We are a welcoming, active and business-friendly rural foothill community built on California's rich gold rush history.

City Manager's Report
September 24, 2024, City Council Meeting
Prepared by: Melissa McConnell, City Engineer
Item #: 12.5

Subject: Consider approving an additional 1.00 FTE Associate Civil Engineer position and approving a $60,000 budget appropriation in additional General Fund engineering fee revenue for the said position.

Recommendation: Adopt a Resolution:

1. Approving an additional 1.00 FTE Associate Civil Engineer position; and
2. Approving a $60,000 budget appropriation in additional General Fund engineering fee revenue for the said position.

Purpose: This item proposes to re-open the position to hire an Associate Civil Engineer.

Strategic Plan Strategy: Infrastructure – Update and Maintain City Owned Infrastructure.

Background: The Engineering Department provides professional engineering services to manage and identify the infrastructure needs, including maintenance, rehabilitation, and expansion, of the City's water distribution system, sewer collection and treatment systems, storm drainage system, and roadway network.

The Engineering Department is currently managing a backlog of 120 Capital Improvement Program (CIP) projects, providing plan review and permit processing support for developer-funded projects, and is responsible for processing and inspecting the City's encroachment permits for work in the City Right of Way. The Engineering Department is also responsible for interdepartmental support services including GIS and mapping services for the Public Works, Police, Fire, and Development Services Departments, engineering services for storm and wastewater permit compliance, engineering and traffic services and speed surveys to support enforcement by the Police Department, code enforcement services, regular community outreach and public engagement regarding the City's infrastructure, engineering support services on the Community Services Department facility projects, and many other tasks that are essential to operations of the City.

In the last few years, the City has been very successful in securing State and Federal grant funding for large transportation CIP projects, and as a result, workload has continued to increase exponentially. The Engineering Department currently has a back log of work that far exceeds the capacity of current staffing. Despite our best efforts, if something does not change it will come at the cost of accuracy, inability to meet project deadlines, or failure to deliver projects.

With State and Federal grant funding comes additional timelines and requirements for the timely use of funds. If an agency does not meet the Timely Use of Funds deadlines, they are at risk of losing the funds – and sometimes must pay back the expended funds. In order to meet these deadlines, the

Engineering Department must currently prioritize those projects above all other tasks, which is affecting our ability to provide the quality of level of service that is essential to successful operation of the City. Deferring or delaying projects, especially those related to the maintenance of the road, water, and sewer system infrastructure, is of particular concern due to potential impacts on public safety and the environment.

In addition to CIP projects, Engineering staff is currently involved in four large development projects, in which the Engineering Department is responsible for providing plan reviews, project approvals, permit processing, and inspections during construction. Because of the current workload, some of the development projects have suffered delays in plan review and processing permits.

The Engineering Department is currently comprised of 1.0 FTE City Engineer, 1.0 FTE Senior Civil Engineer, 1.0 FTE Assistant Engineer, 1.0 FTE Engineering Specialist, and 0.5 FTE Administrative Assistant (shared with the Public Works Department). In Fiscal Year 2023/2024, the Engineering Department had a second Senior Civil Engineer position, which became vacant during the recruitment of the City Engineer position. As a stop gap measure to help balance the Fiscal Year 2024/2025 General Fund Budget, the vacant Senior Civil Engineer position was abolished.

Discussion: Establishment of an additional full-time Associate Civil Engineer position would assist staff in managing the large CIP projects funded by State and Federal grants, managing smaller projects funded by local funds (Measures H and L funds), and providing plan reviews for developer funded projects.

In the next two years, the Engineering Department has prioritized nine CIP projects that will begin construction from now until the summer of 2026:

1. Spring 2025: Solar Photovoltaic (PV) for the Wastewater Treatment Plant (CIP #42246) – Estimated Construction Cost of $3,970,000 (State grant)
2. Spring 2025: Smith Flat Road Storm Drain and Paving Project (CIP #42213) – Estimated Construction Cost of $3,000,000 (Local funds)
3. Summer 2025: Thompson Way/Sherman Street/Sheridan Street Project (first phase) (CIP #42206, 42208, 42324) – Estimated Construction Cost of $500,000 (Local funds)
4. Summer 2025: Placerville Drive Pedestrian Connectivity Project (CIP #42237) – Estimated Construction Cost of $1,800,000 (Federal grant)
5. Summer 2025: Canal Street Phase 1A-Combellack Road Sidewalk (CIP #42403) – Estimated Construction Cost of $900,000 (Federal grant)
6. Spring 2026: Placerville Drive Bridge Replacement (CIP #41410) – Estimated Construction Cost of $14,650,000 (Federal grant)
7. Spring 2026: Placerville Drive Bicycle and Pedestrian Facilities – Phase 1 (CIP #41816) – Estimated Construction Cost of $15,900,000 (Federal grant)
8. Summer 2026: Thompson Way/Sherman Street/Sheridan Street Project (second phase) (CIP #42206, 42208, 42324) – Estimated Construction Cost of $500,000 (Local funds)
9. Summer 2026: Mallard Lane Maintenance (CIP #42325) – Estimated Construction Cost of $550,000 (Local funds)

