

**CITY OF LOS ANGELES  
INTER-DEPARTMENTAL CORRESPONDENCE**

Date: June 18, 2015

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

From: Seleta Reynolds, General Manager  
Department of Transportation

Subject: **2015 HIGHWAY SAFETY IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM (HSIP) CYCLE 7 CALL FOR PROJECTS**

**SUMMARY**

The Los Angeles Department of Transportation (LADOT) is requesting authority to submit grant applications to the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) to compete in the State's 2015 Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP) Cycle 7 Call for Projects grant award process, as well as authority to relinquish funds for three previously funded HSIP Cycle 5 projects. LADOT recommends clearing out the existing backlog of unfunded safety-related improvements citywide. Additional projects are being recommended based solely on safety and incident data and meeting Caltrans' selection criteria for HSIP.

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

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

APPROVE the final list of projects (Attachment A) as the City's priorities for funding for the HSIP Cycle 7; and

AUTHORIZE the general manager of LADOT, on behalf of the City to submit grant applications for all recommended projects to Caltrans for possible funding; and

AUTHORIZE the general manager of LADOT, or director or general manager of the lead city department to execute any necessary funding and contractual documents, subject to the approval as to form and legality, for grants to the City approved in the HSIP Cycle 7; and

DIRECT the general manager of LADOT or director or general manager of the lead city department for each project to submit to LADOT, for inclusion in the Transportation Grant Fund Report, any resource needs, (including, but not limited front-funding, staff, and overtime funding) for the implementation of projects funded through the HSIP Cycle 7; and

AUTHORIZE the general manager of LADOT to relinquish previously awarded HSIP Cycle 5 funds (Attachment B); and

SUPPORT the efforts of the City of Carson for an HSIP application seeking funds for a traffic signal modification at the intersection of Figueroa Street and 190<sup>th</sup> Street, and provide the City of Los Angeles'

25% fair share of the local match, for an amount not to exceed \$25,000.

## **DISCUSSION**

### Opportunity

An estimated \$150 million in new funding is expected to be available for qualified highway safety improvement projects in the State of California through the HSIP Cycle 7 Call for Projects. The City of Los Angeles should submit the most competitive applications to secure the most funding possible.

### Deadline

Caltrans requires applications to be submitted by Friday, July 31, 2015. LADOT is seeking approval as soon as possible so that LADOT and other city departments can complete all required submittal materials to Caltrans before the deadline.

### Recommended Projects

The recommended projects (Attachment A) are divided into five packages. These packages of various locations were selected based on best solutions and countermeasures to remedy their particular pedestrian, bicycle and/or vehicular safety issues.

Package 1 – Installation of Rectangular Rapid Flashing Beacons (RRFB) at locations with uncontrolled crosswalks

Package 2 – Modification of traffic signal's operation, by adding left or right turn phasing

Package 3 – Installation of new traffic signals

Package 4 – Crenshaw Boulevard Traffic and Street Improvements – Florence Avenue to 79<sup>th</sup> Street

Package 5 - La Tuna Canyon Boulevard Safety Improvements between Lowell Avenue and Sunland Avenue

These recommendations have been made by a technical committee of staff from LADOT and reflect the consensus view of the committee after conducting a technical assessment of candidate projects, with an overview of the HSIP Cycle 7 application requirements. Additionally, the recommended projects are a result of LADOT's systematic approach to clear out the existing backlog of unfunded safety-related improvements citywide. Given that this grant opportunity is 100% data driven, the projects being recommended in this report satisfy Caltrans' criteria of having strong benefit to cost ratios, and as such would be the most competitive. The committee also considered adopted city policies as well as Caltrans' evaluation criteria when considering candidate projects. Caltrans has already announced that the minimum requirement for a project to be considered is a project with a Benefit to Cost (B/C) ratio of 5 or greater. The candidate projects determined to be most competitive under Caltrans' evaluation criteria and are recommended for submittal to Caltrans for the HSIP Cycle 7 grant opportunity.

