Staff Report Details (With Text)

File #:	20-673	**Version:**	1	**Name:**	Approval of Design Plans and Specifications
Type:	Minute Order			**Status:**	Action Item
File created:	1/21/2020			**In control:**	City Council Meeting Agenda
On agenda:	2/3/2020			**Final action:**	
Title:	CC - Approval of Design Plans and Specifications and Authorization to Publish a Notice Inviting Bids for Construction of the La Ballona Safe Routes to School Project, Grant Funded by the Active Transportation Program Cycle 2.				
Sponsors:					
Indexes:					
Code sections:					
Attachments:					

Date	Ver.	Action By	Action	Result
2/3/2020	1	City Council Meeting Agenda		

CC - Approval of Design Plans and Specifications and Authorization to Publish a Notice Inviting Bids for Construction of the La Ballona Safe Routes to School Project, Grant Funded by the Active Transportation Program Cycle 2.

Meeting Date: February 3, 2020

Contact Person/Dept: Gabe Garcia/Public Works Department

Phone Number: (310) 253-5633

Fiscal Impact: Yes [] No [X] **General Fund:** Yes [X] No []

Public Hearing: [] **Action Item:** [X] **Attachments:** []

Commission Action Required: Yes [] No [X] **Date:**

Public Notification: (E-Mail) Meetings and Agendas - City Council (01/28/20); (USPS) Courtesy Notice to the project area bounded by Culver Boulevard, Sepulveda Boulevard, Venice Boulevard, and Overland Avenue (01/21/20); e-mail notice to Superintendent Leslie Lockhart (01/21/20)

Department Approval: Charles D. Herbertson, Director of Public Works/City Engineer (01/23/20)

RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends the City Council approve the design plans and specifications and authorize the publication of a Notice Inviting Bids for construction of the La Ballona Safe Routes to School Project,

grant funded by the Active Transportation Program Cycle 2.

BACKGROUND/DISCUSSION

In May 2015, the City submitted a grant application with the California Active Transportation Program (ATP) Cycle 2, under the Safe Routes to School (SRTS) category, for pedestrian and bicycle safety improvements focused in the vicinity of La Ballona Elementary School. In October of 2015, the City was awarded $2.772 million for this project. The proposed project includes improvements along Matteson Avenue, Bentley Avenue, Tilden Avenue, Huron Avenue, Prospect Avenue, College Avenue, Girard Avenue, Elenda Street, Culver Boulevard, Washington Boulevard, Washington Place, and Venice Boulevard.

Typical improvements at these locations include:

- Corner curb extensions with directional curb ramps at various locations;
- High-visibility crosswalks and advance stop bars;
- Two High-Intensity Activated CrossWalK Beacons (HAWK) for safer pedestrian crossing including median refuge islands at the intersections of Washington Place/Bentley Avenue and Washington Boulevard/Huron Avenue;
- Approximately 100 new street trees at certain locations, consistent with the City's Urban Forestry Master Plan;
- A new all-way STOP Control at the intersection of Elenda Street/Marietta Avenue;
- A two-way separated bikeway on Elenda Street, from Culver Boulevard to Washington Boulevard, and pedestrian level lighting;
- Connection to the Culver Boulevard Bike Path from Elenda Street;
- Signal modifications and redesign of corners and curb lines at the intersections of Culver Boulevard/Elenda Street and Elenda Street/Washington Boulevard; and
- Narrower travel lanes.

Public Works Mobility & Traffic Engineering staff worked with staff of the Culver City Unified School District (CCUSD), principal of the La Ballona Elementary School, the PTA and other parents, and area residents in 2014 and 2015 prior to filing the successful grant application. The concerns heard by staff formed the basis of improvements proposed in the ATP grant application in 2015. Because the fund awarded under ATP Cycle 2 is a Safe Routes to School grant, the geographic project area contains La Ballona Elementary School and is bounded by Overland Avenue, Culver Boulevard, Sepulveda Boulevard, and Venice Boulevard.

ATP, SRTS, and City Council Strategic Goals

The ATP goals to be achieved by this project include:

- To increase walking and biking;
- To enhance public health, together with the reduction of childhood obesity;
- To increase safety and mobility of non-motorized users of the public right-of-way; and
- To reduce Green House Gas (GHG) emissions.

