GRANT APPLICATIONS - STATEWIDE ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION PROGRAM 2014

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the City Council approve a motion authorizing City staff to submit grant applications to the California Statewide and San Joaquin Council of Governments (SJCOG) Active Transportation Program (ATP) call for projects. It is further recommended that the motion authorize the City Manager or his designee to execute associated agreements, and undertake additional financial actions that may be appropriate to accept, receive, and spend any grant funding resulting from these applications.

Summary

The ATP is a new California State grant program created in 2013 by Senate Bill 99 and Assembly Bill 101. The ATP funds projects aimed at increasing bicycling and walking, safety and mobility of non-motorized users, reducing greenhouse gas emissions, enhancing public health, and ensuring that disadvantaged communities fully share in the benefits of the program. Agencies who receive ATP funding must comply with all applicable federal transportation regulations.

Caltrans administers a portion of the funds on behalf of the California Transportation Commission (CTC). Caltrans issued a call for projects requesting ATP funding on March 21, 2014. The minimum grant request is $250,000; there is no maximum request amount or cap on the number of applications that can be submitted. ATP will fund infrastructure or non-infrastructure projects. An 11.47 percent local match is required, except for projects in disadvantaged communities, Safe Routes to School projects, and stand-alone non-infrastructure projects. Public Works' staff proposes to submit 19 project applications to Caltrans worth more than $19 million. Fifteen of these projects worth $17.5 million may be exempt from the local match requirement and will be submitted for 100 percent grant funding. The application deadline is May 21, 2014. Funding will be available as early as fiscal year 2014-15. Staff will return to Council to request necessary appropriations for any required matching funds, once specific project awards are known.

DISCUSSION

Background

The ATP is a new California State grant program created in 2013 by Senate Bill 99 and Assembly Bill 101. Caltrans is administering the call for projects on behalf of the CTC.

The program is funded through a blend of State and federal funding sources that combined the old Safe Routes to School, Recreational Trails, and Transportation Enhancement programs. All projects awarded ATP funding must comply with federal transportation regulations. A local hire or vendor
The ATP encourages bicycling and walking, especially for children traveling to school, and for residents of disadvantaged communities. The ATP specifically prioritizes funding toward disadvantaged communities, Safe Routes to School projects, non-infrastructure projects (programs), and Recreational Trails projects.

There will be two separate calls for projects: the current one at the State level, and a subsequent one at the MPO level. Those projects not funded through the Statewide competition are mandated to be considered under the regional MPO call for projects. The City’s MPO is SJCOG. SJCOG has indicated it intends to issue a call for projects sometime during summer 2014, after the CTC approves its program guidelines on June 25, 2014.

The goals of the ATP are to:

- Increase the proportion of trips accomplished by biking and walking
- Increase the safety and mobility of non-motorized users
- Advance the active transportation efforts of regional agencies to achieve established greenhouse gas reduction goals
- Enhance public health through the use of programs and/or projects
- Ensure that disadvantaged communities fully share in the benefits of the program
- Provide a broad spectrum of projects to benefit active transportation users

The ATP will fund infrastructure and non-infrastructure projects. Infrastructure projects can entail the planning, design, and/or construction of pedestrian and/or bicycle facilities. Non-infrastructure projects can consist of efforts that promote education, encouragement, enforcement, and planning of walking and bicycling activities. A combination of infrastructure and non-infrastructure projects is also allowed. Examples of eligible projects include: development of new bikeways and walkways that improve mobility; access, or safety for people who are on foot or bicycle; Safe Routes to School projects that specifically improve safety for children and encourage walking and bicycling on the trip to school; improvements to existing bikeways and walkways; conducting bicycle and/or pedestrian studies/assessments, or planning efforts to further future plans or projects.

**Present Situation**

Caltrans issued a call for projects requesting ATP funding on March 21, 2014. Grant applications are due to Caltrans on May 21, 2014. The CTC is scheduled to adopt Caltrans’ staff recommendations for funding at their regular meeting on August 20, 2014. SJCOG indicated it intends to issue a call for projects after the State has announced its project awards sometime after June 25, 2014.

Public Works’ staff has identified and reviewed candidate projects for ATP funding. Staff has also met with the Safe Routes to School Committee (which includes representatives from the School Districts), the Community Development Department, and the Economic Development
Department/Housing Division to review and discuss potential projects. A representative from SJCOG has been involved with the process as well. As a result of the meetings, Public Works' staff proposes to submit applications for funding consideration under the ATP for the 19 projects shown in Attachment A.

The minimum grant request is $250,000; there is no maximum request amount or cap on the number of applications that can be submitted. An 11.47 percent local match is required, except for projects in disadvantaged communities, Safe Routes to School projects, and stand-alone non-infrastructure projects. There are three factors by which the ATP identifies disadvantaged communities; one is based on median household income within the project area. The other two are based on environmental health, including air quality, or on percent of school students eligible to receive free or reduced-price meals. Projects that meet any of the criteria are eligible as a disadvantaged community. At least 15 of the proposed projects worth approximately $17.5 million appear to meet the criteria for local match exemption, per the grant program guidelines. If all applications were approved for funding at the requested levels, less than $200,000 would be needed for the local match portion.

The ATP program also encourages applicants to use the California Conservation Corps on projects where feasible and factors such use in the scoring of project applications. Due to the aggressive grant submittal deadline and the number of projects, applications are not yet complete and staff is presently refining the project scopes of work and cost estimates. Staff will also review and rate applications based on ATP guidelines and may adjust scopes and estimates to better position the projects for funding.

FINANCIAL SUMMARY

No appropriations are required at this time, and there is no impact to the City's General Fund or to any other unrestricted fund as a result of taking the recommended actions. Funding received from both the Statewide and SJCOG ATP programs will be available as early as fiscal year 2014-15. Staff will return to Council to request necessary appropriations for any required matching funds, once specific project awards are known.

Attachment A - ATP Grant Program 2014 Proposed Projects