



## **STAFF REPORT TO THE CITY COUNCIL**

**DATE:** February 27, 2024

**TO:** Mayor and Members of the City Council

**VIA:** Dante Hall, City Manager

**SUBMITTED BY:** Michael Roberts, Public Works Director/City Engineer

**SUBJECT:** Grant Funding Request for the Sycamore Avenue Bicycle & Pedestrian East-West Connector Project under I-80 and the BNSF Railroad

### **RECOMMENDED ACTION:**

The City Council adopt a resolution requesting the Metropolitan Transportation Commission allocate \$150K in Transportation Development Act Article 3 Pedestrian/Bicycle Project funding in FY 2024 for the Sycamore Avenue Bicycle & Pedestrian East-West Connector Project.

### **BACKGROUND:**

With the I-80 freeway dividing the City, it is difficult for bicyclists and pedestrians to travel between the two areas of the City. On each side of I-80, there are bike lanes and pathways. On the eastern side of the City, there are recreational trails for biking and walking along Refugio Valley Road, Refugio Creek and on certain sections of Sycamore Ave and Willow Avenue. On the western side of the City, there are bike lanes along San Pablo Avenue, Sycamore Avenue, John Muir Parkway, and the Bay Trail. However, these two networks of safe cycling and pedestrian paths are not connected to one another except through the Sycamore Avenue Corridor, which runs under I-80 and the BNSF railroad.

The present condition of the Sycamore Avenue Corridor is dangerous for both cyclists and pedestrians. Currently, pedestrians heading west on the north side of Sycamore

must climb up a steep dirt footpath and scramble down an even steeper loose gravel area to cross under the overcrossing on Sycamore Ave. Meanwhile, cyclists must take the outside vehicular lane, which has limited sight distance due to the bridge column and poor visibility because of the shadows from the overcrossing. The danger of this situation is demonstrated by the 17 accidents recorded along this small section of road over a recent 4-year period.

To address this problem, the Sycamore Avenue Bicycle & Pedestrian East-West Connector Project will install a 10-ft wide multipurpose pathway and Class II bicycle lanes in the Sycamore Avenue Corridor under the I-80 and the BNSF railroad overcrossing. On the south side of Sycamore Avenue, the new pathway and bike lanes will link the bike lanes on San Pablo Avenue to the bike lane on Sycamore Avenue at Refugio Valley Road and a multipurpose pathway in Refugio Park. On the north side, a new Class II bike lane will connect the Creekside Center to a 10 ft multipurpose trail that will be installed westerly, tying into the recently installed multipurpose trail leading to John Muir Parkway, and ultimately to the planned Regional Intermodal Transit Center on the Hercules waterfront. The result of this project will be an increase in cyclist and pedestrian safety, a reduction in pedestrian and cyclist-involved traffic collisions, and the linking of the two halves of the City.

Crucially, this project will link all the schools (elementary, middle, and high), Civic Center (which includes the library, city hall, and senior center), and the community swim and teen centers on the east side of town with the residential component on the west side of town. It is also particularly important as it is within the last half-mile on the route to the Hercules Transit Center.

## **ANALYSIS:**

The Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC) is soliciting applications for 2024/2025 Transportation Development Act (TDA) Article 3 funds for pedestrian and bicycle projects. Each City may submit one project for consideration and awards are made on a competitive basis.

The Sycamore Avenue Bicycle & Pedestrian East-West Connector Project is one of the City's most urgent bicycle/pedestrian projects and the best project in the City to compete for this grant funding.

The priority list will be presented at the Mayor's conference for approval in April, the Board of Supervisors in May, and transmitted to the MTC in June 2024 for a final decision.

**FISCAL IMPACT:**

This grant request is for \$150K, the maximum allowable. There is currently sufficient General Fund/Reserves to cover the estimated remaining \$1.6M to complete the project, but if the grant is awarded to the City, staff will seek other grants to fully fund the project.

**ATTACHMENTS:**

Attach 1 – Resolution

Attach 2 – Preliminary Plans