



## MEMORANDUM

**TO:** CITY COUNCIL

**FROM:** BRIAN PEDROTTI, DIRECTOR OF COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

**BY:** ROBIN DICKERSON, PE, CITY ENGINEER

**SUBJECT:** APPROVE AND AUTHORIZE THE MAYOR ON BEHALF OF THE CITY COUNCIL TO SIGN A LETTER OF SUPPORT FOR THE SUSTAINABLE TRANSPORTATION PLANNING GRANT APPLICATION FOR AN ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION PLAN

**DATE:** OCTOBER 12, 2021

### **SUMMARY OF ACTION:**

A Letter of Support from the City Council for the Sustainable Transportation Planning Grant (STPG) Application for the Active Transportation Plan (ATP) will assist staff in completing the application and show that the ATP is a priority for the City. Submittal of the grant application may result in grant funding for the preparation of the ATP.

### **IMPACT ON FINANCIAL AND PERSONNEL RESOURCES:**

Staff is proposing to use \$14,985 of the Engineering Consultant Services budget for GHD to prepare the STPG application. The City has budgeted \$111,000 for Engineering Consultant Services for FY 2021/22. \$106,000 of the budgeted \$111,000 remains. The STPG grant requires a minimum 11.47% local match of the total project cost. Total project cost is anticipated to range between \$300,000 and \$400,000.

### **RECOMMENDATION:**

It is recommended the City Council approve and authorize the Mayor to sign the letter of support for the STPG grant application.

### **BACKGROUND:**

The Sustainable Transportation Planning Grant Program was created to support the California Department of Transportation's (Caltrans) Mission: Provide a safe and reliable transportation network that serves all people and respects the environment.

The California Legislature passed, and Governor Edmund G. Brown Jr. signed into law, Senate Bill 1 (SB 1, Beall, Chapter 5, Statutes of 2017), known as the Road Repair and Accountability Act of 2017, a transportation funding bill to provide a reliable source of funds to maintain and integrate the State's multi-modal transportation system. In addition to the \$9.5 million in traditional State and federal grants, approximately \$25 million in SB

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1 funds for Sustainable Communities Grants is available for the Fiscal Year (FY) 2022-23 grant cycle. The period of grant funding availability spans over three fiscal years and approximately 27 months for project activities after the grant agreement is executed and Caltrans issues a Notice to Proceed.

The SB 1 grant funding is intended to support and implement Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) Sustainable Communities Strategies (SCS) (where applicable) and to ultimately achieve the State's greenhouse gas (GHG) reduction target of 40 and 80 percent below 1990 levels by 2030 and 2050, respectively.

Eligible planning projects must have a transportation nexus per Article XIX, Sections 2 and 3, of the California Constitution. Therefore, successful planning projects are expected to directly benefit the multi-modal transportation system. These grants will also improve public health, social equity, environmental justice, the environment, and provide other important community benefits.

On July 27, 2021, the City Council adopted the Circulation Element Update. Recommendations for active transportation modes and components were embedded throughout the Update, including a specific recommendation to prepare an Active Transportation Plan.

#### **ANALYSIS OF ISSUES:**

The STPG application is an opportunity to receive funding to prepare the Active Transportation Plan. The City of Arroyo Grande has a desire to promote active transportation and provide a great place to walk, bike, live and visit. While the City's existing 2012 Bicycle and Trails Master Plan and previous bicycle planning documents have helped guide some improvements to the citywide bicycle circulation system, national best practices in bicycle infrastructure planning and design have evolved considerably in recent years since adoption of the 2012 Bicycle and Trails Master Plan. With a growing shift towards providing lower-stress facilities—notably, physically-protected bike lanes and intersection crossings—which make bicycling a more viable transportation option for a wider range of community members, the City's plans and design strategies must also evolve. By updating and replacing the 2012 Bicycle and Trails Master Plan with an Active Transportation Plan, the City will create its first comprehensive document on both bicycle and pedestrian transportation circulation. The Active Transportation Plan expands the City's programs, policies and design toolbox to incorporate current industry best practices to make active transportation more enjoyable, connect better to community destinations and improve access to a diverse range of community members.

With the recent completion of the Circulation Element Update and upcoming presentation of the Systemic Safety Analysis Report and the Local Roads Safety Plan, it has become apparent the next logical step would be for the City to prepare an Active

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Transportation Plan. Comments received during the public comment period for both the Circulation Element Update and the Local Roads Safety Plan expressed a strong desire to improve the walkability and bike-ability of the community.

The Active Transportation Plan will be a comprehensive collection of policies, programs, and infrastructure recommendations aiming to increase the number of people bicycling and walking every day. By improving sustainable transportation such as walking and bicycling, the City can reduce vehicle use and place the City on a better path to achieving climate neutrality. The Active Transportation Plan will take a new approach to implementing projects, supporting a more resilient economy, supporting an equitable transportation system, and using resources more effectively.