The Safe Routes To School (SRTS) goals to be attained by this project include:

- To encourage walking and biking;
- To reduce congestion around schools;
- To enhance safety; and
- To improve students' drop-off/pick-up activities.

The City Council Strategic Goals targeted by this project include:

- To expand the City's existing bicycle infrastructure; and
- To improve circulation for all modes of transportation.

It should also be noted that the draft Culver City Bicycle and Pedestrian Action Plan (currently under review) calls for 23 miles of additional bikeways to establish an integrated network. Due to funding constraints and limited staff resources, the City has to incrementally build this network.

The proposed project will contribute towards achieving all the goals held in common by the ATP, SRTS, and the City Council as listed above. In addition to the bikeways, this project seeks to create a network of low-speed corridors and safer intersection crossings in the vicinity of La Ballona Elementary School and along the routes to and from the school.

The design plans can be reviewed on-line using the following link:
<https://www.culvercity.org/city-hall/city-maps-gis-program/city-projects/la-ballona-safe-routes-to-school-project>

Outreach and Consultation Chronology

Community outreach and consultation for this project has been extensive and inclusive, both in the process leading up to the grant application, as well as in shaping the engineering design. For

example, there were formal listening sessions in which staff's principal role was to hear parents of students of the La Ballona Elementary School and residents. To this end, meetings were held on Saturday, April 26, 2014, on Tuesday, April 29, 2014, and on Thursday, May 1, 2014. In May 2015, the grant application was submitted and in October 2015, the grant was awarded. Subsequently, on Thursday, November 5, 2015, staff attended an evening meeting of the PTA with District staff, parents, and area residents to share the news of funding being awarded, to review the contents of the grant application being responsive to their concerns, and to encourage them with the fact that the City and the State had heard them. Another similar meeting was held on Friday, November 6, 2015 that was arranged and attended by CCUSD Superintended and a member of the School Board.

Following the procedures in Caltrans' Local Assistance Procedures Manual, on August 8, 2017, Alta Planning was contracted to conduct outreach and perform the engineering design of the project.

Following is a chronology of the project tasks including community outreach:

- November 3, 2016: CEQA Notice of Exemption;

- December 27, 2016: NEPA Categorical Exemption;

- March 27, 2017: Request for Proposals (RFP) was issued;

- April 27, 2017: Proposal responses were due;

- June 26, 2017: City Council awarded engineering design contract to Alta Planning;

- November 4, 2017: La Ballona Elementary School Fall Festival;

- November 9, 2017: A parking study was conducted on Elenda Street between Culver Boulevard and Washington Boulevard to determine parking utilization;

- November 16, 2017: Community Meeting was held at City Hall in conjunction with a meeting of the Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee (BPAC) members. The proposed project improvements were presented and input received from the community was not supportive of the two-way cycle track (side-by-side bike lanes) on the west side of Elenda Street, due to the loss of approximately 25 parking spaces. The proposed design was consistent with recommendation of the National Association of City Transportation Officials (NACTO) for 20-foot setbacks from the prolongation of the residential driveways, which caused a significant

loss of parking spaces on the side of the street with residential properties abutting;

- December 2017 to August 2018: During the following eight months, staff and consultant team collaboratively worked to create new concept illustrations of the bikeway on the east side of Elenda Street in response to the input received from residents. Revised project plans were developed, and photo simulation boards were created to effectively convey the proposed project improvements at the various project locations;

- February 27, 2018: A new parking study of Elenda Street was conducted, from 7:00 am to 9:00 pm to capture parking demand prior to residents leaving for work and after they arrive home from work in order to determine parking utilization throughout the day. Findings of the survey supported the potential negative impact of the loss of parking on the west side of Elenda Street;

- August 26, 2018: A project booth was staffed at Fiesta La Ballona to provide information on the project and obtain input;

- September 8, 2018: Public open houses were held at La Ballona Elementary School at 10:00 am, 1:00 pm, and 2:00 pm, to review the preliminary engineering design plans reflecting the relocation of the two-way cycle track to the east side of Elenda Street, thereby preventing the loss of parking on the west side and residents were supportive of this revision. Comments from residents expressed their discomfort and concern for their safety when making left turns from the residential streets onto southbound Elenda Street;

