



Legislation Text

File #: 16-369, **Version:** 1

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SUBJECT: Consideration for Prioritizing Roadway Projects with Regional Surface Transportation Program (RSTP) Exchange Funds

REPORT IN BRIEF

Selects the priority order in which the roadway projects will be completed, as listed in this report with funding by Regional Surface Transportation Program (RSTP) Exchange Funds.

RECOMMENDATION

City Council - Adopt a motion:

- A. Approving staff recommendation for the “Yosemite Avenue - San Augustine to Highway 59” project to be completed utilizing 2015-2016 RSTP Exchange Funds and prioritizing the remaining projects for future opportunities; and,
- B. Directing staff to prepare plans and specifications for the Yosemite Avenue project, and authorizing the project to be advertised for bids.

ALTERNATIVES

1. Approve as recommended by staff; or,
2. Prioritize an alternate project from the approved RSTP List and direct staff to prepare the project for bidding (specific project to be identified in the motion); or,
3. Refer to staff for reconsideration of specific items (specific items to be addressed in the motion); or,
4. Deny; or,
5. Continue to a future meeting (date and time to be specified in the motion).

AUTHORITY

The Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act (SAFETEA-LU) provides for the exchange of Local Un-obligated Regional Surface Transportation Program (RSTP) funds through the Merced County Association of Governments (MCAG) per the Caltrans Agreements.

Projects to be funded through the claim are only those projects that are defined under Section 133(b) and 133(c) of Title 23, United States Code and Article XIX of the California State Constitution, implemented in accordance with the requirements of Section 182.6(d)(l) of the Streets and Highway Code.

Monies received (and the interest earned on such monies subsequent to allocation) must be used

only for the purposes for which the claim is approved. If the claimant fails to use funds received in accordance with the terms of the agreement, the exchange funds must be returned to MCAG.

CITY COUNCIL PRIORITIES

As provided for in the 2016/2017 Adopted Budget.

DISCUSSION

On August 1, 2016, staff presented two options for the City Council's consideration for the 2015-2016 RSTP Exchange Funds claim to MCAG. These project options were:

OPTION 1

"Yosemite Avenue - San Augustine to Highway 59"

Construct two new northbound lanes with frontage improvements

OPTION 2

"N Street - 8th to Childs Avenue" and "15th Street - R Street to O Street"

Pavement resurfacing and installation of ADA compliant curb ramp improvements

The deadline for the submittal of the Project option is due to MCAG by September 30, 2016, or the City will not be eligible for the funding.

At the August 1, 2016 hearing, the Council directed staff to bring forward a discussion on how projects were recommended. Presently, staff derives project priorities based upon their engineering judgement and other factors. These include:

- Eligibility of the projects meeting RSTP Exchange Fund criteria (Roadway on designated Federal Route and type of work)
- Traffic safety needs
- Pavement condition
- Prior City investment
- City liability exposure
- ADA compliance needs
- Potential economic and community benefits

There are numerous tools that can be utilized to aid in the project selection and prioritization process that are more objective and analytical. These tools include:

- Pavement Management System - An assessment of pavement condition that is given a numerical ranking of the condition that can then be used to assist decision makers in determining cost effective strategies for maintaining pavements given various budgets.
- Traffic and pedestrian volume monitoring
- Traffic accident monitoring and categorization
- Traffic Warrant analysis following the Manual of Uniform Traffic Control Devices
- ADA Transition Plan
- Benefit/Cost analysis

Due to funding and staff resource constraints, these aforementioned tools are not used. Should Council direct, staff can report back with on what the budget, resource, and process requirements would be to implement these tools. As the Council will soon move into geographic districts, these objective tools will become more important in project evaluation.