While the primary focus of this Plan will be on walking and bicycling, “active transportation” refers to all human-powered modes of transportation, from walking and bicycling, to scootering, skateboarding, traveling by wheelchair and using other rolling mobility devices. Active transportation requires a balanced, equitable transportation system that provides community members the freedom to choose other modes of transportation without having to completely depend on the automobile. These active modes of transportation are not only fun, affordable, and environmentally friendly, they also support public health by incorporating physical activity into daily life. An Active Transportation Plan provides a blueprint for creating a safe, connected, and efficient citywide active transportation network. It will lay out policies, funding strategies, supporting programs, infrastructure projects, and implementation priorities to improve active transportation options and access for all community members. A major component of the Active Transportation Plan will be public outreach, which will assist in formulating the Active Transportation Plan, identifying and evaluating areas of deficiencies both locally and regionally.

The City has a strong commitment to ensuring that the benefits of active transportation are equitably distributed throughout the community. Because of this, the plan will include a focused discussion of equity and inclusion. Additionally, staff commits to evaluating every action it takes through an equity lens, including issues related to representation, distribution of benefits, and structural equity.

Preparation of the Active Transportation Plan would also provide a list of potential projects and provide support for future funding opportunities.

The grant application will include funding for consultant services associated with a public outreach, existing condition updates and the preparation of the Active Transportation Plan and the necessary environmental document. Grants can range from \$50,000 to \$750,000. Staff anticipates an application in the range of \$300,000 to \$400,000 for total project costs.

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The following is a schedule for the Grant Applications:

October 27, 2021 – Grant application deadline  
Fall 2021- Winter 2022 – Application evaluation and management approval  
Spring 2022 – Grant Announcements  
Fall 2022 – Grant recipients begin project actives  
Winter –Summer 2025 Grant projects are completed

Staff solicited two task orders from the City's current on-call Grant Administration Consultants. GHD was selected as the preferred consultant at about half the cost of the other consultant. Consultant services for the preparation of the STPG Application is a not-to-exceed amount of \$14,985.

**ALTERNATIVES:**

The following alternatives are provided for the Council's consideration:

1. Approve and Authorize the Mayor to sign the letter of support;
2. Do not approve the letter of support;
3. Provide other direction to staff.

**ADVANTAGES:**

Submittal of the grant application could result in the awarding of funds that would cover the substantial cost of preparing an Active Transportation Plan and public outreach providing a blueprint for creating a safe, connected, and efficient citywide active transportation network. The document will be instrumental in addressing biking and pedestrian deficiencies throughout the City.

**DISADVANTAGES:**

If the grant is approved, staff will be required to develop a Request for Proposals for the project and to contribute considerable staff time to manage the plan preparation. However, if no application is made or the grant is not awarded, the Active Transportation Plan will be delayed until funds become available to prepare the plan.

**ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW:**

Environmental review is not required for the grant applications.

**PUBLIC NOTIFICATION AND COMMENTS:**

The Agenda was posted in front of City Hall and on the City's website in accordance with Government Code Section 54954.2.

Attachments:

1. Letter of Support

October 12, 2021

California Department of Transportation  
Division of Local Assistance, MS 1  
Attn: Office of Active Transportation and Special Programs  
Sacramento, CA 94274

**SUBJECT: City of Arroyo Grande Sustainable Transportation Planning Grant Program – Application for Development of an Active Transportation Plan – A Multimodal Transportation Project**

To Whom It May Concern,

On behalf of Arroyo Grande City Council, I am writing to lend my support for the City of Arroyo Grande's Sustainable Transportation Planning Grant application for developing an Active Transportation Plan to improve the walkability and bike-ability of Arroyo Grande by enhancing the built environment for all modes of travel including pedestrians, bicyclists, transit vehicles, trucks, and motorists. We fully support the goals of this project to increase the safety of all users of the City streets by filling in sidewalk gaps, installing Class II buffered bike lanes throughout the City as identified by the Circulation Element Update, and separated bikeways where feasible. The Active Transportation Plan will significantly enhance safety and improve multimodal connectivity for all roadway users while maintaining the urban/ suburban interface.

The Active Transportation Plan is a comprehensive collection of policies, programs, funding strategies and infrastructure recommendations aiming to increase the number of people bicycling and walking every day. By improving sustainable transportation such as walking and bicycling, the City can reduce vehicle use and place the City on a better path to achieving climate neutrality. The Active Transportation Plan will take a new approach to implementing projects, supporting a more resilient economy, equity, and using resources more effectively. The plan will not only increase the safety of our pedestrians, including students who walk to school, but it will establish a sense of community for the residents, encourage a more active lifestyle, and increase mobility for all users.

The Active Transportation Plan will provide a blueprint for creating a safe, connected, and efficient citywide active transportation network. The City has a strong commitment to ensuring that the benefits of active transportation are equitably distributed throughout the community. Because of this, the plan will include a focused discussion of equity and inclusion. Additionally, staff commits to evaluating every action it takes through an equity lens, including issues related to representation, distribution of benefits, and structural equity. This project has the potential to improve the walkability and bike-ability of the city streets throughout the community for all its citizens and grant funding will make this a reality. I am pleased to support the City's endeavor in the Sustainable Transportation Grant Application and encourage your support of this worthwhile project.

Sincerely,

Caren Ray Russom  
Mayor

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