



Board Agenda Item 10

DATE: September 24, 2024

TO: Board of Supervisors

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

SUBJECT: Adopt Resolution for the FY 2024-25 Caltrans Sustainable Transportation Planning Grant Projects and Approve Draft Funding Agreements with Caltrans for the Western Fresno County Climate Adaptation Plan and Safe Routes to School Action Plan

RECOMMENDED ACTION(S):

- 1. Adopt and authorize Chairman to execute Resolution required by the California Department of Transportation (“Caltrans”) stating the County’s approval of and commitment to the Western Fresno County Climate Adaptation Plan (\$1,500,000), and for the Fresno County Safe Routes to School Action Plan (\$400,000), conditionally awarded to the Department of Public Works and Planning by Caltrans under the FY 2024-25 Sustainable Transportation Planning Grant Program; and**
- 2. Approve the draft form of the “Sample Agreement, Adaptation Grants (State), Restricted Grant Agreement” (“Adaptation Grants (State), Restricted Grant Agreement”) with Caltrans for the County’s implementation of the Western Fresno County Climate Adaptation Plan (\$1,694,341); and**
- 3. Approve the draft form of the “Sample Agreement, Sustainable Communities Grants (State), Restricted Grant Agreement” (“Sustainable Communities Grants (State), Restricted Grant Agreement”) with Caltrans for the County’s implementation of the Safe Routes to School Action Plan (\$451,824); and**
- 4. Authorize the Director of the Department of Public Works and Planning (“Director”) to approve and execute the final form of the Adaptation Grants (State), Restricted Grant Agreement including such changes to the draft form of the Adaptation Grants (State), Restricted Grant Agreement that the Director determines to be in the best interest of the County, subject to the review and approval of County Counsel as to legal form and the Auditor-Controller/Treasurer-Tax Collector as to accounting form, for the County’s implementation of Western Fresno County Climate Adaptation Plan; and**
- 5. Authorize the Director to approve and execute the final form of the Sustainable Communities Grants (State), Restricted Grant Agreement including such changes to the draft form of the Sustainable Communities Grants (State), Restricted Grant Agreement that the Director determines to be in the best interest of the County, subject to the review and approval of County Counsel as to legal form and the Auditor-Controller/Treasurer-Tax Collector as to accounting form, for the County’s implementation of the Safe Routes to School Action Plan.**

Approval of the first recommended action will adopt a resolution required by the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) as a condition of award for the planning grant applications submitted by the Department of Public Works and Planning (Department) to Caltrans for the Sustainable Transportation

Planning Grant (STPG) FY 2024-25 cycle. The applications are for (1) the Western Fresno County Climate Adaptation Plan to study west of Highways 99 and 41 to the County line to plan for the resilience of transportation infrastructure due to flooding, drought, subsidence, and other climate-related causes (\$1,500,000); and (2) the Fresno County Safe Routes to School Action Plan to conduct a school assessment study to evaluate the most critical transportation issues students face at 20 selected schools located in or adjacent to unincorporated areas of Fresno County (\$400,000).

Approval of the second recommended action will approve the draft form of the Sample Adaptation Grants (State), Restricted Grant Agreement between the County and Caltrans for the Western Fresno County Climate Adaptation Plan.

Approval of the third recommended action will approve the draft form of the Sample Grants (State), Restricted Grant Agreement between the County and Caltrans for the Safe Routes to School Action Plan.

Approval of the fourth recommended action will authorize the Director of the Department of Public Works and Planning ("Director") to approve and execute the final form of the Adaptation Grants (State), Restricted Grant Agreement including such changes to the draft form of the Adaptation Grants (State), Restricted Grant Agreement that the Director determines to be in the best interest of the County, subject to the review and approval of County Counsel as to legal form and the Auditor-Controller/Treasurer-Tax Collector as to accounting form, for the County's implementation of Western Fresno County Climate Adaptation Plan.

Approval of the fifth recommended action will authorize the Director of the Department of Public Works and Planning ("Director") to approve and execute the final form of the Adaptation Grants (State), Restricted Grant Agreement including such changes to the draft form of the Adaptation Grants (State), Restricted Grant Agreement that the Director determines to be in the best interest of the County, subject to the review and approval of County Counsel as to legal form and the Auditor-Controller/Treasurer-Tax Collector as to accounting form, for the implementation of the Safe Routes to School Action Plan. This item pertains to Districts 1,2,3,4, and 5.

ALTERNATIVE ACTION(S):

If the recommended actions are not approved, the County will not meet the conditions of award for the STPG program and Caltrans could withdraw the projects from funding consideration.

FISCAL IMPACT:

There is no Net County cost associated with the recommended actions. The Climate Adaptation Plan is estimated to cost \$1,694,341. The County would receive \$1,500,000 from Caltrans under the Sustainable Transportation Planning Grant program, with the required 11.47% local match of \$194,341 paid out of the County's Measure C allocation. The Safe Routes to School Action Plan is estimated to cost \$451,824. The County would receive \$400,000 from Caltrans under the Sustainable Transportation Planning Grant program with the required 11.47% local match of \$51,824 paid out of the County's Measure C allocation. The funding is dispersed on a reimbursement basis through the invoicing process, which will be handled by the Department. Sufficient appropriations and estimated revenues are included in the Departments Roads Org 4510 FY 2024-25 Adopted Budget.

