



## CITY OF COMMERCE AGENDA REPORT

**TO:** Honorable City Council

**FROM:** City Administrator

**SUBJECT:** Adoption of the Notice of Exemption, pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), for the Active Transportation and Safe Routes to Schools Plan

**MEETING DATE:** January 9, 2018

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### **RECOMMENDATION:**

Adopt a Resolution for the Notice of Exemption, pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), for the Active Transportation and Safe Routes to Schools Plan.

### **BACKGROUND/ANALYSIS:**

On August 4, 2014, the City Council approved Resolution No. 14-85 entitled "Approving the Support of a Regional Grant Application for an Active Transportation Program (ATP)".

The Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG) released a "Call for Projects" for Cycle 3 pertaining to Sustainability Planning Grants, including Active Transportation Projects in FY 2016 with the following goals:

- Provide needed planning resources to local jurisdictions for sustainability planning efforts;
- Develop local plans that support the implementation of the 2016-2040 Regional Transportation Plan/Sustainable Communities Strategy (2016 RTP/SCS); and
- Increase the region's competitiveness for federal and state funds, including, but not limited to, the California Active Transportation Program and Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund.

The 2016 Sustainability Planning Grants Call for Proposals is comprised of three (3) main project proposal categories that meet the goals of the overall program:

- **Active Transportation** – Examples include bicycle, pedestrian and safe routes to school plans and programs;
- **Integrated Land Use** – Examples include sustainable land use planning, transit oriented development and land use & transportation integration; and
- **Green Region Initiatives** – Examples include natural resource plans, climate action plans, green street plans, and greenhouse gas (GHG) reduction programs

The City submitted a grant application for *Active Transportation and Safe Routes to Schools Plan* in the amount of \$245,000 through the California Transportation Commission (CTC). The project proposes to prepare a comprehensive Active Transportation Plan that incorporates bicycle, pedestrian, American with Disabilities Act (ADA) considerations, and Safe Routes to School analysis and planning. One of the key components of the project is a robust community engagement process, as well as a performance measurement process, to ensure sustainability of achieved results. The project location includes the entire city. Moreover, the proposed plan also includes coordination with neighboring jurisdictions.

On January 27, 2017, the City of Commerce received notification from SCAG that its application was being recommended for award through the Sustainability Planning Grant (SPG) Program, subject to the approval of the SCAG Regional Council. At its February 2, 2017 meeting, SCAG's Regional Council approved staff recommendations for the SPG Program award.

The City received a formal letter dated April 13, 2017 stating that it was approved for funding. In order to accept the award, a supporting resolution from the City Council or a letter of intent in support of the project from the City Administrator was required. On July 3, 2017, the City Council adopted Resolution No. 17-70 accepting the 2017 Active Transportation Grant Award.

The next step to the process requires an assessment of potential environmental impacts of the project prior to receiving allocation of the awarded grant funds. This assessment is to be conducted pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA).

The project has been determined to be categorically exempt under CEQA Guidelines, Sec. 15002 (k)(1) – General Concepts and CEQA Guidelines Sec. 15061 – Review for Exemption. The project includes basic data collection, research, experimental management, and resource evaluation activities that do not result in a serious or major disturbance to an environmental resource, as the project is strictly for information gathering purposes for possible future action which the agency has not yet approved, adopted, or funded as set forth under CEQA Guidelines Sec. 15306 – Information Collection.

A Notice of Exemption (NOE) needs to be filed citing the specific exemption and the reasons why it is applicable to this project. This NOE will be filed with the Office of Planning and Research and the County Clerk/Recorder of the County of Los Angeles for a 30-day public inspection period pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Sec. 15062.

#### **ALTERNATIVES:**

1. Approve staff recommendation
2. Reject staff recommendation
3. Provide further direction to staff

#### **FISCAL IMPACT:**

The City is awarded a grant in the amount of \$245,000. There is no impact to the General Fund, and no match requirements are necessary for the grant award.

## **RELATIONSHIP TO STRATEGIC GOALS:**

The issue before the Council is applicable to the following Council's strategic goal: *"Create and pursue opportunities for collaboration and regional partnerships to maximize resources and address regional issues"* as identified in the 2016 Strategic Plan.

Recommended by: Maryam E. Babaki, P.E., Director of Public Works & Development Services

Prepared by: Jasmin Elepano, MPA, Senior Management Analyst

Reviewed by: Vilko Domic, Finance Director

Approved as to form: Noel Tapia, City Attorney

Respectfully submitted: Edgar Cisneros, City Administrator

## **ATTACHMENTS:**

1. Resolution
2. CEQA Notice of Exemption