



Agenda Item No. _____

File Code No. 530.04

CITY OF SANTA BARBARA

COUNCIL AGENDA REPORT

AGENDA DATE: July 3, 2012

TO: Mayor and Councilmembers

FROM: Transportation Division, Public Works Department

SUBJECT: Approve Local Share Of Funding For Bicycle Transportation Account

RECOMMENDATION:

That Council adopt, by reading of title only, A Resolution of the Council of the City of Santa Barbara Certifying that the City Will Make the Required Ten Percent Local Share of Funding Available for the Cacique Bicycle and Pedestrian Bridge Replacement Project, Should a Bicycle Transportation Account Award be Made in the Year 2012.

DISCUSSION:

The State of California recently solicited applications to fund bicycle projects with the potential to improve the safety and convenience of bicycle commuting. For the purpose of this application, the Streets and Highways Code Section 890.3 defines a bicycle commuter as "... a person making a trip by bicycle primarily for transportation purposes, including, but not limited to, travel to work, school, shopping, or other destination that is a center of activity and does not include a trip by bicycle primarily for physical exercise or recreation without such a destination." Because the City has a State approved Bicycle Master Plan, it is eligible to apply for Bicycle Transportation Account (BTA) funds from Caltrans. Submittal of a Council Resolution supporting the local cost share of ten percent funding is a requirement of the Caltrans BTA funding request.

On April 27, 2012, staff applied for funds from the Caltrans BTA for a non-motorized bridge replacement project to improve facilities for cyclists on the Cacique Street foot bridge over Sycamore Creek (Creek). Lighting will be added near the crossing and on the bridge to improve safety and visibility at night, creating an attractive corridor for pedestrians and cyclists. Funding was also requested to provide street lighting along Cacique between Salinas and Quarantina Streets to make this stretch of Cacique Street a more inviting corridor for bicyclists and pedestrians. Staff has received many complaints and concerns from neighbors over the years regarding lack of adequate lighting on Cacique Street and at the bridge for pedestrians, and has received requests to improve the bridge. The Santa Barbara Police Department (Police Department) is also supportive of the proposed improvements.

Currently, the bridge is only wide enough for bicycles to cross one way at a time. If a person is walking or biking across the bridge one way, someone biking from the other direction must wait for that person to complete the crossing before riding across. Observations have shown that some cyclists feel more comfortable walking their bicycle across the bridge because they do not feel comfortable riding on such a narrow bridge. Since travel can only occur one direction at a time for cyclists, and some feel they must dismount to cross the Creek, this may deter cyclists from using this route due to real and perceived delay. The proposed Cacique Bicycle and Pedestrian Bridge Replacement Project (Project) involves replacing the substandard single lane pedestrian foot bridge with a Class I two-way bicycle and pedestrian bridge with lighting over the Creek. The east bank will be set back (20 percent slope) to reduce flooding in peak season and allow for more habitat restoration. As a result, there will be less paved area at the top of bank. The Police Department has pointed out that the extra pavement at the east terminus of Cacique Creek has been an unattractive nuisance for loitering and illegal activities. More street lighting in the Project vicinity will discourage illegal activities and increase the safety of pedestrians and bicylists.

The Project is consistent with Section 4 of the Circulation Element of the General Plan to maintain the system of bikeways. It is also consistent with Bicycle Master Plan Policies that specify that:

- The bikeway network needs to be maintained and existing facilities must be kept in a safe and good condition;
- The network of bicycle facilities needs to be enhanced; and
- Funding sought for maintenance projects is outside the scope of the City's regular maintenance program.

The Project will benefit bicycle commuters and bicyclists making utilitarian trips within and to/from the Lower Eastside neighborhood. Recently, Caltrans completed the vehicular underpass at Cacique Street under Highway 101 as a part of the Highway 101 Widening and Improvement Project, connecting Cacique Street to South Milpas Street, which is the main commercial center for the Eastside neighborhood. The vehicular undercrossing includes both bicycle lanes and sidewalks. This connection is especially important for non-vehicular modes because it allows bicyclists and pedestrians to cross Highway 101 and connect to downtown, as well as commercial and recreational areas, without negotiating a freeway interchange. With this new connection, Cacique Street is prime for bicycle improvements as it provides a regional connection, identified in the 1998 Bicycle Master Plan community outreach and final document.

BUDGET/FINANCIAL INFORMATION:

In addition to replacing the substandard and unsafe bridge by adding safety lighting, the Project will widen the Creek in accordance with the Lower Sycamore Creek Flood Capacity Plan. Public Works will coordinate the project and funding to meet City goals.

The Project is listed in the Six-Year Capital Improvement Program Document (Capital Plan). The Capital Plan identifies funded and unfunded capital projects that address the City's infrastructure and major equipment needs. The Capital budget was adopted by Council subsequent to Planning Commission and Transportation and Circulation Committee input at public meetings.

Although the Project is listed in the Capital Plan, it has remained unfunded, as it competes with other capital projects. Applying for Caltrans funds for this Project will free-up City funds for other capital projects in upcoming Streets Program budgets.

The estimated Project cost is \$1,377,211. If the City is awarded funds from the BTA, Caltrans requires the City to contribute at least a 10 percent match. To remain competitive, the City would contribute a minimum of \$365,959 which will be provided by the Streets Capital fund. If this grant application is successful, additional grant funding may be sought for Creek bank work and habitat restoration.

SUSTAINABILITY IMPACT:

The Lower Eastside uses of walking and biking for trips are relatively high, as the location is a walkable and bikable distance to commercial corridors and other destinations. This Project enhances a valuable connection between the Lower Eastside and commercial, employment and recreational destinations. By maintaining the City's existing bicycle paths, the Project will promote cycling by providing a safe route for cyclists and will benefit the City's sustainability goals by reducing energy consumption and carbon emissions related to motor vehicle use.

PREPARED BY: Browning Allen, Transportation Manager/SG/kts

SUBMITTED BY: Christine F. Andersen, Public Works Director

APPROVED BY: City Administrator's Office