



CITY OF SANTA BARBARA

COUNCIL AGENDA REPORT

AGENDA DATE: February 3, 2015

TO: Mayor and Councilmembers

FROM: Transportation Division, Public Works Department

SUBJECT: Mission Park To Mission Canyon Multimodal Improvements Plan

RECOMMENDATION:

That Council adopt, by reading of title only, A Resolution of the Council of the City of Santa Barbara Making the Mission Park to Mission Canyon Multimodal Improvements Plan a Project in the City's Capital Improvement Program and Direct Public Works Staff to Work with the County of Santa Barbara to Seek Funding for Design and Construction.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

In December 2012, Council authorized the City Administrator to enter into a Memorandum of Understanding with the County of Santa Barbara (County) to conduct a community planning process for the Mission Canyon Corridor. This action came at the request of a community group known as Concerned Citizens for Safe Passage. The Concerned Citizens for Safe Passage is now known as the Mission Heritage Trail Association (Association) and represents a diverse group of stakeholders that desires to improve pedestrian circulation in the Mission Canyon corridor. A community planning process was needed to discover what solutions could yield a consensus approach because previous solutions have been too controversial to move forward.

Staff from the City of Santa Barbara (City) and County developed a community planning process that involved two well-attended public workshops, preliminary engineer feasibility plans, and board and commission review from both jurisdictions. The result is the Mission Park to Mission Canyon Multimodal Improvements Plan (Plan). The City's Planning Commission (PC) is recommending that Council create a Capital Improvement Project (Project) from the Plan and work with County staff to pursue funding to complete environmental, design, engineering, and construction of the Project.

DISCUSSION:

The Plan is a grant-funded community process and joint effort of the County and City to prepare concept level plans for pedestrian, bicycle, and vehicle circulation improvements in the historic Mission Canyon corridor. The Plan area extends from the intersection of

Laguna Street and East Los Olivos Street (in the City) to the intersection of Mission Canyon Road and Foothill Road (in the County).

No continuous pedestrian or bicycle connection exists through this narrow corridor. Although a few facilities exist at various points, they are not continuous, nor do they comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act. The lack of continuous facilities makes walking and biking in the area difficult and hazardous for residents and visitors.

The Association was formed several years ago to discuss the challenges of the corridor and the need for improvements. Similar community concerns have arisen in the past, but solutions have been too controversial to get approval or achieve community consensus. The Association members have attempted to develop consensus solutions by including a diverse range of interests in their group. While the Association has been successful in this effort, broader community planning and input was needed.

In 2012, the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) awarded a Community-Based Transportation Planning grant in the amount of \$88,911, to the Santa Barbara County Planning and Development Department and the City's Public Works Department for the Plan. One goal of this grant was to provide the needed community process and input, following the initial work of the Association.

Community Engagement

The community process included two well-attended public workshops (over 60 community members) to discover what improvements could possibly garner community support. The initial public meeting was a "listening workshop", where participants let staff know what works well in the corridor, what needs to be fixed, and what needs to be left alone. Based on community feedback, staff developed conceptual plans for a continuous walking path on the west side of the Mission Canyon corridor, and bike lanes on the roadway. Because of past controversy with projects proposed in the Mission area, staff was particularly sensitive to only include project elements that gained the highest level of community consensus.

A conceptual plan was developed from input at the first listening workshop and then presented at the second public workshop, which had greater attendance than the first. Once attendants understood the conceptual plan, staff asked participants to indicate if it could be supported or not. This voting exercise confirmed overwhelming community support (98 percent) for the concepts in the Plan.

Staff also tested other improvements separately that were suggested at the listening workshop, such as improvements to the intersection at Alameda Padre Serra and Mountain Drive. These elements did not have enough community support from the listening workshop to be included in the conceptual plan. Voting results for these separate improvements at the second workshop confirmed that participant support was divided. Staff, therefore, has purposely excluded these elements from the proposed conceptual plan in order to minimize controversy and maximize the possibility of the Project's execution.

The results of the process are concept level plans that can be developed into a capital project. Detailed engineering and environmental review were not included in the scope of work of the Caltrans grant. These tasks would need to be undertaken as part of a subsequent implementation phase and capital improvement.

Conceptual Engineering

In a unique partnership opportunity, the County hired the City's Engineering Division (Engineering) to develop the conceptual plan and conduct the feasibility analysis. Engineering's scope of work provided a technical study of improving continuous pedestrian access between the Mission and the Natural History Museum on Puesta del Sol, while still accommodating appropriate vehicular and bicycle roadway geometries per city, state, and federal design standards. Additionally, Engineering studied feasible alternatives to improve pedestrian access across Mission Creek.

The results of Engineering's work are included in the Mission to Museum Conceptual Design Study (Study). The Study identifies corridor elements as well as design constraints, trade-offs, and design recommendations. It is available for review in the City Clerk's office. Also included in the reading file are written public comments to date.

Board and Commission Review

Once it was developed and affirmed by workshop participants, staff vetted the Plan with various Boards and Commissions, including the City's Transportation and Circulation Committee (TCC), the Historic Landmark Commission (HLC), and the PC. The Transportation and Circulation Committee found the Plan consistent with the Circulation Element.

The HLC identified potential historic resources issues which led staff to have a Historic Resources Report conducted. Once finished, this report will be taken to HLC for further consideration or incorporated into any future environmental review. At issue is the level of impacts that proposed improvements may have to the many historic resources along the corridor.

The PC reviewed the Plan at a joint hearing with the County Planning Commission last December. It recommended that Council create a Capital Improvement Project and work with the County in a joint effort to fund, design, and construct the Project.

BUDGET/FINANCIAL INFORMATION:

Based on the Study prepared by Engineering, the Project is estimated to cost approximately \$2.7 million to construct and approximately \$631,500 to design, including construction management and administrative costs. Public Works has included the Plan as a partially funded project in the draft Capital Improvement Program. Funding could come from various grants, with matching funds coming from the City's Streets Capital Fund.

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

SUBMITTED BY: Rebecca J. Bjork, Public Works Director

APPROVED BY: City Administrator's Office