



City Council Staff Report

From: City Manager

Report Type: CONSENT CALENDAR

Lead Department: Transportation

Meeting Date: December 16, 2024

Report #:2411-3763

TITLE

Approve a Grant Agreement with the Federal Highway Administration for the South Palo Alto Bikeways Demonstration Project for the receipt of \$888,000 in Federal Funds and Requiring \$222,000 in City Matching Funds over Four Years; CEQA status – not a project.

RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that Council approve and authorize the City Manager or their designee to execute a funding agreement (attached) with the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) for the South Palo Alto Bikeways Demonstration Project. The agreement will provide up to \$888,000 in funding, and the City will be required to match up to \$222,000 or 20% of the actual project cost over four years.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This item approves and authorizes the City Manager to execute a grant agreement (Attachment A) to receive \$888,000 in funding from the Federal Highway Administration for the South Palo Alto Bikeways Demonstration Project. This project will use quick-build treatments to improve bikeways and crossings on East Meadow Drive (between Alma Street and Fabian Way) and Fabian Way (between East Meadow Drive and East Charleston Road). The City is responsible for a 20% matching portion of the total project cost (\$222,000) that will be funded from the Safe Routes to School Capital Improvement Fund (PL-00026).

The Safe Streets and Roads for All (SS4A) Planning and Demonstration Grant will also fund educational activities with community members and data collection/analysis to evaluate the project. The SS4A grant also includes funds to conduct the first update of Palo Alto's Safety Action Plan.

BACKGROUND

The [Bipartisan Infrastructure Law](#)¹ (BIL) established the new SS4A discretionary program with \$5 billion in appropriated funds over 5 years. The SS4A program funds regional, local, and Tribal initiatives through grants to prevent roadway deaths and serious injuries. The SS4A program supports the U.S. Department of Transportation's [National Roadway Safety Strategy](#)² and the goal of zero roadway deaths.

The SS4A program provides funding for two types of grants:

- **Planning and Demonstration Grants** provide Federal funds to develop, complete, or supplement a comprehensive safety action plan. Having an Action Plan in place is the foundation of the SS4A grant program. The goal of an Action Plan is to develop a holistic, well-defined strategy to prevent roadway fatalities and serious injuries in a locality, Tribe, or region. The City was eligible for the SS4A Planning & Demonstration Grant because of our draft Safety Action Plan.
- **Implementation Grants** provide Federal funds to implement projects and strategies identified in an Action Plan to address a roadway safety problem. Projects and strategies may be infrastructure, behavioral, and/ or operational activities. Applicants must have a qualifying Action Plan that meets the eligibility requirements to apply for Implementation Grants.

The Federal Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO)³ was released in early 2024, making available \$1.261 billion for distribution. The City applied for a grant on April 4, 2024, for the South Palo Alto Bikeways Demonstration project and was notified of grant award on May 20, 2024.

ANALYSIS

The South Palo Alto Bikeways Demonstration Project supports the Sustainability and Climate Action Plan, as improving safety for vulnerable road users is key to reducing vehicle miles traveled (VMT) and increasing sustainable travel mode shares.

This grant-funded project enables the City to improve bike lanes and crossings on East Meadow Drive and Fabian Way. The City will pilot buffered and separated bike lanes and improved crossings on the two corridors. Per the [Planning and Demonstration grant's requirements](#),⁴ demonstration projects must use temporary infrastructure. This project will feature separated bike lanes using parked vehicles or flex posts as a barrier, buffered bike lanes, green bike lanes,

¹ Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act, 2021; <https://www.congress.gov/bill/117th-congress/house-bill/3684/text#:~:text=SEC.%2024112.%20%3C%3E%20%20SAFE,135%20STAT.%20818%5D%5D>

² National Roadway Safety Strategy, U.S. Department of Transportation; <https://www.transportation.gov/NRSS>

³ Safe Streets for All Notice of Funding Opportunity, 2024; <https://www.transportation.gov/grants/ss4a/fy24-nofo>

⁴ Safe Streets for All, Planning and Demonstration Activities; <https://www.transportation.gov/grants/ss4a/planning-and-demonstration-activities#demonstration-activity-requirements>

dashed green bike lanes at intersections, curb extensions using plastic delineators, bike boxes, and high visibility enhancements to existing crosswalks.