The City is also supporting the City of Carson's funding application to provide left turn phasing at the intersection of 190<sup>th</sup> Street and Figueroa Street. The City of Los Angeles is responsible for 25% of the operation and maintenance of this intersection and as such, is proposing to contribute 25% of the required local match, for an amount not to exceed \$25,000.

Relinquishment of funds for three previously funded HSIP Cycle 5 projects

In March of 2011, the City Council (CF No. 10-2385-52) approved the 2010 Bicycle Plan for the implementation of over 1,680 miles of bikeways throughout the City, and the Five-Year Implementation Strategy that called for a subset of 200 miles of the planned 1,680 miles of bikeways. Hence, the LADOT Bicycle Program staff, with the authority of the City Council (CF No. 12-0909), submitted three application packages consisting of bike lane/road diet projects in response to the State's HSIP Cycle 5 Call for Projects.

Since LADOT was notified that Caltrans was recommending funding these three projects, City staff and a consultant team prepared a preliminary traffic analysis of these proposed facilities, and conducted preliminary outreach with the public in many of the affected areas for these bike lane corridors. Due to the required traffic lane removal necessary for implementation of the road diet/bike lanes, each of the corridors in the three packages has at least some impact to travel for the motoring public.

The changes in some of the affected City Council seats after the most recent elections necessitated new engagement to sustain support within the local communities. However, LADOT was unable to conduct the extensive outreach needed for each of the planned/funded corridors, due to the loss of four staff members in the Bicycle Program during 2014, as a result of resignation, retirement, or reassignment.

With the consideration of all of these factors and looming funding deadlines, staff reached out to Caltrans staff, local and State Headquarters, to determine if it was possible to obtain funding extensions or to modify the scope of work and locations for the projects. In each avenue that was investigated and proposed, the guidelines of the program, as interpreted by Caltrans staff, would not allow for any of the options proposed by LADOT staff.

At this time, LADOT has determined that it is no longer possible to deliver these road diet/bike lane projects by the funding deadlines required by the Federal funding program, without incurring a punitive "red flag" status from Caltrans. A "red flag" status would render all City agencies ineligible to apply for any HSIP funds in future cycles, including the current Cycle 7 opportunity. LADOT recommends that the current HSIP funding dedicated to the implementation of these projects be relinquished at this time. Staff at Caltrans' headquarters supports this recommendation and has noted that applying for funding from this source for these same projects in the future would not be negatively impacted by the relinquishment of these funds at this time. Staff also recommends continuing outreach and design efforts for the corridors and as the public will support, either implement the project along selected corridors, or use future HSIP funding opportunities to seek funding.

Hence, LADOT will continue to work with the affected City Council offices and communities to determine the appropriate safety countermeasures and bikeways configuration for these Bike Plan streets. If the project scope only requires low-cost roadway striping changes (i.e., road diet and bike

lanes), we will recommend to City Council to approve local funds to implement the projects expeditiously. Otherwise, if the project scope requires higher-cost hardscape modifications, we will re-apply for the State/Federal funds to implement the projects.

### Alternatives

The City Council may modify the recommended project list by motion. This could include adding, deleting, and/or re-prioritizing projects. While re-prioritizing projects may better reflect policy makers' priorities, it will also reduce the likelihood that the City will secure maximum funding. Adding projects is not recommended because City staff will have insufficient time to evaluate those projects or to prepare a quality application. The final project list already included the advice and consultation of City Council offices. Finally, the City Council could reject the recommended project list, which would provide insufficient time for City staff to develop another list, secure City Council approval, and submit before Caltrans' deadline.

