

Details

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Body: [City Council](#)

On agenda: 7/5/2023

Title: Recommendation to Authorize the City Manager to Execute All Necessary Documents with the United States Environmental Protection Agency to Accept \$1,472,500 in Grant Funds to Add Stormwater Bioretention Areas at Three Roundabouts as Part of the Central Avenue Safety Improvement Project. In accordance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), this Project is Categorically Exempt under CEQA Guidelines Section 15301(c) Existing Facilities (Minor Alterations to Existing Facilities Including Bicycle Facilities) and Section 15304(h) (Minor Alterations to Land and the Creation of Bicycle Lanes on Existing Public Rights of Way). (Planning, Building and Transportation 20962740)

Attachments: 1. [Exhibit 1 - Agreement](#)

Text

Recommendation to Authorize the City Manager to Execute All Necessary Documents with the United States Environmental Protection Agency to Accept \$1,472,500 in Grant Funds to Add Stormwater Bioretention Areas at Three Roundabouts as Part of the Central Avenue Safety Improvement Project.

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To: Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council

From: Jennifer Ott, City Manager

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Staff is requesting that City Council authorize the City Manager to execute all necessary documents with the United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to accept \$1,472,500 in grant funds to add stormwater bioretention areas at three roundabouts for \$2,945,000 as part of the Central Avenue Safety Improvement Project (Central Avenue Project) funded by the San Francisco Bay Area Water Quality Improvement Fund (SFBWQIF) and the necessary local match.

BACKGROUND

Project Objectives: The Central Avenue Project implements the City of Alameda's (City) 2018 Transportation Choices Plan, 2019 Climate Action and Resiliency Plan, 2019 Intersection Daylighting Policy, 2019 Lane Widths Policy, 2021 Vision Zero Action Plan and 2022 Active Transportation Plan by achieving four overarching objectives:

1. Reduce crashes and improve safety for all modes of travel and for all members of the community including school children, seniors, people with disabilities, bicyclists, transit riders and automobile drivers;
2. Improve bicycle and pedestrian access and safety between West Alameda and Central Alameda and along the San Francisco Bay Trail;
3. Reduce greenhouse gas emissions; and
4. Reduce automobile delay and improve traffic operations and travel times.

City Council Actions: The Central Avenue Project is the result of a ten-year collaborative effort directed by City Council as shown in the project webpage and below: www.alamedaca.gov/Central <<http://www.alamedaca.gov/Central>>

- In May 2013, City Council approved submittal of a Community-Based Transportation Planning state grant application to Caltrans for the project;
- In February 2016, City Council approved an initial concept for the Central Avenue Project and directed staff to continue the design development process with Caltrans and work with the neighboring community to provide safer improvements for the Webster Street area;
- In October 2016, City Council approved an application for and received a federal grant from the Alameda County Transportation Commission, increasing the project funding to \$10.8 million in combined grant monies;
- In June 2017, City Council approved \$557,000 of the Central Avenue local match monies for Fiscal Years 2017 to 2019;
- In January 2018, City Council adopted the Transportation Choices Plan, which included the Central Avenue Project, to address the climate crisis and to increase the safety and convenience of walking, bicycling, carpooling and using transit;
- In April 2018, City Council authorized the City Manager to execute a Cooperative Agreement with Caltrans and a contract with CDM Smith to prepare the Caltrans required Project Initiation Document (PID) since the eastern part of the corridor is Caltrans' State Route 61;
- In March 2019, City Council approved a revised Central Avenue concept between Paden School and McKay Avenue extending the safer two-way bikeway;
- In June 2019, City Council approved \$2.5 million in Central Avenue expenditures from local and federal funding sources for Fiscal Years 2019 to 2021;
- In November 2019, City Council approved a CDM Smith contract amendment for the Central Avenue Project approval and environmental document phase (PA&ED) and the plans, specifications and estimate phase (PS&E);
- In May 2020, City Council approved the Caltrans Cooperative Agreement for the PA&ED and the PS&E since the project is partially on a state route;
- In April 2021, City Council approved the final design concept after a virtual open house in fall 2020 and February 2021 as shown at <https://gather.cdmsmith.com/v/y2qm2KdR1wO>;
- In September 2022, City Council approved a Caltrans required resolution for parking restrictions on the State Route 61 part of the Central Avenue Project;
- In December 2022, City Council approved a CDM Smith contract amendment for the Central Avenue Project roundabout design, construction support and continued Caltrans coordination;
- In February 2023, City Council authorized the City Manager to execute a Cooperative Agreement with Caltrans to complete the construction of the Central Avenue Project, as required since the eastern part of the corridor is a state route;
- In April 2023, City Council authorized the One Bay Area Grant 3 (OBAG 3) and the required local match to construct the Central Avenue/Fourth Street/Ballena Blvd. roundabout; and
- In May 2023, City Council authorized the Fourth Amendment for CDM Smith to design the Central Avenue/Fourth Street/Ballena Blvd. roundabout, and to provide continued Caltrans coordination and additional construction phase support.

