



CITY COUNCIL AGENDA REPORT

MEETING DATE: Tuesday, March 25, 2025
TO: CITY COUNCIL
WRITTEN BY: ADMINISTRATIVE ANALYST MIRANDA
RECOMMENDED BY: PUBLIC WORKS & UTILITIES DIRECTOR LINDBERG
APPROVED BY: TAMARA VIDES, CITY MANAGER
SUBJECT: RESOLUTION TO ACCEPT GRANT FUNDS AND EXECUTE AND NEGOTIATE AGREEMENT WITH ECOLOGY ACTION

RECOMMENDATION:

Adopt a resolution accepting the California Air Resources Board (CARB) Clean Mobility in Schools (CMIS) & Sustainable Transportation Equity Program (STEP) grant program funds in the amount of \$3,238,235 for the implementation of the Adelante Watsonville Program with Ecology Action; authorizing the City Manager to execute an agreement with Ecology Action of Santa Cruz and negotiate and execute all necessary amendments in a form approved by the City Attorney, and appropriate such funds to the Special Grants Fund [0260].

BACKGROUND:

In 2024, the City of Watsonville successfully partnered with Ecology Action of Santa Cruz and others on a \$7.2 million California Air Resources Board (CARB) Clean Mobility In Schools (CMIS) & Sustainable Transportation Equity Program (STEP) grant. The grant will fund the ¡Adelante Watsonville! Project, which gives Santa Cruz County residents access to affordable options to reduce or forego car ownership and limit gasoline powered vehicle trips/miles by providing new bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure, new EV carshares, and expanded e-bikeshare services supported by bilingual/bicultural education and encouragement programs. The project will be implemented by a collaboration of social equity, health, and sustainability-focused CBOs, local government, community residents, and service providers.

DISCUSSION:

The City of Watsonville will work with Grantee and BCycles staff to help with permitting and other City regulations to help plan and facilitate the implementation of ebikeshare to serve all Watsonville residents with a focus on the most vulnerable. City staff will help promote the service through the City's various communication channels.

The City shall enter into an agreement with Ecology Action to secure a \$3,238,235 share of the CARB grant that will fund the following:

- \$275,000 toward the purchase of a city-owned electric street sweeper designed to clean the narrower bike facilities of debris.
- \$220,000 to help pay for a portion of the Downtown Watsonville Safe Route to School project which will provide pedestrian and bicycle improvements around several schools within the City.
- \$1,300,000 to construct sidewalk on the east side of Freedom Blvd between Green Valley Rd and Airport Blvd.
- \$1,432,735 for improvements to the City's slough trail system.

Additional funding from the grant will allow City staff to work with Ecology Action and other parties and participate in the following programs:

- EV Carshare – Work with Miocar staff to provide dedicated EV charging, assist with permitting and other City regulations to help plan and facilitate the implementation of EV carshare to serve Watsonville residents.
- Ebikeshare - Work with BCycle staff to help with permitting and other City regulations to help plan and facilitate the implementation of ebikeshare to serve all Watsonville residents.

CALIFORNIA ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY ACT (CEQA) DETERMINATION:

Approval of the professional services agreement is not a project pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) because it can be seen with certainty based on substantial evidence in the record that the approval constitutes a government fiscal activity that does not involve any commitment to any specific project that may result in a potentially significant physical impact on the environment. (CEQA Guidelines section 15378(b)(4).

Further, the approval is an administrative activity that would not have the potential to either (1) cause a direct physical change in the environment or (2) cause a reasonably foreseeable indirect physical change in the environment due to the scheduled purchase of an electric street sweeper, and through the maintenance and repair of existing city trails and public sidewalks. Therefore, any CEQA analysis would be speculative at this time. Even if approval of the professional services agreement were to be considered a project under CEQA, it would be exempt pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15061(b)(3). The agreement approval is an administrative action involving no physical change in the environment and does not enable or otherwise affect development. Therefore, it can be seen with certainty that there is no possibility that the agreement approval may have a significant effect on the environment

STRATEGIC PLAN:

The funding from this grant is consistent with the following strategic plan priorities:

2-Fiscal Health: Avoids city operational costs through external grant funding.

3-Infrastructure & Environment: Supports the installation and successful maintenance and operation of EVs and EV chargers.

4-Economic Development: Invests in Watsonville staff through targeted workforce development and the transition to green jobs.

7-Efficient and High Performing Government: Grows capacity and network of highly skilled government staff across the region.

FINANCIAL IMPACT:

Funding for this will be provided by Ecology Action and a portion of the CARB grant awarded for the Adelante Watsonville! Project.

This contract will require a budget appropriation in the amount of \$3,238,235 from the special grant fund [0260] to a new project created by the Finance Department.

ALTERNATIVE ACTION:

The council may choose not to enter into this contract with Ecology Action.

ATTACHMENTS AND/OR REFERENCES (IF ANY):

- 1) Scope of Work
- 2) Project Budget