### **FISCAL IMPACT**

There will be no impact to the City's general fund. HSIP program reimburses 90% of the project cost and requires a local contribution of 10% as a local match. Local Proposition C funds are expected to be used to provide matching and front funds for projects awarded through HSIP grant funding. Per the HSIP Cycle 7 guidelines, the City can receive a maximum of \$10 million. As such, the maximum local match contribution needed would not exceed \$1 million and would be needed over the next 3 to 4 fiscal years. Future appropriations by the Mayor and City Council will be required to finalize approved grant memoranda of understanding and to deliver the projects (i.e. design, project management, construction, and inspection).

### Brief History

The Safe, Accountable, Flexible, and Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU), which was signed into the law on August 10, 2005, established HSIP as a core Federal-aid program. The Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century Act (MAP-21) went into effect on October 1, 2012 and continued the HSIP as a core Federal-aid program. Caltrans allocates HSIP funds to local agencies in California for infrastructure-related safety improvements and traffic calming measures on public roads, public surface transportation facilities and public-owned bicycle or pedestrian pathways or trails. These funds assist local agencies in improving safety by eliminating and reducing the number and severity of traffic collisions at critical and high concentration locations. Because of the time sensitivity in safety-related issues, it is the intent of the HSIP that federal funds be expended on projects that can be designed and constructed expeditiously. Projects should not require the acquisition of significant rights-of-way, nor should they require extensive environmental review and mitigation.

### Schedule

On April 27, 2015, Caltrans announced the availability of the HSIP funds and published the HSIP guidelines and the application preparation process on their website; and has started the solicitation of

projects to compete for the HSIP Cycle 7 funds. The application due date to Caltrans District 7 is July 31, 2015.

#### Available Revenue/Distribution

This year, the amount of federal-aid highway safety funds available is expected to be \$150 million for the entire state. There are no limits on number of applications per agency, and a maximum HSIP funds per application is also \$10 million. A maximum amount awarded to a single agency is also \$10 million and a maximum reimbursement ratio is 90%.

#### Fund Availability

Awarded funds are expected to become available by the end of Fiscal Year 2015-16.

#### Caltrans Evaluation Criteria

Caltrans has established a minimum for benefit to cost ratio (B/C) of 5 or better for this cycle of HSIP.

#### City Evaluation approach

After Caltrans' announcement of HSIP Cycle 7 funds, a technical evaluation team, comprised of staff from LADOT was formed to develop strategies to compete for this grant. Due to the technical nature of the HSIP grant applications, and the complexity in calculating the project value (B/C) and its competitiveness, the evaluation team was limited to the technical staff from LADOT's District Operations, Active Transportation and Complete Streets divisions. The review staff involved has participated in the past HSIP, Metro Call for Projects and Active Transportation Program (ATP) project development and selection process, and have extensive experience and expertise in selecting competitive projects for grant solicitation purposes.

On May 26, 2015, LADOT sent out a citywide email sharing this information with the Mayor's Office and all council offices, advising them of the funding opportunity and requested that any new project proposals be coordinated through their related LADOT District Operation Office.

The technical team reviewed a number of intersections and corridors throughout the City that had been identified from prior constituent and/or council office request, as well as an analysis of corridors on the high injury network. The locations were reviewed for their merit and the feasibility to be successful in capturing the grant and in accordance with the published scoring methodology posted by Caltrans. Caltrans' primary rating factor is the benefit to cost ratio (B/C), which takes into consideration the number and severity of collisions that the countermeasures may reduce, the crash reduction capabilities of the selected countermeasures, and the cost of the countermeasures. Caltrans' rating process assigns the most benefit to the crashes involving fatalities, and then severe injuries. In Cycle 7, Caltrans has announced that project with a B/C of 5 or greater will be considered. After several meetings and discussions, the evaluation team recommended the attached list of potential projects for submission to Caltrans to compete for the HSIP grants.

This expedited project selection strategy has also been implemented due to lack of adequate time for creating a Citywide Interdepartmental Task Force Committee to establish policies for competing for HSIP funds; and for establishing citywide project selection and prioritization process. This situation is also exacerbated from the lack of availability of departmental staff and resources to investigate and develop new projects and prepare applications at LADOT and other supporting departments.

