

**CITY OF ALBANY  
CITY COUNCIL AGENDA  
STAFF REPORT**

Agenda Date: 1/19/2010

Reviewed by: \_\_\_\_\_

**SUBJECT:** Buchanan Bicycle and Pedestrian Path - Environmental Negative Declaration

**REPORT BY:** Aleida Andrino-Chavez, Transportation Planner

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**STAFF RECOMMENDATION**

Approve the environmental documents for the Buchanan Bicycle and Pedestrian Project that include:

1. Final Mitigated Negative Declaration (Exhibit A)
2. Mitigation Monitoring Program (Exhibit B)

**BACKGROUND**

In 2007 the City of Albany received a \$266,000 grant from the Alameda County Transportation Improvement Authority (ACTIA) for development of 35% design and environmental work of the Buchanan Bicycle and Pedestrian Path project. The Buchanan Bicycle and Pedestrian Path project was ranked top priority in the Alameda Countywide Bicycle Plan for its local and regional significance in closing the existing gap between the Ohlone Greenway and the Bay Trail. As such, the likelihood of this project for obtaining construction funding in the near future is high.

Over the last two years, City staff and the Traffic and Safety Commission have gone through the design process of this project. The Commission has held several meetings with the project stakeholders and with the public during design development. The design phase was completed in June, 2009 and the City Council approved the design option recommended by the Traffic and Safety Commission at its meeting of July 20, 2009. The last phase of the grant scope of work is the completion of the environmental work for the project, which includes the state and federal processes, CEQA and NEPA respectively.

**DISCUSSION**

Upon Council's approval of the preferred design option, staff proceeded with the environmental phase. LSA is the consulting firm responsible for conducting the environmental work for the project. The draft CEQA document was released on November 7, 2009 and the required 30-day comment period was closed on December, 8 2009. Staff did not receive any written comments about the environmental document during this period. Exhibit C, the Administrative Response to Comments Memo addresses the verbal

comments received at the public meeting held by the T&S Commission on November 19, 2009. The comments referred to the following:

- Correct description of the University Village project,
- Address the safety concerns regarding the path segment along the US Department of Agriculture (USDA)
- Correct the map showing the alignment of the existing Buchanan Street Connector on Figure 2.

In addition, LSA prepared a Mitigation and Monitoring Report Program (MMRP) that was formulated based upon the findings of the Initial Study/Mitigated Negative Declaration (IS/MND). This document is intended to ensure program compliance with typical state requirements during project implementation. State law requires the adoption of an MMRP when mitigation measures are required to avoid significant impacts.

As required by the National Environmental Protection Act (NEPA), an Environmental Assessment is being prepared for the USDA portion of the project due to the fact that the bicycle project directly affects a federal property. USDA staff is currently reviewing the draft NEPA document. No City Council approval is required.

### **SUSTAINABILITY IMPACT**

Implementation of the Buchanan Bicycle and Pedestrian Project provides opportunities to promote bicycle and walking. By promoting zero emission forms of transportation, the City is getting closer to the emissions reduction policy goal adopted in April 2007 by the City Council.

### **FINANCIAL IMPACT**

None.

### **Attachments**

Exhibit A: Mitigated Negative Declaration for the Buchanan Bicycle and Pedestrian Path

Exhibit B: Mitigation Monitoring Program

Exhibit C: Administrative Response to Comments