



Staff Report

City Council

Item No. 6.D

Meeting Date: April 23, 2025

From: John A. Corella, Director of Public Works

Title: 2025 SB 821 Bicycle and Pedestrian Facilities Program Funding Application

RECOMMENDATION:

To authorize the submittal of a 2025 SB 821, Bicycle and Pedestrian Facilities Program funding application for one (1) potential bike lane improvement project; and authorize the City Engineer to sign all applications/letters for the funding program.

BACKGROUND:

In 2018, CA Senate Bill 821 (SB 821) was passed by the state legislature. This bill did not directly impose a specific sales tax rate. Instead, it was related to the Transportation Development Act (TDA) and funded by a ¼ cent of the general sales tax collected statewide. Specifically, SB 821, known as the Bicycle and Pedestrian Facilities Program, is funded through the Local Transportation Fund (LTF) within the TDA. Each year, 2% of the LTF revenue is allocated to SB 821 for bicycle and pedestrian facility projects.

In Riverside County, SB 821 is a discretionary program administered by the Riverside County Transportation Commission (RCTC) to fund local bicycle and pedestrian projects. On every odd-numbered year, the Commission conducts a competitive call for projects in which all local agencies within the County can submit applications. Eligible projects include construction of bicycle lanes, sidewalks, and Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) curb ramps, and the development of bicycle and pedestrian master plans.

The programming capacity for this cycle is \$7,279,863. As such, the maximum funding request per application is \$727,986 and the maximum funding for each jurisdiction is \$1,455,973.

This year's call for projects was released on February 3, 2025, and will remain open until April 24, 2025.

The program guidelines are summarized as follows:

- 36 months to complete the project.
 - Limit three (3) applications per city. For Riverside County, limit two (2) applications
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per Supervisorial District.

- Maximum request for each application is 10 percent of the current call for projects programming capacity.
- Total award to one jurisdiction is limited to 20 percent of the current call for projects programming capacity
- Awarded projects can start on July 1, 2025
- Use safety questions and construction readiness to settle tiebreakers.

The evaluation criteria consist of:

- Destinations Served – 14 points max, 2 points for each destination served.
- Safety - 15 points max, safety enhancement features included in the project.
- Multi-Modal Access – 6 points max, added “bicycle lanes, sidewalks, and crosswalks” as eligible multi-modal elements for consideration.
- Matching Funds – 10 points max, 1 point for each five percent of match provided by the local agency.
- Population Equity – 5 points max, calculated by RCTC Staff, Cathedral City receives 0 points in this evaluation criteria.

The city has experienced recent success with this grant program. In 2019, the city completed SB 821 Gerald Ford Drive Bike Lanes Striping project with 80% participatory funding from the program. In 2021, the city was awarded SB 821 program funds to leverage 80% of the funding for the Cathedral Canyon Drive Sidewalk Gap Closures project, which contributed to the Cathedral Canyon Drive Sidewalks and Multiuse Trail project, one of three (3) projects within the City/CVAG Active Transportation Program Cycle 5. Most recently, in 2023, the city was awarded SB 821 program funds for the Perez Road Class IV Separated Bikeway and the Whispering Palms Trail Class III Bike Route, with 75% and 65% participatory funding from the program, respectively. These last two projects are under design and are scheduled to be completed before the summer of 2026.

DISCUSSION:

For this 2025 SB 821 call for projects, city staff has identified improvements based on the prioritized strategies from the Cathedral City Active Transportation Plan (ATP) funded by the Southern California Association of Governments’ (SCAG) Sustainability Program to assist Southern California cities in developing tangible strategies to improve mobility conditions for all people who walk, bike, and utilize public transportation. The ATP provides the framework to support safe connections between key destinations within the city, including schools, transit facilities, employment centers, parks, residential neighborhoods, and more.