After reviewing over 80 project locations and conducting a thorough evaluation and analysis of countermeasures, 4 packages of projects including over 45 locations were found to be competitive and have met the HSIP Cycle 7 criteria. This report is seeking authority to prepare grant application for these projects.

SJR:cr

**Attachments**

- c: Borja Leon, Office of the Mayor
- Marcel Porras, Office of the Mayor
- Nat Gale, Office of the Mayor
- Paul Backstrom, Council District 11
- Maria Sauza-Rountree, CLA
- Ida Rubio, CAO

**Attachement A**

<b>Ref #</b>	<b>City's proposed projects for 2015 Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP) Cycle 7 Call for Projects</b>	<b>Council Districts</b>	<b>Dept.</b>	<b>Grant Request</b>	<b>Local match</b>	<b>Total Cost</b>
1	Package 1 – Installation of Rectangular Rapid Flashing Beacons (RRFB) with uncontrolled crosswalks	1, 4, 5, 8, 9, 10,11, 13, 14, 15	DOT	\$ 2,610,000	\$ 290,000	\$ 2,900,000
2	Package 2 – Modification of traffic signal's operation, by adding left or right turn phasing	2, 4, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 15	DOT	\$ 3,150,000	\$ 350,000	\$ 3,500,000
3	Package 3 – Installation of new traffic signals	2, 3, 5, 6, 7, 8, 11, 12, 15	DOT	\$ 3,960,000	\$ 440,000	\$ 4,400,000
4	Package 4 – Crenshaw Boulevard Traffic and Street Improvements – Florence Avenue to 79 <sup>th</sup> Street	8	BSS	\$ 2,700,000	\$ 300,000	\$ 3,000,000
5	Package 5 - La Tuna Canyon Blvd Safety Improvements between Lowell and Sunland	7	DOT	\$ 270,000	\$ 30,000	\$ 300,000
	<b>Total</b>			<b>\$ 12,690,000</b>	<b>\$ 1,410,000</b>	<b>\$14,100,000</b>

**Attachment B**

<b>Project Title / Location</b>	<b>Project Description</b>	<b>Council District</b>	<b>Grant Amount</b>	<b>Local Match</b>	<b>Total</b>
Eagle Rock Blvd. between Westdale Dr. and Colorado Blvd.; Central Ave. between 1st St. and Century Blvd.; Vermont Ave. between 79th St. and 88th St.; Vermont Ave. between SR 105 and 120th St.; Anaheim St. between "I" St. and Henry Ford Ave.	Install bike lanes and a "road diet" (reduce travel lanes from 4 to 3 and add a two-way left-turn lane)	8, 9, 14, 15	\$655,000	\$73,000	\$ 728,000
Woodman Ave. between Roscoe Blvd. and Sherman Way; Plummer St. between Balboa Blvd. and Woodman Ave.; Roscoe Blvd. between Topanga Canyon Blvd. and Whitsett Ave. (Arleta Ave.)	Install bike lanes, "road diet" (reduce travel lanes from 4 to 3 and add a two-way left-turn lane)	3, 6, 7, 12	\$900,000	\$153,000	\$1,053,000
Eight (8) road sections (Vine St. from Yucca to Melrose; Hollywood Blvd. from La Brea-Virgil; 6th St. from Fairfax to La Brea; San Vicente Blvd. from Wilshire to Venice; Hoover St. from Venice to 7th; Palms Blvd. from McLaughlin to National; Westwood Blvd. from LeConte to Wellworth; and Motor Ave. from National to Washington)	Install bike lanes and a "road diet" (reduce travel lanes from 4 to 3 and add a two-way left-turn lane)	1, 4, 5, 13	\$725,300	\$80,700	\$ 806,000
<b>Totals</b>			<b>\$2,280,300</b>	<b>\$306,700</b>	<b>\$2,587,000</b>