

CITY OF LOS ANGELES
INTER-DEPARTMENTAL MEMORANDUM

Date: August 31, 2022

To: The Honorable City Council
c/o City Clerk, Room 395
Attention: Honorable Mike Bonin, Chair, Transportation Committee

From: Connie Llanos, Interim General Manager 
Department of Transportation

Subject: **AUTHORITY TO SUBMIT FUNDING APPLICATIONS TO THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA
DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION TO COMPETE FOR THE 2022 HIGHWAY SAFETY
IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM (HSIP) CYCLE 11 CALL FOR PROJECTS**

SUMMARY

The Los Angeles Department of Transportation (LADOT) and the Bureau of Street Services (StreetsLA) request approval of the Highway Safety Improvement Project (HSIP) selection methodology, and authority to submit two grant applications to the State of California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) to compete for the State's HSIP Cycle 11 Call for Projects.

RECOMMENDATIONS

That the City Council, subject to the approval of the Mayor:

1. APPROVE LADOT and StreetsLA's project selection methodology for this HSIP Cycle, as described under the Discussion section of this report;
2. AUTHORIZE the General Manager of LADOT and/or the Director of StreetsLA to submit two grant applications to Caltrans on behalf of the City for all recommended projects for possible funding through this grant;
3. AUTHORIZE the General Manager of LADOT and/or the Director of StreetsLA to execute any necessary funding or contractual documents, subject to the approval of the City Attorney as to form and legality, for projects awarded funding through this grant opportunity; and
4. DIRECT the General Manager of LADOT and/or the Director of StreetsLA to identify any additional resource needs, including staff and/or overtime funding, for the implementation of the projects awarded funding through this grant opportunity, and to seek approval for any additional staffing needs from the City Council prior to accepting the funds.

BACKGROUND

On May 9, 2022, Caltrans announced the notice of funding availability for Cycle 11 of the HSIP and asked interested and eligible jurisdictions to submit funding applications by midnight on September 12, 2022.

The HSIP Cycle 11 guidelines include funding for projects in two categories: (a) projects with a Benefit to Cost Ratio (BCR) of over 3.5; and (b) funding set asides. HSIP Cycle 11, based on the SB-137 funding exchange, will provide an estimated \$210 million statewide. The Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) may also increase HSIP funding by 34%. Caltrans calculates the distribution of HSIP funds are as follows (not inclusive of additional IIJA funding):

1. The available funding in the BCR category is \$174 million statewide. Caltrans requires a minimum for a project to compete in the BCR category. There are no limits on the number of submitted applications in this category, but there is a \$10 million limit award per agency.
2. The available funding in the Set Aside category is \$36 million statewide with no BCR calculation requirement. There are five subcategories for the Set Aside projects, and each agency has a limit of submitting only one project per category. The subcategories and funding caps are as follows:
 - a. Guardrail upgrade (\$1,000,000 per agency)
 - b. Pedestrian Crossing Enhancement (\$250,000 per agency)
 - c. Edgeline Installation (\$250,000 per agency)
 - d. Bike Safety Improvements (\$250,000 per agency)
 - e. Tribes (\$250,000 per Tribe)

DISCUSSION

The goal of the HSIP program is to fund safety projects that can quickly improve safety conditions, as measured through a Benefit to Cost Ratio (BCR). Caltrans established a 3.5 minimum BCR in Cycle 8, but as cycles become more competitive the funding cut-off BCR for HSIP Cycle 8 through 10 projects has been 3.5, 7, and 12, respectively. To be eligible for HSIP funding, a local agency must define specific safety problems and the approved countermeasure(s) in the project must substantially address the conditions. All proposed projects must lead to an implementation phase and must be consistent with California's Strategic Highway Safety Plan (SHSP). Non-safety related items, such as landscaping, highway beautification, maintenance, etc. shall not exceed 10% of the project's construction cost.

Caltrans Selection Process

Caltrans' primary rating factor to select and award HSIP funding is the BCR. The BCR calculation includes the number and severity of collisions, a Collision Reduction Factor (CRF) attributed to each countermeasure, and the cost of the countermeasures. To maximize competitiveness and yield a higher BCR for HSIP funding, LADOT selects projects on corridors with the highest number of incidents, proposes appropriate countermeasures with the highest CRF, and combines multiple countermeasures into one application to improve safety effectiveness and improve project delivery efficiencies.

Caltrans added a new criteria in HSIP Cycle 11. To apply for funds, an agency must have a completed Local Road Safety Plan (LRSP) or an equivalent, such as Systemic Safety Analysis Report (SSAR) or Vision Zero Action Plan. Local agencies must update and validate their safety plans or equivalent at least every five years. When an agency submits an HSIP funding application, the agency must self-certify that an LRSP or its equivalent has been completed and provide a copy of the safety plan upon request.

Project Selection and Prioritization Methodologies

LADOT and StreetsLA recommend the following projects for application submittal:

- South Figueroa Priority Corridor Safety Improvements between Imperial Highway and 1st Street (funding request of up to \$10 million)
- Citywide Guardrail Upgrades (funding request of \$1 million)

In the City's Vision Zero Action Plan, LADOT identifies projects that promote safer corridors to achieve the goal of eliminating traffic deaths by 2025. The City originally identified 40 Priority Corridors in 2017, which included South Figueroa between Imperial Highway and Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard. The priority corridors selection process focused on areas that would achieve the greatest reduction in severe and fatal injuries, since safety improvements are the core focus of the funding source.

