



CITY OF

NEWPORT BEACH

City Council Staff Report

January 14, 2020
Agenda Item No. 6

TO: HONORABLE MAYOR AND MEMBERS OF THE CITY COUNCIL

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TITLE: Resolution No. 2020-4: Authorizing Submittal of a Grant Funding Application to the Orange County Transportation Authority for West Coast Highway and Superior Ave./Balboa Blvd. Intersection Improvement

ABSTRACT:

As part of the on-going effort to relieve traffic congestion and enhance overall safety for pedestrians, cyclists and motorists, staff has submitted a funding application for the West Coast Highway and Superior Avenue/Balboa Boulevard Intersection Improvements, which includes a pedestrian/bicycle bridge over Coast Highway, under the Orange County Transportation Authority (OCTA) Regional Capacity Grant Program. As part of the grant funding application process, a City Council resolution approving the submittal of this grant funding application is required. Staff now requests City Council's adoption of the required supporting resolution.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- a) Determine this action is exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) pursuant to Sections 15060(c)(2) and 15060(c)(3) of the CEQA Guidelines because this action will not result in a physical change to the environment, directly or indirectly; and
- b) Adopt Resolution No. 2020-4, *Authorizing and Approving the Submittal of a Funding Application for an Intersection Capacity Enhancement Project to the Orange County Transportation Authority for Funding Under the Comprehensive Transportation Funding Program.*

FUNDING REQUIREMENTS:

City staff actively pursues available grant funding for needed or desired capital improvement projects. For this proposed intersection improvement project, the total estimated cost to complete the concept design, environmental document, final design and necessary permitting is expected to be approximately \$1,200,000.

If successful at obtaining this grant funding, OCTA would provide \$780,000, or 65 percent of the necessary funding. In turn, the City would be required to provide \$420,000, or 35 percent of the funding as local matching funds. The City's portion of the local matching funds would be included in a future Capital Improvement Program (CIP) budget and be drawn from either/or a combination of Gas Tax, Transportation and Circulation (Traffic Impact) funds, possible secondary grants, or other transportation related funds for Council consideration.

DISCUSSION:

The intersection of West Coast Highway and Superior Avenue/Balboa Boulevard is one of the busier intersections in the City with regards to traffic volumes as well as pedestrian and cyclist crossings. Staff has been reviewing various ideas and options that might be implemented to increase the capacity, operational efficiency as well as enhance the overall safety level for all users of this intersection. One of the best options to achieve these goals would be to construct two pedestrian bridges over the intersection and remove the northern and eastern crosswalks from the intersection, thus increasing the available green time to Coast Highway and removing much of the potential conflict for pedestrians and bicyclists.

In a recent but separate grant request, OCTA awarded the City \$2,349,600 for construction of a pedestrian/bicycle bridge over the Superior Avenue leg of this intersection. On November 19, 2019, City Council approved the Conceptual Design for the Superior Avenue Pedestrian/Bicycle Bridge and Parking Lot project and that project is now under design.

In August 2019, OCTA announced the opening of the 2020 CTFP Regional Capacity Grant Program (RCP) and Call for Projects. Approximately \$32 million is available from Measure M(2) funds for this RCP Call for Projects. Project applications were due on October 24, 2019, and will be evaluated and scored by OCTA in the coming months. With this opportunity becoming available, staff submitted a funding application for the West Coast Highway and Superior Avenue/Balboa Boulevard Intersection Improvement project. The grant application was for the \$1,200,000 in estimated funding needed to complete the concept design, environmental document, final design and necessary permitting for the intersection widening and pedestrian/bicycle bridge over Coast Highway. Intersection widening involves adding one additional eastbound thru lane on West Coast Highway, and converting the Superior Avenue southbound dual right-turn lanes to a free right-turn lane. Additionally, the project would construct the second pedestrian/bicycle bridge, over West Coast Highway. With the completion of both bridges, the two existing at-grade crosswalks (north and east sides) will be removed, which will significantly enhance pedestrian and bicycle safety at this busy intersection. Vehicular operations will also improve since the crosswalk push buttons will not be activated, allowing more traffic signal time for vehicular movement. Vehicular capacity will be increased with the additional eastbound thru lane on West Coast Highway and the free right-turn lane on Superior Avenue.

A draft resolution was also included with the application as required by the funding guidelines. Staff is now requesting City Council's adoption of the required supporting resolution to be submitted as a follow-up to our application.

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW:

Staff recommends the City Council find this action is not subject to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) pursuant to Sections 15060(c)(2) (the activity will not result in a direct or reasonably foreseeable indirect physical change in the environment) and 15060(c)(3) (the activity is not a project as defined in Section 15378) of the CEQA Guidelines, California Code of Regulations, Title 14, Chapter 3, because it has no potential for resulting in physical change to the environment, directly or indirectly.

NOTICING:

The agenda item has been noticed according to the Brown Act (72 hours in advance of the meeting at which the City Council considers the item).

ATTACHMENTS:

Attachment A – Location Map
Attachment B – Resolution No. 2020-4