



CITY OF SAN MATEO

City Hall
330 W. 20th Avenue
San Mateo CA 94403
www.cityofsanmateo.org

Agenda Report

Agenda Number: 10

Section Name: {{section.name}}

File ID: {{item.tracking_number}}

TO: City Council

FROM: Drew Corbett, City Manager

PREPARED BY: Public Works Department

MEETING DATE: April 4, 2022

SUBJECT:
Downtown San Mateo Grade Separations Project – Grant Funding

RECOMMENDATION:

Adopt a Resolution to authorize an application for the Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity Grant Program to fund the development of a project study report, preliminary engineering plans, and environmental planning documents to assess the Downtown San Mateo Grade Separations Project.

BACKGROUND:

The Office of the Secretary of Transportation issued a Notice of Funding Opportunity for the Department of Transportation's National Infrastructure Investments (i.e., the Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity (RAISE) Grant Program) under the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (Bipartisan Infrastructure Law). The grants through this program are intended for capital projects in surface transportation that will have significant impacts at the local or regional level. Grant applications are due on April 14, 2022.

Staff proposes to submit a grant application for the development of needed planning-level analysis of the Downtown San Mateo Grade Separations Project consisting of a project study report, preliminary engineering plans, and environmental planning documents. This planning-level analysis of the Downtown San Mateo Grade Separations Project is estimated to cost \$8,000,000. The proposed study involves planning for grade separations at six (6) of the Caltrain crossings in the City's downtown (1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th, 5th, and 9th Avenues). As the 7th largest commuter rail line in the nation, Caltrain provides commuter rail services along a corridor from the City and County of San Francisco to the City of Gilroy. Forty at-grade street/railroad crossings (places where local streets cross the railroad tracks) exist along Caltrain's corridor. Twenty-eight of these crossings are in San Mateo County, with eight (8) in the City – the most of any other municipality.

While the rail line offers a critical transportation service to the Bay Area community, the at-grade crossings in the City pose serious safety risks and disconnect the downtown from the neighboring communities. The Federal Railroad Administration has recognized grade crossing incidents to be the second leading cause of rail-related deaths in America. As part of its Business Plan, Caltrain is planning to increase rail service along the corridor from 92 trains per day to 360 per day by 2040, further exacerbating the safety concerns at the City's existing crossings and resulting in significant gate downtimes of up to 45 minutes each hour. The daily shutdowns will increase vehicle idle times, potentially increase harmful air emissions, block pedestrian and bicycle traffic, and will negatively affect emergency response times.

The proposed grade separations will be critical to ensuring conditions in the City remain safe and equitable. This will increase safety exponentially, and it is expected to produce environmental sustainability and quality of life benefits. In addition, it will provide economic opportunities to the downtown area and will greatly improve mobility and community connectivity, particularly for some of our most underserved community members living in the adjacent neighborhoods. As the financial sponsor, the City is responsible for obtaining the funding needed for Caltrain to design and construct the

grade separations. The City understands that key considerations for RAISE grant applications include the project's incorporation of environmentally sustainable practices and opportunities for increased local economic productivity. In its capacity as the sponsor of this effort, the City commits to supporting the use of environmentally sustainable practices as part of the future construction, as well as the use of fair labor practices. Currently, the City is successfully engaged in a Project Labor Agreement (PLA) for the construction of the Wastewater Treatment Plant Upgrade and Expansion Project. The PLA for this \$400 million construction project, managed by the City, has proven to stabilize wages and has increased workforce development and apprenticeship opportunities. The City commits to supporting these measures as part of the grade separation effort that Caltrain would lead as well.

BUDGET IMPACT:

The estimated cost for the planning-level effort is \$8,000,000. The submittal for the RAISE grant application for \$6,000,000 will require an estimated \$2,000,000 in local matching funds. If the application is selected, the sources for the matching funds would need to be determined (i.e., combination of Measure A, Measure S, and the General Fund).

ENVIRONMENTAL DETERMINATION:

The authorization of a grant application to fund a project study report, preliminary engineering plans, and environmental documents and commitment by the City to completion of the project study report, preliminary engineering plans, and environmental documents with matching funds in an estimated amount of \$2,000,000 is not a project subject to CEQA because it is a government fiscal activity which does not involve any commitment to any specific project which may result in a potentially significant physical impact on the environment. (CEQA Guidelines Section 15378(b)(4).)

NOTICE PROVIDED

All meeting noticing requirements were met.

ATTACHMENTS

Att 1 – Proposed Resolution

Att 2 – Project Description

STAFF CONTACT

Azalea Mitch, Director of Public Works

amitch@cityofsanmateo.org

(650) 522-7303