding opportunities by creating projects that are shovel ready. Funds that flow from the Federal level to stimulate the economy often look for these shovel ready projects. There may be increasing opportunities for these types of projects with the new administration.

PREPARED BY: Ying Smith
Transportation and Mobility Manager

Reviewed by: Town Manager, Assistant Town Manager, Town Attorney, and Parks and Public Works Director

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DISCUSSION:

Both grant programs would fund planning projects in the feasibility study and conceptual design phases. Town staff reviewed the priority projects in the Town's 2020 Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan (BPMP) Update and is recommending three candidate projects for further consideration. These projects are included in the BPMP Connect Los Gatos Prioritized Projects list, meet the eligibility requirements, and are considered to be the Town's most competitive projects under the established criteria in the corresponding grant programs.

The first opportunity is to conduct a barrier crossing enhancement study for the Los Gatos Creek Trail and Winchester Boulevard Corridor. This planning level effort could take advantage of both the Caltrans Sustainable Transportation Planning and Measure B grant opportunities.

This project will prepare an evaluation of State Route (SR) 85 crossing enhancement options in the Winchester Boulevard and Los Gatos Creek trail corridor between Lark Avenue and Town limits to the north. The project work will include preparation of conceptual designs for enhancements on Winchester Boulevard and the Los Gatos Creek trail.

In looking at this corridor, staff took into account that there are currently three facilities crossing SR 85: Winchester Boulevard, Los Gatos Creek trail, and Los Gatos Boulevard. The Los Gatos Creek trail is a Class I facility used by many people for all purposes and is increasingly impacted by congestion. In the segment between SR 85 and Lark Avenue, the trail was damaged by flooding three out of the past five years. During these times, the trail was temporary closed to use. The Town repaired the damage in the spring of 2019 utilizing Federal Emergency Management Agency funding.

The Winchester Boulevard crossing becomes very challenging for bicyclists and pedestrians north of Lark Avenue. Bicyclists and pedestrians must navigate the freeway ramps and the Union Pacific railroad tracks and there is no sidewalk on the easterly side of the bridge.

Given the limited options in the area, staff is proposing a corridor planning approach and exploring options to enhance the freeway crossings to improve active transportation safety and promote higher usage. The planning study would evaluate and prioritize complementary improvements on both the street and trail, through community engagement efforts. A long-term solution to consider may include trail realignment to ensure this segment is flood-proof so public access is not denied during the rainy season.

This project would continue to advance the work done through the Winchester Boulevard Complete Streets conceptual design that was completed in early 2020, refining the conceptual and preliminary design. A grant for the final design was awarded through the Measure B capital program, which is anticipated to be available in the 2022-2024 timeframe. The Charter Oaks

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DISCUSSION (continued):

Trail Repair project is included in the Town's Capital Improvement Program and includes protecting the trail from ongoing storm damage.

A second opportunity entails a look at a Complete Streets study for Pollard Road. This project aligns well with the requirements in the Measure B program. Staff has received numerous comments about concerns of safe routes to school and the lack of safe pedestrian crossings and in the 2020 Los Gatos Active Transportation Survey, respondents identified Pollard Road as a location of concern. Pollard Road will need pavement rehabilitation in the near future, making this an opportune time to design a Complete Streets project to maximize the investment. Because half of Pollard Road is in Campbell, this could be a partnership that would help make for a compelling project. The pavement maintenance portion of the project could serve as the matching funds for the Complete Streets improvements.

A third opportunity for planning grant funding, also from Measure B, would be a Los Gatos Boulevard Complete Streets plan. This plan could address the area between Shannon Road and the Town limits and might explore conceptual designs for a Class IV bikeway, intersection improvements, and pedestrian safety improvements. This project is identified as a priority project in the 2017 BPMP and in the 2020 update. In the 2020 Los Gatos Active Transportation Survey, respondents identified Los Gatos Boulevard as one of the locations of concern.

Transforming Los Gatos Boulevard is a large-scale and highly visible project. Staff will further evaluate this potential project's competitiveness, project development schedule, and the Town's budget capacity for local matching funds. On a later date, staff will need to determine if this cycle (FY20/21) of Measure B program or a later cycle is more appropriate.

CONCLUSION:

Staff is recommending authorizing submittal of grant applications for the above three candidate projects to the Caltrans Sustainable Transportation Planning Grant Program and the VTA Measure B Bicycle and Pedestrian Planning Grant Program. As staff completes the application packages and estimates preliminary scoring, a final determination of which projects to apply with may be made. The support from the Town Council will increase the credibility of the grant applications.

COORDINATION:

This report was coordinated with the Complete Streets and Transportation Commission. The Commission unanimously voted to support staff's recommendation at its January 14, 2020 meeting. The Commission also provided valuable feedback to staff.

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FISCAL IMPACT:

There is no fiscal impact as a result of the recommended action. If the grant applications are awarded, the Council will have the opportunity to review the funding agreement to accept the grant funds and commit to local match funds.

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT:

This is not a project defined under CEQA, and no further action is required.

ATTACHMENTS:

1. Caltrans Sustainable Transportation Planning Grant Program Overview
2. Measure B Bicycle/Pedestrian Planning Studies Competitive Grant Program Criteria