City staff have identified opportunities to improve roadway safety for bicyclists and pedestrians throughout Cathedral City. In alignment with the Cathedral City ATP and its priority phasing for bicycle and pedestrian projects, staff have selected a Class III Bike Route on Avenida Maravilla for submission under the FY 2025 SB 821 funding program.

The proposed improvements on Avenida Maravilla extend from the north end of Avenida Maravilla to Ramon Road. This project will enhance non-motorized mobility and connectivity in the city by providing clearly marked bicycle routes, promoting safer shared road use, and encouraging alternative transportation options. The project aligns with the city’s commitment to expanding its active transportation infrastructure and improving safety for all road users.

The grant application involves collecting and evaluating speed surveys, crash data, field evaluations and proximity to school or park data as critical information for the grant application compilation. The goal is to put together a project that will be within the grant funding limits (\$727,986 for construction and engineering). This project would add approximately 2.25 miles of bike route and would require the installation of a broken centerline, shared roadway bicycle markings on pavement and additional signage. Exhibit 1 attached to this report shows the extent of the proposed bike route.

The SB 821 call for projects application process has grown increasingly complex and now requires specialized expertise, particularly from consultants with a successful history in preparing grant applications for similar programs. Additionally, the limited timeframe provided by RCTC to prepare, evaluate, and submit the applications, including all necessary data attachments, further supports the need for consultant assistance.

To ensure compliance with RCTC's application requirements and to maximize the city's competitiveness for FY 2025 SB 821 grant funding, staff has solicited a task order proposal from Albert Webb and Associates (Webb), the city's on-call traffic engineering consultant. The consultant is assisting in preparing the grant application at a not-to-exceed cost of \$8,047.

The scope includes guidance from Webb in evaluating the proposed project, compiling the required supporting data, and assisting city staff throughout the application process. Once all necessary information has been gathered, Webb will also support the city in submitting the formal project applications. A draft of the application is attached to this report.

As with most grant opportunities, the SB 821 program requires applicants to declare a local match percentage as part of the grant application package. For the 2025 SB 821 grant cycle, one point will be awarded for every 5% of the local match provided by the agency, up to a maximum of 10 points for a 50% match. Supporting documentation for the proposed match must be included in the application to qualify for the associated scoring.

Currently, the total cost and overall benefit of the proposed projects have not yet been fully analyzed, and a final budgeted local match percentage has not been determined. However, based on past SB 821 grant awards and the estimated rough order of magnitude (ROM) costs provided in the Cathedral City ATP, staff are recommending a preliminary city participation of up to 50% for budgeting purposes for the Avenida Maravilla Class III Bike Route project. This equates to approximately \$350,000, based on the ATP's ROM estimate of \$297,850 per mile. The proposed local match would be funded through the city's available Traffic Safety fund.

City staff are requesting City Council authorize the submittal of a 2025 SB 821, Bicycle and Pedestrian Facilities Program funding application for one (1) potential bike lane improvement project; and authorize the City Engineer to sign all applications/letters for the funding program.

FISCAL IMPACT:

The Director of Public Works approved a task order in the amount not-to-exceed \$8,047 for Albert Webb and Associates to evaluate, compile and prepare the funding application. The task order is funded with existing funds from the FY2025/26 Engineering Department Professional and Technical Services budget 100-100-150-156-8600-8601. The task order (Albert Webb and Associates proposal) is attached to this report.

If awarded the SB 821 grant, the design and construction for Avenida Maravilla Class III Bike Route Project will be presented to the City Council for funding approval, currently estimated at \$350,000. The project is proposed to be funded from available city Traffic Safety Funds.

FIVE-YEAR STRATEGIC PLAN:

Goal E – Safety

Action E-7: Identify improvements and pursue grant funding to improve safety and connectivity of non-motorized routes throughout the City.

ATTACHMENTS:

1. Attachment 1 – Exhibit – Avenida Maravilla Class III Bike Route
2. Attachment 2 – Draft Application
3. Attachment 3 – Albert Webb and Associates Proposal