

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

Agenda Date: 03/07/2011
Reviewed by: BP

SUBJECT: Resolution No. 2011-10 authorizing the City Manager to enter into a Contract with the State of California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) upon receipt of a Community Planning Grant

REPORT BY: Aleida Andrino-Chavez, Transportation Planner

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Approve Resolution No. 2011-10 authorizing the City Manager to enter into a contract with Caltrans upon receipt of a Community-based Transportation Planning Grant for the development of a study for Complete Streets for Buchanan Street and San Pablo Avenue.

BACKGROUND

In January 2011, Caltrans issued a Call for Projects for its Transportation Planning Grants for Fiscal Years 2011-12. The Transportation Planning Grants aim at promoting the implementation of a balanced, comprehensive and multimodal transportation system. There are four categories for these grants: Community-based Transportation Planning, Environmental Justice, Partnership Planning, and Transit Planning. Each of these grants is targeted to specific needs and has program-specific issues that address state and federal goals. The Community-based Transportation Planning Grant includes economic revitalization, “complete streets” studies, context-sensitive streetscapes or town center studies or plans among other categories of eligible projects. Last year, the City was unsuccessful in obtaining a grant through this program for three corridors, San Pablo Avenue, Buchanan Street, and Solano Avenue from Masonic Avenue to the Berkeley City Limits. Caltrans staff provided feedback on the application packet and has encouraged the City to reapply this year. Because staff learned that San Pablo and Buchanan streets were the higher scoring of the three streets, staff is recommending that the grant study focus on those two streets.

DISCUSSION

The City’s Draft Climate Action Plan calls for the inclusion of the concept of Complete Streets in the City of Albany. Complete Streets is a concept developed at the national level encouraging the implementation of streets that accommodate all users of the roadways. The implementation of Complete Street strategies promote walking and bicycling, therefore having the potential of reducing emissions from transportation sources. This is a goal that the City Council adopted in 2007.

Currently, Buchanan Street is the subject of a design project that will eventually implement a bicycle path along the south side of Buchanan Street from the intersection of San Pablo Avenue to the Buchanan Bridge Overcrossing. The City has finalized 35% design and environmental work for this project and has secured construction funds in the amount of \$1.7 million from the Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality program. This project includes the implementation of a new traffic signal at Pierce Street and the closure of Buchanan Avenue to improve pedestrian and cyclist safety for the path transition to the Buchanan overcrossing. In addition, as part of a Safe Routes to School Project, pedestrian improvements and a new signal will be implemented at the intersection of Buchanan and Jackson Streets this summer. The ongoing Active Transportation Plan has identified a crossing treatment at the intersection of Polk and Buchanan Streets, but this is still in draft form and not finalized yet. Because some of these projects are in the conceptual stage, there is an opportunity to further define these components through the Complete Streets public process and create a unified vision for the Buchanan corridor.

Moreover, there has long been an interest in working on a plan for physical improvements/enhancement along San Pablo Avenue, starting with the San Pablo Streetscape Master Plan. The Albany Active Transportation plan has identified conceptual projects for San Pablo Avenue as well. The draft plan proposes medians, high visibility pedestrian crossings, new traffic signals, and defined loading and unloading areas for merchants. As previously stated, these are conceptual proposals that could be defined through the public process taking place under the Complete Streets projects.

City staff partnered with the Local Government Commission (LGC) for the application submission last year and is planning on doing the same for the re submittal this year. LGC specializes in assisting local governments with preparing a proposal for Caltrans and carrying out the planning process if the grant funds are awarded.

The grant submittal requires a resolution from the applicant's governing body stating the title of the person authorized to enter into a contract with Caltrans. The grant submittal deadline is March 30, 2011. Awards are expected to be announced in the summer of 2011.

SUSTAINABILITY IMPACT

Implementing Complete Streets criteria in developing corridor projects ensure the consideration of all users of the street, be it pedestrians, cyclists, rollers, the disabled community, and motorists. This in turn promotes less reliance on the private automobile and encourages the use of alternative transportation modes and activities that involve community building, like walking, bicycling, jogging, etc. This helps achieve the goal of reducing emissions generated by transportation modes, a policy adopted by Council in 2007 and reaffirmed by the Climate Action Plan adopted in 2010.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

A 10% match is required for this grant. Up to one quarter of the 10% match can be in kind. It is estimated that the project will cost about \$125,000. With the 2.5% in-kind contribution, the

estimated match is only 7.5% or \$9,375. Possible sources of funding are Transportation Development Acts (TDA) funds.

Attachment

City Council Resolution No. 2011-10