- September 15, 2018: A Community Celebration/Go Human Campaign Demonstration Kick-Off took place from 11:00 am to 3:00 pm. Three pop-up community workshops occurred concurrently at various locations along Elenda Street to obtain community input. Expressions of drivers discomfort and concern for their safety when turning from residential streets onto southbound Elenda Street were repeatedly raised;

- September 15 through 22, 2018: Go Human Demonstration “Experience Elenda” was implemented modeling the proposed two-way cycle track and all-way STOP at Elenda Street/Marietta Avenue. Input received as a result of the Experience Elenda demonstration included requests to improve sight-distance for drivers turning left onto southbound Elenda Street from the adjacent residential street, Oregon Avenue, Arizona Avenue, and Marietta Avenue. Also concerns were raised regarding the delivery of emergency services when Elenda Street may be congested.

- September 15, 2018: Photo simulation boards depicting the existing condition and the proposed improvements at each project intersection and along Elenda Street were setup at the different project locations. The boards invited input via a hot-line phone number, via an interactive online map, and at an upcoming community Celebration. Additionally, input by email and phone calls directly to the Bicycle and Pedestrian Coordinator was accepted. The boards were in place through October 15, 2018;

- October 15, 2018: Photo simulation boards were retrieved and input was reflected in the 90% design plans;

- January 17, 2019: Presentation at January BPAC meeting of the revised 90% engineering design and input was received from the Committee and the community;

- March 11 through March 22, 2019: A two-week demonstration modeling the curb extensions proposed in the engineering design was implemented to observe the operation of the student drop-off on eastbound Matteson Avenue east of College Avenue (as opposed to its original location west of College Avenue). With the collaboration of the school Principal, Mr. Ramirez, and parent volunteers who operated the student drop-off, the demonstration project results showed that the student drop-off should remain at its existing location on the west of College Avenue. It also showed that the curb extension on the south side of Matteson Avenue across the entire intersection with College Avenue should be reduced to the width of the proposed raised crosswalk on the east leg of the intersection to avoid impeding the merging of parents' vehicles following students' drop-off. Among the observed driver reactions to the demonstration of the relocated student drop-off was an increase in dropping off students in the travel lane, a reduction in the students' drop-off at the designated zone, severe congestion, and some parents driving on the wrong side of the road to bypass the congestion. However, the footprint of the curb extension being removed will be modified to resolve these issues with a taper and is proposed to be painted in place, combined with the placement of K71 delineators (white in color approximately 18 inches in height and about 8 inches in diameter). This will provide the look of a curb extension and will demark the space so that drivers would not pull into what otherwise would be a vacant space to drop-off in the morning or to wait for a child in the afternoon

  Additional changes made as a result of the demonstration include the southwest corner of the T-intersection of Matteson Avenue/Girard Avenue, section of the curb extension on the south side of Matteson Avenue was removed from the design while retaining the section on the west side of Girard Avenue. This is to facilitate the eastbound right-turn movement and avoid causing potential delays, while shortening the crossing distance and enhancing visibility of pedestrians crossing Gerard Avenue. Curb extensions were added to the design on the east side of Girard Avenue at Matteson Avenue to further enhance the pedestrian crossing locations.

  At the intersection of Girard Avenue/Washington Boulevard the curb extensions were removed from the design. This is to avoid creating congestion and the potential queuing of turning

vehicles into the crosswalk upstream, that could hinder the movement of pedestrians and adversely impact safety conditions.

Also, on westbound Washington Boulevard west of Girard Avenue, the curb extension was removed, but preserved at the intersection of Washington Boulevard/Elenda Street. The loss of the curb extension on the north side of Washington Boulevard was made up by a new curb extension approximately 120-foot long on the south side of Washington Boulevard, from Elenda Street to the terminus of the intersection with Girard Avenue.

- March 16, 2019: Public open house was held at La Ballona Elementary School.

- March 16 through 25, 2019: Online survey was open for input. A summary of the online survey responses is as follows:

  Total Responses: 631

  Noted opinions of the curb extensions contained in the project (out of the total number of responses):

  72.20 % support and 12.20% against.