DISCUSSION:

Background

The purpose of the Sustainable Transportation Planning Grant (STPG) is to provide much needed funding to support regional sustainable communities' transportation strategies and ultimately achieve the State's greenhouse gas reductions targets of 40 and 80 percent below 1990 levels by 2030 and 2050, respectively. The STPG is available on an annual basis through a competitive application process. Grants are awarded for transportation planning activities such as planning for active transportation, safe routes to schools, transit

services, vision zero, complete streets, freight corridors, social equity, integrated land use and transportation planning.

On January 18, 2024, the Department submitted two applications to Caltrans for the STPG program FY 2024-25 funding cycle.

On June 18, 2024, your Board retroactively approved the submission of the two applications. (See Reference Material).

The grant applications proposed studies that will result in action plans which will address important issues facing County residents, climate change and school traffic safety. Both applications were conditionally awarded by Caltrans in a letter dated July 9, 2024 (Attachment A).

Both awards are pending a list of conditions from Caltrans the County must meet before Caltrans agrees to allow the Department move forward with the planning projects. One of those conditions is to present Caltrans with a signed Resolution from the County's Board of Supervisors committing to the STPG program's guidelines for project delivery, which includes the grant project title and job title of the person authorized to enter into the Adaptation Grants (State), Restricted Grant Agreements with Caltrans for both the Western Fresno County Climate Adaptation Plan and the Safe Routes to School Action Plan projects.

Further, the Adaptation Grants (State), Restricted Grant Agreements for both projects must be executed with Caltrans before such funds can be reimbursed through the STPG program. A resolution was not required at the grant application stage. However, it is required upon award as a condition of grant acceptance by October 1, 2024.

County staff submitted the required documents to meet most of the conditions of grant acceptance for both grants on August 15, 2024.

California's Department of Housing and Community Development Housing Element Requirement

One of the conditions for acceptance of the Safe Routes to School Action Plan Grant is for the County's Housing Element to be approved the State Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD) prior to execution of the grant agreement. The Department has been working diligently with HCD staff to address all the items they require and has made significant progress in this effort, and Caltrans has agreed to allow the grant to be awarded, with the expectation that the Housing Element be approved by March 2025.

An outstanding requirement for Housing Element approval by HCD is the identification of adequate sites to meet the County's Regional Housing Needs Allocation (RHNA) obligation. Because of the required siting criteria, many of these sites will be located near several of the County's incorporated cities. While the Department intended to have the required sites identified and rezoned, it continues to coordinate with the impacted cities to address any concerns and obtain their support. Based on this, the Department staff anticipates finalization of the identification of the required sites, changes to the Draft Housing Element, and resubmittal back to HCD by this fall/winter and potential approval by March 2025.

The housing element condition of award does not apply to the Climate Adaptation Planning Grant (\$1,500,000), so the Department will be clear to move forward with that project given Caltrans accepts the submitted documents of award conditions and your Board adopts the recommended actions.

Fresno County's Commitment to the STPG

The purpose of the Sustainable Transportation Planning Grant (STPG) is to provide much needed funding to support regional sustainable communities' strategies and ultimately achieve the State's greenhouse gas reductions targets of 40 and 80 percent below 1990 levels by 2030 and 2050, respectively. The STPG is

available on an annual basis and through a competitive application process. Grants are for transportation planning activities such as planning for active transportation, safe routes to schools, transit services, vision zero, complete streets, freight corridors, social equity, integrated land use and transportation planning.

The Department submitted two applications to the STPG program's FY 2024-25 funding cycle. Both applications propose studies that will result in action plans which will address important issues facing County residents; climate change and school traffic safety. Below are brief descriptions of the subject matter in each application and the funding requested:

Western Fresno County Climate Adaptation Plan - the Department is proposing a study of the western unincorporated communities and overlapping cities (west of Highways 99 and 41 to the County line) to plan for the resilience of transportation infrastructure due to flooding, drought, subsidence, and other climate-related causes. When storm events occur, the roads can flood and impact thousands of residents trying to get to school, work, and access to other vital resources. This area of study was chosen due to its high flood risk and high concentration of underserved communities. Deliverables include a report with scoping, cost estimates, and a list of priority projects with feasibility of recommended actions, identified through a scientific and public process that considers cost, equity, long-term resiliency, and potential environmental impact.

Fresno County Safe Routes to School Action Plan - the Department is proposing a Safe Routes to School Assessment Study that will result in Action Plan, to carefully evaluate the most critical transportation issues students face at 20 selected schools located in or adjacent to unincorporated Fresno County. The selection of schools was based on outreach conducted by the Fresno Council of Governments (FCOG) to schools and districts. The Action Plan will develop feasible solutions that have immediate and positive impacts on the safety and comfort of children traveling to school. This study will result in a Safety Action Plan providing crash analysis, a toolbox of proven safety countermeasures, pathways to implementation, and a robust transportation safety education program, including engaging students, staff, parents, community members, and relevant authorities in the assessment and planning process.

OTHER REVIEWING AGENCIES:

Caltrans reviewed the grant applications and submitted conditions for acceptance to the Department to be returned to them by August 16, 2024.

REFERENCE MATERIAL

BAI #76, June 18, 2024

ATTACHMENTS INCLUDED AND/OR ON FILE:

Attachment A - Conditional award letters

On file with Clerk - Resolution

On file with Clerk - Western Fresno County Climate Adaptation Sample Restrictive Grant Agreement

On file with Clerk - Safe Routes to School Action Plan Sample Restrictive Grant Agreement

CAO ANALYST:

Salvador Espino