



# Board Agenda Item 9

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DATE: September 24, 2024

TO: Board of Supervisors

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

SUBJECT: Retroactive Approval of Office of Traffic Safety Safe Routes to School Action Plan Grant; and Grant Agreement

RECOMMENDED ACTION(S):

1. **Retroactively approve and authorize the Director of Public Works and Planning's ("Director") previous submittal of a grant application to the California Office of Traffic Safety ("OTS") for the Fresno County Safe Routes to School Action Plan for the County to conduct a school assessment study to evaluate the most critical transportation issues students face at ten selected schools located in or adjacent to unincorporated areas of Fresno County, which study will result in an Action Plan to improve safety for such students (\$223,082);**
2. **Approve the draft form of the Grant Agreement with the OTS for the Fresno County Safe Routes to School Action Plan, including its Certifications and Assurances ("Grant Agreement");**
3. **Authorize the Director, as the Authorizing Official for the County under the Grant Agreement, to approve and execute the final form of the Grant Agreement, including such changes to the draft form of the Grant Agreement that the Director determines to be in the best interest of the County, subject to approval as to legal form by County Counsel and as to accounting form by the Auditor-Controller/Treasurer-Tax Collector; and**
4. **Authorize the following officials of the Department of Public Works and Planning ("Department") to execute the Grant Agreement, and to provide the Certifications and Assurances under the Grant Agreement, in their respective capacities: Erin Haagenon, Program Manager, as Grant Director under the Grant Agreement; and Lemuel Asprec, Financial Division Manager, as the Fiscal Officer under the Grant Agreement.**

To meet the grant filing deadline of January 31, 2024, the Department of Public Works and Planning (Department) submitted the Grant Applications on the due date for the California Office of Traffic Safety (OTS) FY 2024-25 grant cycle. On July 8, 2024 the Department received communication from OTS of tentative award of the grant and it is pending official approval from the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA). The OTS sent a Grant Agreement as a condition of grant approval that staff be delegated to sign the agreement the Director of Public Works and Planning, the Grant Administrator, and the Department's Fiscal Officer, and returned to the OTS by October 1, 2024. This impact of this item is Countywide.

ALTERNATIVE ACTION(S):

If the recommended actions are not approved, the Department will withdraw the OTS program grant application and agreement. If that should be the case, the County's proposed Safe Routes to School Action Plan will no longer receive OTS funding under the current FY 2024-25 cycle.

#### FISCAL IMPACT:

There is no Net County cost associated with the recommended action. The Safe Routes to School Action Plan is estimated to cost \$223,082, which will be reimbursed by the OTS through the issuance of invoices. \$200,000 of this budget is set aside for consultant services, while the remainder will be used for staff costs for administration, consultant procurement, public engagement, and grant management. Costs Sufficient appropriations are included in Roads Org 4510 Fiscal Year 2024-25 budget.

#### DISCUSSION:

The purpose of the OTS grant program is to reach a goal where everyone will travel safely on California roads through a thoughtful, forward-thinking, and data-driven selection of grants to local and state agencies. With grant funding made available to California by the NHTSA, the OTS funds more than \$100 million dollars annually in innovative, evidence-based education and enforcement programs and technologies designed to improve road safety.

This is the first time the Department has submitted a grant application to the OTS Pedestrian and Bicycle Safety program. The Department submitted the grant application on January 18, 2024 to meet the grant deadline of January 31, 2024. The application proposed a Safe Routes to School Assessment study to evaluate the most critical transportation issues students face at ten schools located in or adjacent to unincorporated areas of Fresno County, which study, if approved, will result in an Action Plan to improve safety for such students. 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. The draft grant agreement contains descriptions of various activities allowed under the grant, such as walk audits, safety assessments, bicycle rodeos, share the road assemblies, and crossing guard kits. As of this writing, the amount and budget for the individual line items are still being finalized through discussions with Department staff, the various schools, and OTS. The period of performance of the grant is October 1, 2024 to September 30, 2025. The grant application listed ten schools to proposed to participate in the action plan, although additional schools may be added if the budget allows:

1. Cantua Creek Elementary
2. West Park Elementary
3. Orange Center Elementary
4. Washington Colony Elementary
5. Washington Union High
6. Del Rey Elementary
7. Alvina Elementary
8. Caruthers High
9. Burrel Union Elementary
10. Riverdale Elementary

On July 8, 2024, Department staff received communication of conditional award and it is pending official approval from the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA). The OTS sent a Grant Agreement as a condition of grant approval to be signed and returned by October 1, 2024. The OTS worked with County staff to prepare the draft grant agreement using information included in the original grant application as well as any changes to the budget and/or strategies discussed. Any proposed changes to the draft Grant Agreement are not expected to be material. The draft form of Grant Agreement is on file with the

Clerk.

Section 7 of the Grant Agreement incorporates by reference schedules and exhibits which contain the specific terms and conditions agreed to by the County and OTS. In general terms, the Department will select a consultant through the RFP process to assist in developing the Action Plan. Because the safety assessment will take place over a vast area with varying challenges, the specific benefits will vary depending on the unique context of each community and school depending on their specific needs. An important goal of the project is to create an environment where students can concentrate more on learning than whether their personal safety or well-being is jeopardized by unsafe surroundings and 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 which will include, but will not be limited to, walk audits and safety assessments at each school, providing a set of recommended safety countermeasures with which the Department will identify future transportation safety projects. The development of the Safety Action Plan will include community engagement with students, school faculty, parents, community members and relevant local leaders. Prior to adoption, the Department will conduct the necessary California Environmental Quality Act Review for your Board's approval.

The OTS does not require signature from the County's Board of Supervisors on the Agreement; however, it does require the signature of the Director of Public Works and Planning, the Grant Administrator, and the Department's Fiscal Officer. This item is before you today to delegate authority to Steven, E. White, Director of Public Works and Planning; Erin Haagenson, Program Manager; and Lemuel Asprec, Finance Division Manager; to sign the Agreement. Your Board may choose to delegate responsibility to alternate staff should your Board see fit.

The County officials named on the Grant Agreement are required under the Grant Agreement to certify by way of their signatures, that the County complies with all applicable Federal statutes, regulations, and directives and State rules, guidelines, policies, and laws in effect with respect to the periods for which the County receives grant funding.

ATTACHMENTS INCLUDED AND/OR ON FILE:

Location Map

On file with Clerk - OTS Application - Fresno County Safe Routes to School Action Plan

On file with Clerk - Draft Form of Grant Agreement

CAO ANALYST:

Salvador Espino