



CITY COUNCIL AGENDA REPORT

MEETING DATE: Tuesday, June 24, 2025
TO: CITY COUNCIL
WRITTEN BY: On-Call Traffic Engineer Rodriguez
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 THE FEDERAL HIGHWAY
ADMINISTRATION

RECOMMENDATION:

Adopt a resolution to do the following:

1. Accept Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) Safe Streets for All (SS4A) program grant funds in the amount of \$320,000 for the preparation of transportation plans and studies;
 2. Authorize the City Manager to negotiate and execute an agreement with the Federal Highway Administration and all necessary amendments in a form approved by the City Attorney, and appropriate such funds to the Special Grants Fund [0260].
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BACKGROUND:

The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) implemented a grant program in FY2022-23 known as the Safe Streets for All (SS4A) program. The program is intended to help government agencies develop analysis-based traffic projects and program recommendations to improve roadway safety for all travel modes. The SS4A program includes three grant types: 1) Safety Action Plan grants for the development of studies, 2) Implementation grants to build projects and implement programs developed in approved Safety Action Plans, and 3) Demonstration and planning grants to help provide demonstration projects during the development of Safety Action Plans.

The city submitted a grant proposal during Fall 2024 during the SS4A 3rd round of calls for projects. The city targeted the Safety Action Plan program to develop a focused traffic study that included the following elements:

- Active Transportation Plan
- Local Road Safety Plan
- Citywide Plan Line Study

The city requested a grant in the amount of \$320,000 with an \$80,000 local match for a project total of \$400,000.

DISCUSSION:

The SS4A program is currently the only federally approved roadway safety grant program funded in the current federal government budget. This fact highlights the priority of the SS4A program for the current administration. FHWA aims to have all government agencies across the union to develop Safety Action Plan studies using data-driven and community-based input methods. This is in part due to concerns that projects funded in the past that faced public criticism were not properly vetted during the planning phase.

FHWA has gone a step further in the current 4th cycle of the program that limits Implementation grants to projects that are in completed and approved Safety Action Plans. Watsonville is fortunate to have received a grant in last year's 3rd cycle of the program. Staff plans to immediately release a Request for Proposals upon execution of the grant funding agreement with the FHWA so that the city can qualify for Implementation grants in 2026. The study will also qualify Watsonville for State of California and regional grant funding programs.

The Safety Action Plan will include three focused study efforts:

1) Active Transportation Plan

This will include an update of the Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plans to consolidate and expand network recommendations to better link neighborhoods with public facilities including schools, shopping centers, and recreation facilities. The city will include development of new Safe Routes to School – Preferred Routes to School maps for all public schools that service the Watsonville community.

2) Local Road Safety Plan

This will include analyzing traffic volume and historical collision data to identify high-priority corridors and intersections. Mitigation projects and programs will be developed to improve infrastructure, reducing crashes and improving safety for vulnerable road users.

3) Citywide Plan Line Study

This effort will allow the city to develop conceptual plans (15%) demonstrating how mitigation measures will be implemented so that residents can better understand roadway changes if a project is implemented. When appropriate, the plan line drawings will be expanded to complete signage and striping plans that can be implemented in upcoming street resurfacing programs. This effort can also include the development of school-focused improvements such as enhanced crosswalks or implementation of All Way STOP controls, etc.

CALIFORNIA ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY ACT (CEQA) DETERMINATION:

Approval of the Grant 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 preparation of the Active Transportation Plan, Local Road Safety Plan and Citywide Plan Line Study. 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). Approval of the agreement 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:

Preparation of the Active Transportation Plan, Local Road Safety Plan, and Citywide Plan Line Study supports General and Strategic Plan strategies for:

Infrastructure & Environment

Public Safety

Community Engagement & Well-being

FINANCIAL IMPACT:

The Safety Action Plan project is estimated to cost approximately \$400,000. The SS4A Program will provide a grant in the amount of \$320,000 that is reimbursable as the project is developed. Grant funds will be appropriated to the [260] Special Grants Fund. A local match of \$80,000 is required to supplement the grant. The City anticipates the \$80,000 local match to come from existing Measure D funds.

ALTERNATIVE ACTION:

No reasonable alternatives are known at this time.

ATTACHMENTS AND/OR REFERENCES (IF ANY):

1. DRAFT FHWA SS4A Funding Agreement