

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

Agenda Date: 7/16/2012
Reviewed by: BP

SUBJECT: Contract No. C12-15 with Nelson/Nygaard Consulting Associates, Inc. to develop 35% concept design and public process for a Complete Street Project for San Pablo Avenue and Buchanan Street

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STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Authorize the City Manager to enter into Contract No. C12-15 with Nelson/Nygaard Consulting Associates, Inc. in the amount of \$75,315 for the development of 35% Design and public process for a Complete Streets Project for San Pablo Avenue and Buchanan Street.

BACKGROUND

The California “Complete Streets Act” directs cities to identify all users of the streets, including seniors, children and people with disabilities and establish routine accommodations to meet the transportation needs of all parties whenever a street is repaved, reconfigured, or designed for new construction. Pursuant to this directive, staff has applied for grants that will improve San Pablo Avenue and Buchanan Street to accommodate the needs of all users and encourage all modes of transportation. Both of these roadways carry high traffic volumes and provide access to important destinations in Albany. Their current design, however, favors motor vehicle travel and do not encourage alternative modes of transportation.

In 2010, the City in coordination with the Local Government Commission, which is a Sacramento-based non-profit organization, applied for and was awarded a Planning grant from Caltrans in the amount of \$128,600 for a Complete Streets planning process and development of 35% concept plans for San Pablo Avenue and Buchanan Street. The Local Government Commission specializes in public outreach and coordination, and is working with nearby cities on similar projects.

Background on San Pablo Avenue

San Pablo Avenue is a major north-south arterial carrying approximately 25,300 vehicles per day and speeds approaching the 40 mph at the 85th percentile. Currently, San Pablo

Avenue is not a pedestrian or bicycle friendly street. This roadway has become the subject of design analyses in the past. A design guideline was conducted in 1989, a Vision Plan in 1997, and a Streetscape Master Plan in 2001. In addition, the Albany Active Transportation Plan finalized in 2012, proposes the installation of medians and pedestrian crossing treatments at intersections with high pedestrian demand and high incidence of collisions.

Background on Buchanan Street

Buchanan Street is a major east-west arterial carrying 30,100 vehicles per day and supporting speeds that reach 30.4 mph at the 85th percentile. Since the development of the Traffic Management Plan in 2000, Buchanan Street has been the concern of residents due to its fast speeds, high incidence of collisions, lack of pedestrian crossings and the presence of a school and a City park along the south side of the street. Buchanan Street is also a truck route that provides freight access to the commercial districts along San Pablo and Solano Avenues. The 2000 Albany Bicycle Master Plan proposed a bicycle facility along Buchanan Street and Marin Avenue in order to close the existing east-west gap in the bicycle network between the Ohlone Greenway and the Bay Trail. This proposal, known as the Marin/Buchanan Bikeway was ranked top priority in the 2006 Alameda County Bicycle Plan. The City obtained grants to develop concept plans and environmental work. In 2012, the design was finalized using local funds and a federal grant was awarded for the project construction, which is scheduled for the fall of 2012. The plan includes a traffic signal at Pierce, pedestrian bulb outs and a bicycle/pedestrian path along the south side of Buchanan Street and Marin Avenue, implementation of an exclusive right turn lane in the eastbound direction on Marin Avenue, a pedestrian lead off phase for the signal at the Marin/San Pablo intersection, installation of sharrows in the eastbound direction on Buchanan Street and Marin Avenue, and installation of a bike lane on the westbound direction on Marin Avenue and Buchanan Street from San Pablo Avenue to the Buchanan Bridge overcrossing.

In addition, the City obtained a Safe Routes to School Grant in 2007 to implement pedestrian improvement at the intersection of Buchanan and Jackson Streets and a new traffic signal with protected left turns. This project was implemented in the fall of 2011.

Despite these improvements and the planned implementation of the bikeway later this year, the recently adopted Active Transportation Plan identified areas along Buchanan Street that still need attention in order to make Buchanan a complete street. These areas include the intersection of Taylor and Buchanan Streets, the proposed bicycle facility that crosses Buchanan at Jackson Street and the Marin/Buchanan merge.

DISCUSSION

The City is required by grant guidelines to hire a consulting firm through a competitive process. The City issued a Request for Proposals on May 1, 2012 and received seven proposals. The consultant selection panel included two representatives of the Traffic and

Safety Commission, a representative of the Albany Strollers & Rollers, a representative of the Albany Chamber of Commerce, a staff member from AC Transit, and the Project Manager of the Local Government Commission, and City staff members. The panel ranked the submittals and interviewed the top three teams, Alta Planning and Design, Fehr and Peers, and Nelson Nygaard. While all three consulting teams were qualified to do this work, the panel selected Nelson Nygaard's team because their presentation was especially engaging and clear, and because of relevant work in cities of similar size and demographic makeup as Albany.

The Complete Streets process will follow the scope of work and budget presented in Attachment 1. An important part of the work will be the public design "charrettes" that will be taking place for approximately six days in the fall of 2012. The Complete Streets planning effort will build on the ideas and concepts proposed in the Albany Active Transportation Plan, public input, and the consultant's assessment of the two streets.

SUSTAINABILITY IMPACT

Improving walkability and accommodating active transportation in Albany will help decrease emissions from transportation sources and will help achieve the emissions reduction goal established by Council in March 2007 of reducing greenhouse emissions to 25% below 2004 levels by the year 2020.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

The Complete Streets plan and project total cost is \$142,890 (budget included in Attachment 2). A ten percent local match is required by Caltrans, but this can be furnished by 2.5% In-Kind and 7.5% cash. Staff proposes using local pass through funds to meet the cash requirement. Pass through funds the City receives are Measure B and Transportation Development Act (TDA). The contract with Nelson Nygaard represents 52.7% of the project cost. The City also entered into a contract with the Local Government Commission for \$61,790 (43.2% of the total cost).

Attachments

1. Nelson Nygaard proposal and schedule
2. Grant schedule and budget