Total Cost of Construction Projects = $41,770,000

Of these projects, most notably is the Placerville Drive Bicycle and Pedestrian Facilities – Phase 1 Project which has Active Transportation Program (ATP) funding for Construction. ATP is one of the most stringent programs in terms of Timely Use of Funds requirements and this project must be delivered in the required timeframe. Staff intends to deliver the Placerville Drive Bridge Replacement concurrently with the Bicycle and Pedestrian Facilities project since the bridge project sits within the limits of the sidewalk project and it would be most efficient to build the improvements together. As currently programmed, the Bicycle and Pedestrian Facilities project must begin construction in 2026, and so completing both projects in a timely manner is the number one priority for the Engineering Department.

Not included in the list above are other larger Federal and State funded transportation projects that are currently in the environmental and design phase with construction planned in the next four to six years. The Canal Street Bicycle and Pedestrian Improvement Projects (Phase 1 and Phase 2) are planned for construction in 2028, and both projects combined are estimated to cost more than $15,000,000. The US 50 Trip to Green project is kicking off this year and is also slated for construction in 2029, with an estimated construction cost of approximately $18,000,000. The Western Placerville Interchanges Phase 2.3 – the Westbound Off-Ramp at Ray Lawyer Drive – will be kicking off the environmental phase in 2025 with construction planned for 2030.

Finally, the City anticipates approval of our Last Mile Broadband Grant at the end of this month. Once that grant is approved and a contract negotiated, the City has 18 months to complete the project (this timeline could change during the contract negotiations). Although the plan is to contract as much of this work as possible, it will still require some coordination through Engineering. The total grant amount for this project is $20,198,943.

While the two Placerville Drive projects are in construction, it will require a significant amount of time from Engineering staff to ensure the proper management of a construction contract of this magnitude. For reference, this contract, estimated at more than $30,000,000, will be three times greater than the Western Placerville Interchanges Phase 2 Project – which is currently the largest transportation project ever delivered by the City of Placerville. Even with the help of a consultant Construction Management team, Engineering staff must still be involved in the day-to-day decision-making during construction. Staff must make the final approvals on field directives and construction change orders, provide oversight to ensure compliance with the Federal/State funding, and ensure that all City processes are followed.

During the two years of Placerville Drive construction, we will still need to have staff dedicated to ensuring the timely delivery of the other large Federally and State funded transportation projects in design, as well as moving forward the locally funded maintenance projects. Right now, with only two licensed Civil Engineers, we are concerned that if we can only prioritize these large transportation projects, the schedule of the locally funded maintenance projects will slip.

Staff is recommending the establishment of a second 1.00 FTE Associate Civil Engineer position. The salary schedule for the Associate Civil Engineer position is as follows:

	Step 1	Step 2	Step 3	Step 4	Step 5
Annually	$96,264.00	$101,076.00	$106,128.00	$111,432.00	$117,000.00
Monthly	$8,022.00	$8,423.00	$8,844.00	$9,286.00	$9,750.00
Biweekly	$3,702.46	$3,887.54	$4,081.85	$4,285.85	$4,500.00
Hourly	$46.28	$48.60	$51.02	$53.57	$56.25

Options:
1. Approve the recommendations of staff, or
2. Direct staff to take other actions.

Environmental: Not applicable.

Cost: The projected cost of the Associate Civil Engineer position for the remainder of Fiscal Year 2024/2025 net of CIP cost recovery is $19,537. The projected annual cost of the Associate Civil Engineer position net of CIP cost recovery is $33,914.

Budget Impact: The Associate Civil Engineer position was not included in the adopted Fiscal Year 2024/2025 General Fund Budget. Staff currently projects the City will generate $60,000 in additional General Fund engineering fee revenues in Fiscal Year 2024/2025 which will offset the $19,537 projected cost of the Associate Civil Engineer position for the remainder of Fiscal Year 2024/2025.

M. Cleve Morris, City Manager

Melissa McConnell, City Engineer

Attachments:
Attachment A: Resolution