LADOT followed its Mobility Investment Program procedures to identify projects that meet HSIP funding eligibility requirements while furthering the City's Vision Zero goals. Using the MIP, LADOT identified the South Figueroa Street Corridor between Imperial Highway and Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard as a potential location for improvement as it best addressed both the safety and systemic elements needed for a successful application. LADOT and StreetsLA propose to install concrete curb extensions, Pedestrian Hybrid Beacons (PHB), and reflective traffic signal backplates on South Figueroa Street. LADOT incorporated these elements into a revised application from a previous HSIP cycle on South Figueroa Street which increased the BCR to 17, making the project more competitive for funding.

Caltrans also offers a \$1 million set-aside for agencies to install or upgrade guardrails to current Manual for Assessing Safety Hardware (MASH) guidelines. Caltrans does not require Benefit Cost Ratio (BCR) scores for applications under this category, nor does it require agencies to identify the exact locations of all proposed guardrails. Streets LA was awarded the set-aside funding for planned Citywide guardrail improvements for the previous HSIP cycles to improve safety for undivided median, high speed zone with no sufficient shoulder, and terrain area in the City. For the current cycle, StreetsLA will apply for the maximum \$1 million set-aside under the guardrail upgrades category to continue advancing Citywide goals, drawing upon the existing backlog of requests from the community and Council Offices.

Both proposed projects meet the criteria outlined in the Council-approved transportation grant project selection and prioritization process (Council File 14-0499-S5). Proposed projects meet core criteria of the grant eligibility checklist including policy consistency, project readiness, grant eligibility and competitiveness, and project implementation and resource needs assessment (Attachment A).

Local Match/Leveraging Requirements

The HSIP grant reimbursements can range from 90% to 100% of the project's total cost. The countermeasures proposed by LADOT and StreetsLA for the South Figueroa Priority Corridor Safety Improvements Project require a 10% local match contribution (90% reimbursable), while the Citywide Guardrail project is 100% reimbursable. Caltrans does not provide additional benefits for agencies that provide additional local match or leverage funds.

The City will provide the 10% local match for the South Figueroa Priority Corridor Safety Improvements Project from City staff salaries programmed through the annual budget of the Transportation Grant Fund annual work program in the Proposition C fund for LADOT and the Public Works Bureaus.

FISCAL IMPACT

There is no impact to the General Fund. There is a 10% local match requirement for the South Figueroa Priority Corridor Safety Improvements Project that will come from City staff salaries programmed through the annual budget of the Transportation Grant Fund annual work program in the Proposition C fund for LADOT and the Public Works Bureaus. There is also no immediate impact on Special Funds; however, future front funding appropriations by the Mayor and City Council will be necessary should the HSIP program award grant funds to deliver the projects (i.e., design, project management, construction, and construction inspection). For projects awarded funding, LADOT and StreetsLA will identify the recommended appropriate sources of funds from available revenues during the development of each year's budget, as well as multi-year schedules for transportation special funds.

CL:DM:cr

Attachments

[Attachment A](#): Grant eligibility checklist for reference purposes

CITYWIDE TRANSPORTATION PLANNING AND PROJECT GRANT APPLICATION STRATEGY						
Project Eligibility Checklist for Mobility Projects						
PROJECT NAME:						
	<i>Item/Category</i>	<i>Reference Link(s)</i>	<i>Yes</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>Action Item</i>	<i>Notes</i>
A	Policy Consistency					
1	Is the project compliant with the Mobility Plan 2035?	Mobility Plan 2035	•	•		
2	Is the project compliant with the Complete Streets Act?	Complete Streets Act	•	•		
3	Does the project adhere to the Mobility Plan 2035 settlement agreement (as applicable and if on a MP35 designated network)?	Mobility Plan 2035 Settlement Agreement	•	•		
4	Does the project adhere to the LADOT Lane Reconfiguration Guidelines (as applicable and if there is repurposing of travel lanes)?	Lane Reconfiguration Guidelines	•	•		
B	Project Readiness					
1	Is the project classified as Development in Phase 3-6 using the LADOT Planning & Development Guide?	Planning & Development Guide	•	•		
2	Is the Council Office consultation completed?		•	•		
3	Has the project met minimum community engagement requirements, per department guidelines?	Planning & Development Guide	•	•		
C	Grant Eligibility and Competitiveness					
1	Have you submitted a Concept Nomination Form and/or a Project Initiation Form at least 60 calendar days before a grant application deadline?	Concept Nomination Form Project Initiation Form	•	•		

2	Does the project meet grant eligibility criteria?		•	•		
3	Is the project ranked as 'competitive' for the subject funding source?		•	•		
D	Timeline Requirements					
1	Have you consulted with LADOT Advanced Planning staff to review proposed project concept, scope, and budget at least the following business days in advance of grant deadline? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Planning & Capital Projects*: 50 days ■ Grant on Unexpected Cycle**: 40 days 		•	•		
2	Have you submitted the grant eligibility checklist and project application for LADOT review at least the following business days in advance of grant deadline? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Planning & Capital Projects*: 35 days ■ Grant on Unexpected Cycle**: 25 days 		•	•		
E	Project Implementation Assessment					
1	Are adequate resources available to implement the project if grant funding is received? If 'NO' consider identifying staff support needs in staff reports OR reconsider applying.		•	•		
2	Is the project interdepartmental in nature? If 'YES', identify which departments and/or agencies would be affected in the notes section. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ LADOT ■ StreetsLA ■ BOE ■ Bureau of Street Lighting (BSL) 		•	•		
F	Project Benefits					
	Does the project have opportunities for co-benefits? If 'YES', identify the co-benefits in the notes section. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Stormwater ■ Shade ■ Cooling ■ Economic Development ■ Other 		•	•		