At August 1, 2016 hearing, the Council also directed staff to bring forward a discussion on how staff selects Grants to pursue for the City's transportation infrastructure improvements. Most of these Grants require local matching funds and therefore the availability of these local funds must be reserved to leverage the Grant funding. In addition, Grants are competitive and must meet certain eligibility criteria. Many Grants constrain the potential improvements to modes of travel and the type of work allowed. Therefore, when a call for projects is issued from the grantor, the City must search for deficient transportation infrastructure that meets the criteria and will compete well in the selection process, as there is typically a significant amount of staff time and analysis that is required to submit.

The City of Merced has had great success in obtaining Grants. The City of Merced is defined as an underserved community and ranking points are typically added for this designation. In the last five years, the City has delivered 22 projects leveraged \$494,000 in local funds to capture \$7,536,000 in external Grant funds. In addition, the G Street Undercrossing was built with \$9 million in Proposition 1B funds. A listing of the current Grants, eligibility and timing is attached to this report. Should the Council direct, staff can report back with a workshop to discuss these programs in more detail and develop a frame work on how staff can bring potential grants to Council prior to submission.

Council also has requested a list of current roadway projects, their associated costs, and the relative funds that are available to perform the work. All Costs are an estimate based on best practice and previous projects of a similar nature. Actual cost will vary and the limits of construction will be modified accordingly when survey data and field verification is done during the design phase. Project are listed in a sequence of importance as dictated by the City Engineer.

RSTP Funds

V Street - 16th St to 18th St (Funded previously) (Currently in design phase)	\$263,000
B Street - Childs to 15th Street (Funded previously) (Currently in design phase)	\$517,000 (+ \$400,000 local funds)
R & 18th Street Reconstruction (Funded previously) (Project has been completed)	\$70,321
R Street - 16th St to 18th St (Funded previously)	\$300,000
G Street - Childs to 13th Street (Funded previously)	\$430,000
M Street - North of Bear Creek (Funded previously)	\$122,894
Yosemite Avenue - St Augustine to HWY 59	\$876,003 (+ \$300,000 local funds)
N Street - 8th Street to Childs Avenue	\$480,000

15 th Street - R Street to O Street	\$396,003
4 th Street - N Street to O Street	\$215,000
Merced Avenue - Hwy 99 to Parsons Avenue	\$455,089
Carol Avenue - Childs Avenue to HWY 140	<u>\$344,089</u>
	\$5,169,399

The following are the funding sources available for 2016-1017:

RSTP Funds 16/17	\$852,894
Local Transportation Funds (LTF) 16/17	\$831,156
Projects to be determined 16/17	<u>\$310,000</u>
	<u>\$2,000,000</u>

The City of Merced receives an annual allocation from the Regional Surface Transportation Program Exchange Fund Claim (RSTP Claim). As part of the Merced County Association of Governments (MCAG) process, the City was required to submit the completed claim form, containing a list of projects to be funded with the exchange funds, as well as a City Council Resolution authorizing the RSTP Claim.

Staff Recommendation for RSTP Exchange Funds Claim to MCAG.

Staff is recommending that OPTION 1 “*Yosemite Avenue - San Augustine to Highway 59*” be listed in the City claim to MCAG for RSTP Exchange Funds. This recommendation is based upon the following:

- It meets the eligibility criteria for RSTP
- There is an existing a traffic safety concern with the present configuration and there is liability exposure to the City
- The City has made significant prior investment in the acquisition of the right of way for the project
- The City has applied for HSIP Grants funds three times with no success and therefore alternative funding sources for funding the project are likely unavailable
- The project is a potential catalyst to annexation and development of the adjacent vacant land to the north
- The project will provide pedestrian and bike facilities to serve the urban residential developments to the south and east

HISTORY AND PAST ACTIONS

On December 15, 2014, City Council awarded the Merced Roadway Rehabilitation Project 114037/115032, which included the “R and 18th Street Intersection Reconstruction” as approved on the 2013/2014 RSTP Claim.

IMPACT ON CITY RESOURCES

The RSTP Exchange Funds have previously been allocated for the projects. No appropriation is needed.

ATTACHMENTS

1. Transportation Grant Summary