The demonstration will last two years. City staff will evaluate the project by using pedestrian, bicycle, and vehicle counts, crash data, a survey for the public, and feedback from standing committees and City Council. Upon the completion of the demonstration, the City will update its Safety Action Plan. This will involve reassessing project prioritization, revisiting project descriptions, and updating the content to reflect the latest findings and recommendations.

Upon execution of the grant agreement (Attachment A), the City will prepare and publish a Request for Proposal (RFP) document to hire a transportation planning firm to develop the design and conduct community engagement. The City will also prepare a RFP for a construction firm to construct and remove, if necessary, the infrastructure. Staff will return to the Council for approval of both vendor contracts. Staff target construction before students return to school in Fall 2025. SS4A funds must be spent within five years of grant execution, though the City expects to complete the project in less than four years from grant agreement execution.

The City will submit quarterly financial reports and performance progress reports to the U.S. Department of Transportation. The City will also submit a final performance progress report no later than 120 days after the end of the period of performance.

Table 1. Schedule of Grant Activities

Month and Year	Phase	Activities
Dec 2024	Before Pilot	Begin community notifications. Notify standing committees and Council.
Jan 2025	Before Pilot	Procure design contractor and construction contractor.
Apr 2025	Before Pilot	Collect vehicle, bicycle, & pedestrian counts.
July 2025	Construction Start Begin Pilot Period	Install quick-build pilot striping project.
Oct 2025 & Feb 2026	Pilot Period: Outreach/Education	Provide lessons & bike tours to school communities on how to navigate new infrastructure. Survey participating families.
Apr & Sep 2026 Apr & Sep 2027	Pilot Period: Data Collection	Collect vehicle, bicycle, & pedestrian counts and take photos. Collect near-miss data and survey users via QR codes on signage
Dec 2027-Jan 2028	Pilot End: Evaluation	Collect & analyze collision data. Analyze count, user survey, & near-miss data.
Feb-Mar 2028	Update Safety Action Plan	Reassess project prioritization, revisit project descriptions, & update project appendix/chapter content.
Apr-Jun 2028	Approve Safety Action Plan	Review & approval by standing committees & the City Council. Remove pilot infrastructure if unsuccessful.

FISCAL/RESOURCE IMPACT

The FY 2025 Adopted Capital Improvement Plan Safe Routes to School Project (PL-00026) has sufficient funding for the required city contribution of \$222,000 with no additional budgetary action required. The additional revenue and expense adjustments will be incorporated as a part of the FY 2025 Mid-Year Budget Review.

STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

To promote the proper use of the new striping infrastructure and to enhance community awareness and safety, the City will organize one educational bike ride with the public and two bike rides for local school communities. City staff will hire a [League Certified Instructor](#)⁵ to host these bike rides.

To evaluate the demonstration project, City staff will conduct a survey to collect insight from users on their experience, safety perceptions, and satisfaction. A QR code to this survey will be posted along East Meadow Drive and Fabian Way and will be distributed through the City's online channels. City staff will also consult the Planning and Transportation Commission, the Pedestrian and Bicycle Advisory Committee, the City/ School Traffic Safety Committee, and the City Council. City staff will also request feedback from these groups when updating the Safety Action Plan. The City will also conduct a focus group with parents/guardians from JLS Middle School and Fairmeadow Elementary School.

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

Council action on this item is not a project as defined by CEQA because the grant agreement with the Federal Highway Administration is a government funding mechanism or fiscal activity which does not involve any commitment to any specific project which may result in a potentially significant physical impact on the environment. CEQA Guidelines section 15378(b)(4). To the extent the Demonstration Project itself requires CEQA and/or NEPA review, that work will be carried out by the City and its consultant.

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment A: Grant Agreement Under the Fiscal Year 2024 Safe Streets And Roads For All Grant Program

APPROVED BY:

Philip Kamhi, Chief Transportation Official

⁵ Why Become a Cycling Educator?, The League of American Bicyclists; <https://bikeleague.org/ridesmart/become-instructor/>