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City Manager's Report

February 14, 2023 City Council Meeting

Prepared by: Melissa McConnell, Associate Civil Engineer

Item #: 12.5

Subject: Adopt a Resolution:

1. Directing staff to proceed with de-programming funding through the Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP) and terminate the Spring Street and Pleasant Street Intersection Safety project (CIP #41926); and
2. Approving a \$19,000 budget liquidation of HSIP revenues for the said project.

Purpose: The purpose of this item to provide staff direction on their recommendation to de-program funding and terminate the Spring Street and Pleasant Street Intersection Safety Project.

Strategic Plan Strategy: Strategy 4 - Update and Maintain City-Owned Infrastructure

Background: The intersection of Spring Street and Pleasant Street was identified by staff, Placerville residents, and community stakeholders as an unsafe intersection for pedestrians. Currently there is an unmarked and unprotected pedestrian crossing that supports the parking lot near the Spring Street and Pleasant Street intersection and the Placerville Shakespeare Club is located nearby on the corner of the Spring Street/Pleasant Street intersection. Spring Street is a narrow two-lane, major collector roadway with a 30 mph speed limit, limited shoulders, and no sidewalk. Just west of Pleasant Street, there is a steep vertical grade on Spring Street along with sharp horizontal curves. Pedestrians cross Spring Street at this uncontrolled crossing and it is difficult for approaching vehicles to see the crossing pedestrians due to the steep vertical grade to the west and limited horizontal sight distance from both directions. Given these conditions, the City initiated CIP #41926 to begin identifying potential solutions to improve pedestrian safety at the intersection crossing.

In 2018, staff was successful in applying for and securing Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP) funding for the project during the HSIP Cycle 9 Call for Projects. The project was programmed, and then staff received federal authorization to begin Preliminary Engineering (PE) on March 15, 2019, with an approved federal cost of \$19,000 for PE. The original scope of the project was to install a new crosswalk on Spring Street, install a Rapid Rectangular Flashing Beacon (RRFB) system at the crosswalk, construct a small section of curb, gutter and sidewalk to make the crosswalk ADA-compliant, install pedestrian signage and pavement markings, and provide clearing and grubbing to improve visibility for vehicles. The crosswalk at Pleasant Street primarily was considered a safety concern due to the pedestrian traffic that crosses Spring Street between the private property of the Shakespeare Club and their privately owned parking lot, which is located on the opposite side of the street.

Discussion: Staff completed their initial engineering review this of project and evaluated potential safety measures. During the evaluation, it was determined that the proposed improvements would not adequately address the safety concerns and may not be the best use of public funds. Notably, two items have been identified as safety concerns.

First, the crosswalk has inadequate stopping sight distance. The posted speed limit on Spring Street is 30 mph, which would typically require a 35 mph design speed. According to engineering design standards required to be applied from the Highway Design Manual, a 35-mph design speed requires 250 feet of stopping sight distance. Up the hill to the west, vehicles approaching the proposed crosswalk cannot adequately see the crosswalk at a distance of 250 feet away and therefore do not have sufficient distance to react and safely stop their vehicle for a crossing pedestrian. Even with any clearing of vegetation, the roadside embankment itself blocks the view to the crosswalk.

Secondly, staff is concerned that even with the proposed signage and safety features there may still be a false sense of security resulting from the installation of a new crosswalk. The City does not believe that this is the best location for a crosswalk, and the City would not typically install a crosswalk under these types of conditions.

For these reasons, staff does not feel comfortable moving forward with the project due to safety concerns and is unable to justify the use of federal public funds solely for private benefit as it conflicts with the funding requirements and guidelines. Staff presented these items at the December 5, 2022 Shakespeare Club Board meeting with the honorable Board members present; and the Board understood these concerns and concurred with the City's decision to cancel the project. Staff recommends de-programming the HSIP funding and terminating CIP #41926.

Options:

1. Direct staff to proceed with de-programming HSIP funding and termination of the project, as recommended by staff.
2. Provide other direction to staff.

Environmental: Although a Notice of Exemption pursuant to CEQA Guideline 15301(c) on November 17, 2021, upon cancellation of the project, a Notice of Determination would be subsequently filed as well.

Cost: None.

Budget Impact: At the regularly schedule City Council meeting held on March 26, 2019, the City Council approved a budget appropriation in the amount of \$19,000 in HSIP funds for the said project. De-programming the funds through Caltrans and canceling the project would require the City to pay back any HSIP funds spent to date. At this time, \$405.09 has been invoiced to Caltrans and would need to be reimbursed. Staff recommends that the City Council approve a \$19,000 budget liquidation of the HSIP revenues for the said project.

Recommendation: Adopt a resolution:

1. Directing staff to proceed with de-programming funding through the Highway Safety Improvement Program and terminate the Spring Street and Pleasant Street Intersection Safety project (CIP #41926).
2. Approving a \$19,000 budget liquidation of HSIP revenues for the said project.



M. Cleve Morris, City Manager



Rebecca Neves, City Engineer

Attachments:

Attachment A: Resolution

Attachment B: Project Exhibit