



Council Agenda Correspondence

DATE: February 15, 2022

TO: Mayor and Council

FROM: Matt Horn, Public Works Director

VIA: Derek Johnson, City Manager

SUBJECT: Item 6a – FY 2021-22 Mid-Year Budget Review

Staff received the following questions, regarding the mid-year report that the City Council is reviewing under agenda Item 6a.- FY 2021-22 Mid-Year Budget Review, specifically regarding the funding for active transportation programs and projects. This correspondence aims to provide additional information accordingly. The questions are below with staff's response shown in italics:

1. Is there need for an additional Transportation Engineering position?

The Mid-Year Budget Review includes a recommendation for additional operating funds for consultant services to support the Transportation Planning and Engineering work program. One may ask "why not increase in-house staffing resources in the Transportation Engineering and Planning Program in lieu of funding additional consultant work?". At the recent City Council hearing on February 1, 2022, the Council received a staff report presenting the findings of a Capital Improvement Plan Program Assessment, completed by Management Partners. This study identified strategies to improve the process and recommended increased resources for City-led Capital Improvement Plan projects, including any adjustments to staffing needed to support an ambitious work program that includes many significant transportation projects. The recommendation from this study was not to increase staffing levels in the Transportation Engineering and Planning Program at this time, but to shift the majority of project management and delivery responsibilities for transportation CIP projects to the CIP Engineering Program. Transportation staff are currently managing delivery of several high-priority CIP projects, including the Railroad Safety Trail (Taft to Pepper), Orcutt/Tank Farm Roundabout, and the recently completed Broad/Woodbridge, which requires significant staff time. By shifting the time-intensive responsibility of CIP project delivery to others, Transportation Engineering and Planning Program would have more in-house resources to focus on ongoing transportation operations, programs (i.e. Neighborhood Traffic Management, Traffic Safety/Vision Zero) and planning & design of other priority transportation projects. During this interim period while the CIP Engineering Program team begins to increase staffing levels to support these process improvement strategies, Transportation Engineering and Planning staff plan to use consultant resources to support the ambitious current work.

2. Minor Bicycle Facility Improvements Funding

Public agenda correspondence suggested that the Miscellaneous Bikeway Facility Accounts should be replenished at this time. Each fiscal year, there is a CIP project that provides funding for miscellaneous minor bikeway and pedestrian facility improvements. This is typically used for lower-cost spot improvements, like addition of green pavement markings, traffic signage/striping modifications, and retrofitting older drain grates. However, the Active Transportation Committee (ATC)—who provides funding recommendations to staff and the City Council on active transportation project priorities—recently directed Transportation staff to use the remaining unspent balance in the Misc. Bicycle Facility Improvements account to accelerate planning and design efforts for a complete street project on the Foothill Boulevard corridor. At the time, there was not a strong consensus among the ATC on which minor bikeway projects should be prioritized; thus, the committee preferred advancing efforts to improve active transportation facilities on Foothill now. The Misc. Bicycle Facilities Account funding will be replenished at the start of the next fiscal year (July 1, 2022).

3. Quick-Build Delivery of Active Transportation Tier 1 Projects

The Active Transportation Plan (ATP) identifies a rapid build-out of the ATP Tier 1 (highest-priority) network over a 10-year period, which is very ambitious and will require efficient project planning, design and construction to achieve. Staff concurs with the suggestion to utilize a quick-build approach to implement the highest-priority active transportation projects using lower-cost strategies first, then upgrading to more costly permanent designs over time. Design is already underway for complete street projects along the Higuera Corridor (Marsh to Los Osos Valley Road) and the Foothill Boulevard Corridor (Patricia to California), which will utilize this quick-build approach, and several other priority active transportation projects are currently in construction or planned for construction in 2022, such as the Railroad Safety Trail (Taft to Pepper), Marsh/Higuera Bikeways and Neighborhood Greenways as part of 2021-22 Paving Projects, Cerro San Luis Greenway (working title for previously-named Anholm Greenway), and Pedestrian Crossing Improvements Project (enhanced ped crossings at Johnson/Sydney, South/King, 4 other locations). These projects are expected to keep the Transportation Engineering and Planning Program fully occupied through the remainder of the 2021-23 Work Program. Staff is looking ahead to the 2023-25 Financial Plans as opportunities to request additional funding resources to advance planning/design of the Broad Street Corridor (and other Tier 1 projects), and fund construction of the Higuera and Foothill Complete Street Projects.