



REPORT TO THE CITY COUNCIL

DATE: Regular Meeting of March 11, 2025

TO: Mayor and Members of the City Council

SUBMITTED BY: Dante Hall, City Manager

SUBJECT: Acceptance of Local Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP) Grant Award for the Sycamore Avenue Bicycle & Pedestrian East-West Connector Project

RECOMMENDED ACTION:

Staff recommends that the City Council adopt a resolution authorizing the City Manager, or his designee, to accept and manage the awarded Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP) Cycle 12 grants totaling \$350,000 for the Sycamore Avenue Bicycle & Pedestrian East-West Connector Project.

BACKGROUND:

The Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP) is a core federal aid program designed to significantly reduce traffic fatalities and serious injuries on all public roads. Caltrans makes this federal and state aid available to local government agencies based on the results of statewide competition. In February 2025, the City was awarded \$350,000 of HSIP Cycle 12 funding for the Sycamore Avenue Corridor improvement project.

The Sycamore Avenue Corridor, located under the I-80 and BNSF railroad overcrossing, presents critical safety challenges for pedestrians and cyclists due to poor infrastructure and visibility. To mitigate these risks, a project is proposed to construct a 10-foot-wide multipurpose pathway and Class II bicycle lanes along the corridor. Key improvements include:

- South Side: Connecting San Pablo Avenue bike lanes to Refugio Valley Road and Refugio Park pathways.
- North Side: Creating a Class II bike lane from Creekside Center to a 10-foot multipurpose trail, extending to John Muir Parkway and the Regional Intermodal Transit Center.

This initiative will significantly enhance pedestrian and cyclist safety, reduce the potential for collisions, and improve connectivity across Hercules. It will link local schools, the Civic Center, and residential areas while integrating the east and west halves of the city. Additionally, the project aligns with three Plan Bay Area 2050 Growth Geographies, promoting sustainable development.

The total project cost is estimated to be \$1.5M, of which the City was previously allocated \$135,000 of Transportation Development Act (TDA) Funds through the Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC). The \$350,000 HSIP Cycle 12 grant will contribute to the project's construction phase. With a secured right-of-way and detailed plans, this project is a pivotal step toward a safer, more connected Hercules, fostering increased pedestrian and cyclist travel.

ANALYSIS

The current condition of the Sycamore Avenue Corridor, situated beneath I-80 and the BNSF railroad overcrossing, poses significant safety risks for cyclists and pedestrians. Presently, pedestrians traveling west on the north side of Sycamore Avenue must navigate a steep dirt footpath and a treacherously loose gravel area to cross under the overcrossing. Conversely, cyclists must use the outside vehicular lane, which suffers from restricted sight distance due to the bridge column and poor visibility from the overcrossing's shadows. The hazardous nature of this section is underscored by 17 recorded accidents over a recent four-year period.

To address these safety concerns, the project intends to construct a 10-foot-wide multipurpose pathway and Class II bicycle lanes along the Sycamore Avenue Corridor beneath the I-80 and BNSF railroad overcrossing. The planned improvements include:

- On the south side of Sycamore Avenue, the new pathway and bike lanes will connect the existing bike lanes on San Pablo Avenue to the bike lane on Sycamore Avenue at Refugio Valley Road and the multipurpose pathway in Refugio Park.
- On the north side, a new Class II bike lane will link the Creekside Center to a 10-foot multipurpose trail extending westward. This trail will connect to the recently installed multipurpose trail leading to John Muir Parkway and, ultimately, to the planned Regional Intermodal Transit Center on the Hercules waterfront.

Completing this project will significantly enhance safety for cyclists and pedestrians, reduce traffic collisions involving these groups, and unify the east and west halves of the city. Importantly, the project will connect all local schools (elementary, middle, and high) and the Civic Center—encompassing the library, city hall, community swim, and teen centers, and the senior center—on the east side of town with the residential areas on the west side. Additionally, it will serve as a crucial link within the last half mile of the route to

the Hercules Transit Center and connect to the San Pablo Avenue Priority Development Area and the nearby Waterfront District Priority Development Area.

This project will bridge three Plan Bay Area 2050 Growth Geographies: the Waterfront and San Pablo Avenue Corridor PDAs to the west, and the Transit-Rich Area centered around the Hercules Transit Center to the east. The entire project lies within one mile of a PDA boundary.

The successful implementation of this project will improve pedestrian and cyclist safety through the Sycamore Avenue Corridor, enhancing connectivity across I-80 and the BNSF railroad overpass. With the right of way already secured, as shown in the attached Sidewalk Layout Plan, the new multipurpose pathways and bike lanes will foster a safer, more accessible network throughout Hercules, promoting increased viability for pedestrian and cyclist travel.

FISCAL IMPACT:

The estimated cost for the Sycamore Avenue Bicycle and Pedestrian East-West Connector Project is \$1.5M. This HSIP grant award of \$350,000 and the previous TDA grant of \$135,000 will contribute to the project's construction phase. City staff will continue to pursue additional grants to fund the project entirely.

ALTERNATIVES:

1. Approve the recommendation – This allows the City to accept the HSIP grant and continue to pursue additional funds to implement necessary safety improvements for the Sycamore Avenue Corridor.
2. Decline the HSIP funding – The City would forfeit the \$350,000 grant, and the project would require alternative funding sources or remain unfunded.

ATTACHMENTS:

1. Resolution
2. Project Award List for Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP) Cycle 12
3. HSIP Cycle 12 Grant Application
4. Letter Allocation of TDA Funds in FY 2024-25