



County of San Mateo

Inter-Departmental Correspondence

Department: COUNTY MANAGER: OFFICE OF SUSTAINABILITY

File #: 21-641

Board Meeting Date: 8/3/2021

Special Notice / Hearing: None
Vote Required: Majority

To: Honorable Board of Supervisors

From: Carolyn Bloede, Director, Office of Sustainability

Subject: Resolution authorizing the acceptance of a California Department of Transportation Sustainable Communities Competitive Grant for the North Fair Oaks Bicycle and Pedestrian Railroad Crossing and Community Connections Study

RECOMMENDATION:

Adopt a resolution authorizing:

- A) The County of San Mateo to accept a \$356,163 grant from the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) and to enter into a grant agreement to fund the North Fair Oaks Bicycle and Pedestrian Railroad Crossing and Community Connections Study (Study); and
- B) An Appropriation Transfer Request (ATR) recognizing \$356,163 in grant funds from Caltrans to fund the Study.

BACKGROUND:

Caltrans Sustainable Communities Competitive Grants, which are part of the Caltrans Sustainable Transportation Planning Grant Program, are funded by the State Highway Account and the Road Maintenance and Repair Account (Senate Bill 1, Chapter 5, Statutes of 2017). Key objectives of the Sustainable Communities Competitive Grants are to encourage local and regional multimodal transportation and land use planning to further the region's Regional Transportation Plan/Sustainable Communities Strategy, reduce greenhouse gas emissions to meet State mandated targets, and to prioritize the needs of disadvantaged communities.

The County of San Mateo received a Caltrans Sustainable Communities Competitive Grant award, in the amount of \$356,163, that will leverage funds to finance the Study. The Study will provide recommendations to improve conditions to encourage walking and biking in North Fair Oaks and improve access to transit, social and health services programs, and other community destinations in a disadvantaged community. It will also support efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, health impacts from poor air quality and physical inactivity, household transportation costs, and single

occupancy vehicle trips.

DISCUSSION:

The Study will explore options to overcome barriers to safe bicycle and pedestrian access in the area bounded by El Camino Real to the west, 5th Avenue to the south, Middlefield Road to the east and the County border with Redwood City to the north by:

- Assessing the viability of alternative locations and designs for a new bicycle and pedestrian grade-separated railroad crossing of the Caltrain Corridor; and
- Identifying specific bicycle and pedestrian enhancements that will link the preferred community supported crossing site to key destinations on both sides of the railroad tracks.

Extensive community engagement with community-based organizations, social service agencies, and the local community will occur throughout the Study to shape the recommendations for the location, design, and enhancements for the bicycle and pedestrian crossing and links to nearby destinations.

Key activities and milestones in the Study include:

- Ongoing local stakeholder coordination with:
 - A Technical Advisory Community comprised of County and external agency staff that include but are not limited to Caltrain, Redwood City, SamTrans and the California High Speed Rail Authority; and
 - A Community Advisory Committee comprised of community leaders, representatives from community-based organizations and social service agencies.
- Development of a community engagement plan including outreach to vulnerable populations, such as youth, older adults, people experiencing homelessness, and day laborers.
- Review of existing site conditions, including a community needs assessment.
- Development of evaluation criteria for the railroad crossing alternatives and accompanying bicycle and pedestrian connections.
- Development of conceptual crossing locations and design alternatives with accompanying bicycle and pedestrian connections.
- Selection of a preferred alternative for the location and crossing design as well as accompanying bicycle and pedestrian connections on both sides.

County Counsel has reviewed and approved the resolution as to form.

Adoption of this resolution and acceptance of this grant from Caltrans will help further the County's commitment to equity and inclusion by exploring community-supported solutions to improve mobility and access in a community lacking pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure. It is also consistent with recommendations for a new crossing of the Caltrain tracks to improve mobility and neighborhood connectivity from the 2011 North Fair Oaks Community Plan and the 2021 Unincorporated San Mateo County Active Transportation Plan.

FISCAL IMPACT:

Approval of the Appropriation Transfer Request will appropriate funds in the amount of \$356,163 from Caltrans to the Office of Sustainability. The Caltrans Sustainable Communities Competitive Grant requires a minimum 11.47 percent match, which will be met through a combination of staff time and funding from the Departments of Planning and Building, Public Works, and the Office of Sustainability.

ATTACHMENTS:

- A. Caltrans Notice of Award
- B. Appropriation Transfer Request