

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

Agenda date: January 18, 2022

Reviewed by: NA

SUBJECT: Authorization to Submit Application for Caltrans Clean California Program Grant Funding and Establish the Eastshore Access Improvement & Litter Abatement Project (CIP No. 24012)

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SUMMARY

The City of Albany has identified the Road to Nowhere area near Target off Eastshore Highway as a highly trafficked area for illegal dumping. This segment of roadway is located at an important intersection of bicycle and pedestrian trails and is a connector to the Bay Trail. California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) has recently released a one-time, short term grant program which is projected to provide \$296 million in funding for projects focused on litter abatement and beautification throughout California.

Staff recommends establishment of a Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) project which would improve the targeted area for bicycle and pedestrian safety while at the same time addressing one of the worst sites for illegal dumping in the City. Staff recommends Council authorize staff to apply for the grant, and if awarded, execute the grant agreement and appropriate the grant funding.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

That the Council adopt Resolution No. 2022-05:

1. Authorizing staff to submit an application to Caltrans for the Clean California Local Grant Program for the Eastshore Access Improvement & Litter Abatement Project (CIP No. 24012); and
2. Authorizing establishment of the recommended Eastshore Access Improvement & Litter Abatement Project (CIP No. 24012); and
3. If awarded, authorizing the City Manager to execute the grant agreement and appropriating the grant funding towards the project, which will be provided to the City on a reimbursement basis for work performed.

BACKGROUND

The Road to Nowhere area near Target off Eastshore Highway is historically a problematic site for significant illegal dumping. The combination of poor lighting and easy vehicular access to a non-through street makes the site attractive for litter, and as a result a consistent issue requiring Police and Public Works staff time and attention to clean up.

The area is most notably an important connection point between the Buchanan Bikeway and Eastshore Highway, providing access up to San Pablo Avenue and Solano Avenue from the Bay Trail. It also functions as a delivery route for the businesses on the east side of Eastshore Highway. Nearby major points of interest include Target on Eastshore Highway and Ocean View Park and Ocean View Elementary School on Buchanan Street. The trail currently appears to be underutilized as a cyclist and pedestrian pathway because of the perception of the area as dirty and unsafe.

The California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) is developing the Clean California Local Grant Program as part of the nearly \$1.1 billion Clean California Program, which makes a serious investment in beautifying our local communities to create spaces of pride for all Californians. The two-year Clean California Local Grant Program includes approximately \$296 million for communities to beautify and improve local streets and roads, tribal lands, parks, pathways, and transit centers to restore pride in public spaces.

DISCUSSION

The Clean California Local Grant Program highlights competitive projects as those focusing on community litter abatement, beautification, events, and education. The proposed project meets the following grant program goals:

- Reduce the amount of waste and debris within public right-of-ways, pathways, parks, transit centers, and other public spaces.
- Enhance, rehabilitate, restore, or install measures to beautify and improve public spaces and mitigate the urban heat island effect.
- Enhance public health, cultural connection, and community placemaking by improving public spaces for walking and recreation.

The project in question will focus on addressing an area of the City that has long struggled with blight, and turn it into a pleasant connector for active transportation at a key spot in the City's network. The site as it stands is a magnet for illegal dumping, which as such could deter cyclists and pedestrians from utilizing this important connection for access as noted above.

The proposed grant application includes the following potential project elements:

- Improved lighting under the Buchanan Overpass
- Gate to limit vehicular access to only deliveries and City staff
- Striping and bollards to distinguish protected bicycle and pedestrian trail
- Wayfinding signage to improve bicycle connection from Eastshore Highway
- Curb & sidewalk work to ensure compliant ADA access

- Project design & project/construction management services

The grant program requires projects to be completed by June 30, 2024. If awarded, the project will be incorporated into the City's upcoming Capital Improvement Plan update, and project plans will be brought to the Transportation Commission for consultation on the bicycle and pedestrian elements. Artistic elements are not included, as the timeline for the grant expenditures makes executing such elements quite difficult, but the project itself paves the way for the possibility of future art elements depending on site assessment and discussion by the Arts Committee. More dramatic changes to the streetscape will be investigated as part of future paving cycles and are not recommended as part of this project.

Staff is seeking letters of support from community organizations and local businesses, to be included in the grant application.

CITY COUNCIL STRATEGIC PLAN INITIATIVES

Authorizing application to the grant program and establishing the project continues to further the City Council's 2021-2022 Strategic Plan as follows:

Goal 1: Foster a Healthy and Sustainable City

Objective 2: Promote Housing Availability & Quality

Workplan Item 3: Take action to further reduce blight (regards economic development as well)

Reducing the blight in this area will increase the attractiveness of this trail connector for active transportation between business districts and the Bay Trail.

Objective 3: Promote Active Transportation & Safety

Workplan Item 1: Develop a timeline and funding plan to support scheduling CIP projects to achieve street-safety-related infrastructure goals including (1) appropriate night lighting of streets, sidewalks, and parks, and (2) safety features at intersections and other crossings of roadways.

The project includes both lighting updates and increase in safety features for ADA access and bicycle and pedestrian trail demarcation.

SOCIAL EQUITY & SUSTAINABILITY CONSIDERATIONS

The project in question will enhance an important trail connector for active transportation within the City. Active transportation by nature contributes to reduced greenhouse gas emissions and contributes to overall health and wellness in the general population.

Enhancing this site also contributes to increased mobility for disabled persons desiring to access the connecting areas who may have only intermittent or nonexistent access to a personal motor vehicle.

FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS

For the Clean California grant, a local match is required for Albany projects applying for this funding. At this time, the estimated local match is between 37.5%-50% of the total project amount, which will be finalized as part of the grant application package. The estimated total project cost is \$300,000.

As is appropriate to the nature of the project, matching funding is recommended to be allocated from Alameda County Transportation Commission (ACTC) Direct Local Distribution (DLD) transportation funds, specifically from Measure B/BB Bicycle & Pedestrian funding. Staff has confirmed with ACTC staff that this is an appropriate use of local DLD funds. Pending approval of the grant application, staff will return to Council at a future meeting for appropriation of the necessary matching funds.

If awarded, the grant funds will be administered on a reimbursement basis for project expenditures incurred.

Attachments

1. Resolution No. 2022-05
2. Clean California Local Grant Program Fact Sheet