



Board Agenda Item 56

DATE: July 18, 2023

TO: Board of Supervisors

SUBMITTED BY: Steven E. White, Director
Department of Public Works and Planning

SUBJECT: Tranquillity Complete Streets Grant Application and Agreement with United States
Department of Agriculture

RECOMMENDED ACTION(S):

- 1. Retroactively approve and authorize the Department of Public Works and Planning's previous submittal of a grant application for Tranquillity Complete Streets project to the United States Department of Agriculture.**
- 2. Retroactively authorize the Director of Public Works and Planning's ("Director's") signing of the Community Facilities Grant Certification, and notification to the State and Local Clearinghouses, both of which are part of the grant application listed in recommended action 1.**
- 3. Authorize the Director, subject to review and approval as to legal form by County Counsel and as to accounting form by the Auditor-Controller/Treasurer-Tax Collector, to approve and execute the grant agreement with the United States Department of Agriculture and any amendments thereto, as well as notify the State and Local Clearinghouses in connection with the construction of Fiscal Year 2023 Congressionally Directed Spending Allocation for the Tranquillity Complete Streets project. (\$1,000,000).**

Approval of the first recommended action will authorize the Department of Public Works and Planning (Department)'s previous submittal of a grant application for the Tranquillity Complete Streets project to the U.S. Congress, which subsequently assigned the grant application to the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA). Approval of the second recommended action would retroactively authorize the Director of the Department of Public Works and Planning ("Director") having signed, as a part of submission of the grant application for recommended action 1, the Community Facilities Grant Certification and notifying the State and Local Clearinghouses. Approval of the third recommended action would authorize the Director to sign a grant agreement, and any amendments thereto with the USDA accepting Fiscal Year 2023 Congressionally Directed Spending Allocation for the Tranquillity Complete Streets project. This action impacts District 1.

ALTERNATIVE ACTION(S):

If the recommended actions are not approved, the Department will not be allowed to accept up to \$1,000,000 in funding for improvements of roads and streets in Tranquillity.

FISCAL IMPACT:

There is no Net County Cost associated with the recommended actions. The Congressionally Directed

Spending grant allows for up to \$1,000,000 towards the Tranquillity Complete Streets construction project. Additional project costs, estimated not to exceed \$105,826 will be paid for out of the Department's Road Maintenance and Rehabilitation (SB-1) allocation and budgeted in the Road Fund 0010.

DISCUSSION:

The Department submitted project proposals to U.S. Congress in Spring 2022 for Community Facilities "Earmark" funding, and the Tranquillity Complete Streets project (\$1,000,000) was selected. The amount was approved by Congress in December 2022 through the passing of the Omnibus Appropriations Bill. The grant itself was assigned to be overseen by the USDA, specifically the Rural Development Agency (RDA).

The unincorporated community of Tranquillity has roads that are in need of repair to fix potholes, cracks, and dips. The sidewalks are also crumbling or are non-existent in some areas. This hinders travel for residence trying to reach destinations in the community such as schools, churches, and convenience stores. Funding from the Congressionally Directed Spending grant will allow for road reconstruction, sidewalks and curb ramps on Randolph Avenue from James Road to Morton Avenue, approximately 0.4 miles of road and sidewalk.

The funding for the project will complement projects the Department has already completed or plans to begin in the area, that include improvements to public facilities to reconstruct roads and sidewalks. A road reconstruction project was completed in September 2022 that rebuilt Daniels Avenue and adjoining sidewalks, and added ADA compliant curb ramps, between Tranquillity High School and Tranquillity Elementary School. Further improvements to the community sidewalks will be made possible through funding to be received through the Active Transportation Program in the amount of \$458,000.

Although funding has been allocated by Congress, a detailed grant application (attached as Exhibit A) is required now that the grant has been assigned to the RDA. The application was still in progress at the time this item was submitted to the Board but should be finalized and submitted to the RDA prior to the date of this Board hearing. Part of the grant application, as in Exhibit A, is the submission of the Community Facilities Grant Certification (certification). Approval and authorization of the recommended actions allow retroactive authority for the Director to sign this certification as part of the grant application. Amongst other provisions, the certification certifies that the organization (here, the County of Fresno, Department of Public Works and Planning) is unable to finance the proposed project from its own resources and that the organization will not take action or incur obligations which would limit the range of alternatives to be considered or which would have an adverse effect on the environment. The certification is a required part of the grant application.

This project will undergo review per the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and, because it is Federally funded, it is also subject to review under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). For CEQA, since the project scope is covered under Section 15301(c) of CEQA: minor alterations to "existing highways and streets, sidewalks, gutters, bicycle and pedestrian trails, and similar facilities," a Notice of Exemption is anticipated. The USDA will act as the lead agency for NEPA review and RDA staff have indicated that the anticipated level of NEPA review is a Categorical Exclusion with an environmental report to be completed by the Department.

Approval of the recommended actions also allows for the Director to fulfill the grant condition of notifying the State and Local Clearinghouses. Providing notification to the State and Local Clearinghouses is also a required part of the grant application. Also, as part of the grant application process, a public meeting will be held on August 8, 2023 at Tranquillity High School.

Once the grant application is approved by the RDA, the County must enter into a standard template funding agreement, prior to authorizing activities under the grant. The RDA will not provide this agreement until the funding application is complete. The Department requests that your Board authorize the Director of the Department to approve and sign the agreement and any amendments that might be necessary in the future,

subject to approval as to legal form by County Counsel and as to accounting form by the Auditor-Controller/Treasurer-Tax Collector.

OTHER REVIEWING AGENCIES:

United States Department of Agriculture (USDA)

ATTACHMENTS INCLUDED AND/OR ON FILE:

Location Map
Exhibit A - Community Facilities Grant Program Application and Guide

CAO ANALYST:

Salvador Espino