Project construction for the Central Avenue Project is anticipated to begin in early 2024.

DISCUSSION

On March 8, 2023, EPA announced that the City's stormwater bioretention grant application was selected for SFBWQIF funding. This grant will be used for green infrastructure at the three funded roundabouts as part of the Central Avenue Project at the following intersections:

- Central Avenue/Main Street/Pacific Avenue;
- Central Avenue/Third Street/Taylor Avenue; and
- Central Avenue/Fourth Street/Ballena Blvd.

A fourth roundabout at Central Avenue/Sherman Street/Encinal Avenue is unfunded.

The Central Avenue Project is not classified as a "Regulated Project" and is therefore exempt from the City of Alameda's stormwater treatment requirements in Section C.3.d of the Municipal Regional Stormwater NPDES Permit (MRP). Nevertheless, the City does require that appropriate source controls, site design measures, and bioretention facilities be included in the project to the maximum extent possible. These design components will provide water quality and drainage benefits and also support the compliance with the San Francisco Bay Mercury and Polychlorinated Biphenyls (PCBs) total maximum daily loads, and the state's trash control requirements.

The project's green infrastructure design strategy includes minimizing new impervious surfaces and maximizing vegetated surfaces to reduce runoff, prevent erosion, promote infiltration, and remove pollutants from the stormwater system. This stormwater bioretention grant includes installation of bioretention facilities in strategic locations to capture, detain and treat stormwater runoff. The bioretention designs follow the guidance and design details provided by the Alameda Countywide Clean Water Program, including requirements for bioretention soil mix and plant selection (Alameda County, 2017). Approximately fifteen bioretention units are proposed in the curb bulb-outs located around the three new roundabouts, with footprints ranging from 25 to 2,300 square feet. The total impervious area treated by these units is approximately 70 acres.

Staff is requesting that City Council authorize the City Manager to execute all necessary documents with EPA to accept \$1,472,500 in SFBWQIF grant funds to add stormwater bioretention areas at three roundabouts as part of the Central Avenue Project. This work is funded by the SFBWQIF grant in the amount of \$1,472,500 and the required local match is 50 percent for a combined total of \$2,945,000.

ALTERNATIVES

- Authorize acceptance of grant funding and execution of all necessary documents;
- Authorize acceptance of grant funding and execution of all necessary documents with revisions determined necessary by the City Council; and
- Not approve the grant or execution of all necessary documents, and direct staff to proceed with a different approach.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

Staff is requesting that City Council authorize the City Manager to execute all necessary documents with EPA to accept \$1,472,500 in grant funding from SFBWQIF to add stormwater bioretention areas at three roundabouts as part of the Central Avenue Project and the necessary local match of \$1,472,500 for a total of \$2,945,000. The SFBWQIF grant covers 50 percent of the stormwater bioretention areas for the three roundabouts totaling \$1,472,500 and the required local match covers the remaining 50 percent totaling another \$1,472,500. The SFBWQIF and local matching funds are included in the FY 2023-25 budget and Capital Improvement Program, which the City Council approved in June. No additional appropriation approval is required.

MUNICIPAL CODE/POLICY DOCUMENT CROSS REFERENCE

This action is consistent with the Alameda Municipal Code and the City's Mobility Element of the General Plan with the four main goals of equity, safety, choices and sustainability.

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

In accordance with CEQA, this project is categorically exempt under CEQA Guidelines Section 15301(c) Existing Facilities (Minor alterations to existing facilities including bicycle facilities) and Section 15304(h) (Minor Alterations to Land and the creation of bicycle lanes on existing public rights of way). None of the exceptions to the categorical exemptions apply. For the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) determination, Caltrans has specified that this project is a categorical exclusion under 23 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) 771.117(c): activity (c)(3).

CLIMATE IMPACT

Since vehicle miles traveled in Alameda is the largest source of greenhouse gas emissions in Alameda, safety improvements in support of pedestrians, bicyclists and transit will have a positive climate impact. Green infrastructure treatments such as these bioretention areas help keep shoreline neighborhoods dry by improving flood management with nature-based designs that also enhance water quality. Major storms are becoming more frequent due to human-caused climate change causing the need to mitigate with nature-based solutions so as to delay and decrease water into the stormwater system.

RECOMMENDATION

Authorize the City Manager to execute all necessary documents with EPA to accept \$1,472,500 in SFBWQIF grant funds to add stormwater bioretention areas at three roundabouts as part of the Central Avenue Project the necessary local match.

Respectfully submitted,
Andrew Thomas, Director of Planning, Building and Transportation

By,
Gail Payne, Senior Transportation Coordinator

Financial Impact section reviewed,
Margaret O'Brien, Finance Director

Exhibit:
1. EPA SFBWQIF Agreement

cc: Erin Smith, Public Works Director

