

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

Agenda Date: December 6, 2010

Reviewed by: BP

SUBJECT: Albany's participation in San Pablo Avenue Stormwater Spine Project (Stormwater Planters/Rain Gardens)

REPORT BY: Ann Chaney, Community Development Director
Nicole Almaguer, Environmental Resources Associate

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

That the City Council approve Resolution No. 2010-62, authorizing the City Manager to submit a letter of support on behalf of the City to the San Francisco Estuary Project (SFEP), approving the City's participation in San Pablo Avenue Stormwater Spine Project, and supporting the SFEP's grant applications for the project.

BACKGROUND

The City's watershed is compromised by non-point source pollution and excessive stormwater runoff, which flows untreated via storm drains directly to our creeks and the San Francisco Bay. This situation, exacerbated by the lack of pervious surfaces, contributes to water quality impairment. Improvements in "green infrastructure" are a growing trend, providing management of stormwater through the use of surface-level landscape features, which absorb, slow, filter, and cleanse run-off before it enters storm drains. Examples of "green infrastructure" include curb-cuts and flow-through planters along the parking, planting strip and sidewalk areas; and vegetated swales or stormwater planters (rain gardens).

SFEP is a division of the Association of Bay Area Governments, and is a local coalition working to protect and enhance water quality in the San Francisco Bay Delta Estuary. SFEP is initiating a pilot project to develop green infrastructure along the San Pablo Corridor. Caltrans has given their support to the project and will be involved in project implementation.

SFEP is requesting that each city partner select its own sites on San Pablo Avenue that would then be designed to treat a minimum of 1.1 acres of urban run-off using appropriate sustainable stormwater management techniques. The City of Albany has been asked to participate as one of the seven cities.

To fund the San Pablo Avenue Stormwater Spine Project, SFEP is applying for grants from the EPA (due by January 18, 2010), and from the State of California (due by January 7, 2010):

- The San Francisco Bay Water Quality Improvement Fund (SFBWQIF) is a competitive grant program managed by the EPA and funded through Congressional appropriations. The program is in its third funding cycle, with approximately \$2,000,000 available in grants (ranging from \$500,000 to \$1,500,000) for collaborative activities that will result in direct environmental benefits or establish institutional capacity to achieve desired improvement in: 1) protecting and restoring local waterways and the San Francisco Bay; 2) reducing polluted run-off from urban development; or 3) implementing watershed plans to restore impaired waterbodies.
- The California Department of Water Resources' Integrated Regional Water Management (DWR IRWM) grant is funded through Proposition 84 and Prop 1E, and is intended to encourage regional strategies for managing water resources. It would provide funding for both planning and implementation in support of that goal.

Required matching funds for each grant are being provided by the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) in the form of funds for project construction (toll plaza authority funds). SFEP is receiving \$1.8 million toward the project from Caltrans.

DISCUSSION

SFEP is applying for both grant programs. If the grant applications are successful, SFEP will hire a project designer/engineer through an RFP process to design seven stormwater treatment facilities in seven cities along San Pablo Avenue. This designer will work with the cities to do final design and engineering for the site(s) chosen by each city, with the goal of treating at least 1 acre of impervious surface per city. Construction will be performed by a contractor hired by SFEP and approved by Caltrans.

The San Pablo Avenue Green Stormwater Spine project is an opportunity for the City to develop in-house green infrastructure designs and specifications. It will also provide a demonstration project that will be instructive to the City and its residents in innovative, sustainable stormwater management. SFEP has been successful in securing SFBWQIF awards in both previous rounds by submitting proposals with numerous partners and a wide variety of approaches.

Staff has proposed a number of potential areas for creation of stormwater planters to treat stormwater runoff. The goal of treating 1.1 acres represents the amount of impervious surfaces (e.g., roofs, parking lots, sidewalks, streets) that the planters will treat, and not the size of the planters themselves. The City of El Cerrito concluded that treatment of 44,188 square feet of impervious surface equals 1.01 acre. This can be achieved by installing three stormwater planters, each totaling 72 square feet (about 4' by 18') in size. Thus, approximately 216 square feet of planter area is needed to treat 1 acre of impervious

surface. Because presence of a storm drain is important in locating a stormwater planter, the best locations along San Pablo Avenue are on the east side between Washington and Marin Avenues (800, 900, 1000 blocks) and at creek crossings.

Upon a site review, staff recommends the following location:

- 800 block of San Pablo Avenue (east side)

Alternate location include:

- San Pablo Avenue at Codornices Creek and Village Creek (west side adjacent to University Village)

Any stormwater planter designed within a sidewalk area would ensure sufficient width for ADA access. Any potential location that would displace an on-street parking space would be one that would have minimal interference with business commerce and use.

A schematic plan is attached to this report showing potential locations. Additional analysis and discussion with SFEP may be required to determine the most suitable sites along San Pablo.

The letter of support to SFEP is due by December 30, 2010.

SUSTAINABILITY IMPACT

Improving water quality within our local watershed is an ongoing goal of the City's Clean Water Program. Additionally joining in a regional opportunity to "green" San Pablo Avenue further reinforces the Green Corridor Partnership.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

There will be no significant cost to the City other than for staff time to review and approve the design, inspection during construction, and long term maintenance. The grant will cover design and construction costs, as well as maintenance for the first two years. Bay Friendly plantings will reduce maintenance costs to the City after that period.

Attachments

Letter of Support

Resolution No. 2010-62

Schematic of stormwater planters and locations