  Noted opinions of the two-way cycle track on the east side of Elenda Street:

  57.19% support and 29.40% against.

  A summary of the online survey comments is as follows:

  - Sight-distance concerns for motorists making left turns from Oregon Avenue, Arizona Avenue, and Marietta St, exacerbated due to the Elenda Street curvature;

  - Concerns regarding the loss of the center two-way left-turn lane on Elenda Street and associated discomfort and sense of inability to safely turn left from Elenda Street onto Arizona Avenue, Oregon Avenue, and Marietta Street;

  - Concerns regarding potential increase in emergency vehicle response time when Elenda Street is congested, in the absence of the two-way left-turn lane;

  - Concerns regarding truck loading for the business on the southwest corner of Washington and Elenda from the southbound lane of Elenda in the absence of a two -way center lane; and

- Concerns regarding increased traffic on Elenda St.

- May 4, 2019: At a special Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee meeting at La Ballona Elementary School, staff presented comments made by the community at the March 16 Open House and through the online survey. In response to public input received, the parking lane on the east side of Elenda Street was removed from the engineering design to improve the comfort and sight-distance of drivers turning left from the residential streets. This in turn freed space for restoring the center two-way left-turn lane and provided a safe zone for residents turning left onto Elenda Street from the residential streets, turning left out of their driveways, or for possible use by emergency services when the roadway is congested.

  Additionally, the originally proposed Rectangular Rapid Flashing Beacon (RRFB) at Washington Place/Bentley Avenue was upgraded in the design plans to a High-Intensity Activated Crosswalk (HAWK) because studies have shown the HAWK (a regulatory device) to be more effective than the RRFB (a warning device) which displays a yellow flashing indication. The HAWK signal displays solid red indication facing vehicular traffic, thereby requiring drivers to stop and giving the right-of-way to crossing pedestrians. Similarly, on Washington Boulevard at Huron Avenue, the originally proposed RRFB was also upgraded to a HAWK.

In the spirit of the City Council's adopted Strategic Plan, Goal #1 to increase civic engagement and … *to expand access to information and create opportunities for stakeholders to play an active role in discussing public policy and setting priorities…*staff has conducted a significant outreach effort and provided many opportunities for input from all stakeholders. In the process, staff has been responsive to the input received, and has reflected the input in revisions contained in the final design plans.

The community meetings were promoted via the City's website, email distribution lists, and social media.

Timeline

If the City Council approves the final plans and specifications and authorizes the publication of a notice inviting bids for construction, staff will proceed accordingly. Staff expects to return to the City Council in April of 2020 to recommend that the City Council consider the award of a construction contract to a contractor to build the project. Construction would commence during the 2020 school summer break and will take approximately nine months to complete. The construction work will be prioritized and scheduled so that the improvements along the primary school routes are constructed while school is not in session. Once school starts, construction will be scheduled so that at least one access route to and from school is always available.

Because of the iterative process of the consultation with stakeholders and the multiple design revisions, staff requested from the California Transportation Commission and received an extension to program construction allocation funding to June 30, 2019 (instead of June 30, 2018), and an extension to award a construction contract to April 27, 2020 (instead of December 19, 2019). Therefore, a construction contract award is required by April 27, 2020.

FISCAL ANALYSIS

The La Ballona Elementary School SRTS project was funded by the ATP grant in the amount of $2.772M. Additionally, the City provided a local match of $100,000, for a total project budget of $2.872M. The Plans, Specifications, and Engineering phase were allocated $367,000, leaving $2,505,000 for construction costs.

It should be noted that upgrading the two RRFB locations at Huron Avenue/Washington Boulevard and at Bentley Avenue/Washington Place to the installation of two HAWK signals is expected to increase the project costs by approximately $400,000 in excess of the grant funding available. Additionally, the unit costs utilized in the grant applications are now five years old, and the cost of construction has increased. This too could potentially further increase the cost of construction.

It is anticipated that at the time of award of contract in April, staff will also request the City Council consider a budget amendment to make up the difference between the available grant funds and the actual cost of construction.

ATTACHMENTS

None

MOTION

That the City Council:

Approve the design plans and specifications and authorize the publication of a Notice Inviting Bids for construction of the La Ballona Safe Routes to School Project.