



# AGENDA REPORT

**TO:** Edward D. Reiskin  
City Administrator

**FROM:** Ryan Russo  
Director, Oakland Department  
of Transportation

**SUBJECT:** Resolution to Accept and Appropriate  
Sustainable Communities Grant  
Funds

**DATE:** August 31, 2021

City Administrator Approval

Date: Sep 3, 2021

## **RECOMMENDATION**

**Staff Recommends That City Council Adopt A Resolution Authorizing The City Administrator To Accept And Appropriate Sustainable Communities Competitive Grant Funds Totaling Five Hundred Thousand Dollars (\$500,000) To Implement The Chinatown Complete Streets Plan, Allocate Seventy Thousand Five Hundred Dollars (\$70,500) In Measure BB Funds As The Required City Local Match; And Adopt Appropriate California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Findings.**

## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

In June 2021, the City was awarded a grant administered by the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) through the Fiscal Year (FY) 2021-22 Sustainable Transportation Planning Grant Program and under the Sustainable Communities Competitive category.

Approval of the proposed resolution will allow the City to accept and appropriate \$500,000 in grant funding for the Chinatown Complete Streets Plan. The City is required to provide a local match of \$70,500, which represents approximately twelve percent of total project costs. Local match funds will be allocated from Measure BB.

## **BACKGROUND / LEGISLATIVE HISTORY**

The Sustainable Communities Competitive grant program is funded by Senate Bill 1, the Road Repair and Accountability Act of 2017 signed into law in 2017 to fix roads, freeways and bridges in communities across California and invest in transit and safety. The purpose of this program is to support local and regional multimodal transportation and land use planning projects that further the region's Regional Transportation Plan Sustainable Communities Strategies, contribute to California's greenhouse gas (GHG) reduction targets, and assist with achieving Caltrans mission and program objectives. A minimum of 50% of grant funds are required to benefit disadvantaged communities.

City Council  
September 21, 2021

In February 2021, the Department of Transportation (OakDOT) submitted one grant proposal for the Chinatown Complete Streets Plan under the Sustainable Communities Competitive grant program. Chinatown is a central neighborhood in Downtown Oakland bordered by Broadway, 14th Street, Fallon Street, and Interstate 880. Chinatown is a vibrant, bustling neighborhood that is a centerpiece of Oakland's cultural identity. Unfortunately, Chinatown is also home to the highest concentration of pedestrian and bicycle collisions in the City. It is also one of the City's most transit-dependent neighborhoods.

In June 2021, the City received funding approval for this proposal, totaling \$500,000 in State funds, with a local match of \$70,500. Implementation of the proposal requires that the City Council accept the Sustainable Communities Competitive grant and commit funds for local match. Doing so will help establish community consensus on improvements to safety and access for people taking the bus, walking, and biking in Oakland's Chinatown. Most importantly, this effort will engage community-based organizations and a consultant team to create the conceptual designs necessary to move capital projects forward to implementation.

### **ANALYSIS AND POLICY ALTERNATIVES**

Chinatown is one of the most transit-dependent neighborhoods in Oakland. Compared to Oaklanders citywide, residents in the project area are almost twice as likely to take transit as their primary mode of transportation versus driving alone. Approximately 7% of residents identify biking as their primary mode compared to a citywide average of 5%. Of the two census tracts that contain Chinatown, 38% of households do not have access to a vehicle, compared to a citywide average of 16%. Chinatown also has the highest concentration of pedestrian and bicycle collisions in the City. There were 137 pedestrian collisions and 71 bicycle collisions in the five years from 2015 to 2019, and collisions are trending upwards. Within the two majority-Asian census tracts that encompass Chinatown, 30% of streets are on Oakland's High Injury Network – the 6% of Oakland streets that see 63% of severe and fatal crashes. This is a central equity issue for Oakland, as Asian Americans in the City are 3.5 times more likely to be killed while walking than Whites.

The overarching goal of the Chinatown Complete Streets Plan is to create a safer, calmer, more multi-modal Chinatown transportation network that prioritizes people taking transit, walking, and biking. This network will encourage mode shift and meet City and State goals to reduce single-occupancy vehicle trips and lower GHG emissions. This Plan will take the following steps to achieve this goal:

- Distill the last decade of planning work related to Chinatown streets down to a digestible, easily communicated set of corridors for consideration and a discussion of their related decision points and tradeoffs;
- Engage local Chinatown residents, business owners, people who travel through and within Chinatown, and local community organizations to identify up to four "key corridors" that this project will move forward for project development;
- Establish a final project description for each key corridor including a hierarchy of mode choice, a toolkit of proposed improvements, an assessment of tradeoffs to parking, circulation, and vehicle throughput, and a discussion of how each project fits within the overall Chinatown transportation network;
- Collect data and perform traffic studies as needed;

- Conduct conceptual design (with up to two alternatives for each corridor) for each key corridor (up to 4 key corridors budgeted);
- Produce draft and final report with discussion of outreach/decision-making process, approved conceptual designs, cost estimates and graphics.

**FISCAL IMPACT**

Adoption of the resolution will allow \$500,000 of Sustainable Communities Competitive grant funds to be deposited and appropriated in the California Department of Transportation Fund (2140), Complete Streets Planning and Project Development (35214), Project Number to be determined.

This project would not be feasible without grant funding. While a local match of \$70,500 is required under the grant program, this amount represents only 12.4 percent of the total project costs. Local match funds will be allocated from Measure BB Funds (Fund 2218, Project 1003346). Grant funding and local funding by project is shown below:

Project Title	Total Project Cost	SCC Grant	Local Match
Chinatown Complete Streets Plan	\$570,500	\$500,000	\$70,500

**PUBLIC OUTREACH / INTEREST**

This project has the advantage of being able to tap into the strong network of community-based organizations that have been engaged in planning for a safer, more connected Chinatown since at least 2004. Letters of support have been received by the Lincoln Recreation Center, Oakland Chinatown Chamber of Commerce, Walk Oakland Bike Oakland, and Bike East Bay. At a minimum, these and following organizations (and any others that express interest) will be involved in the planning process, either as paid members of the team or as key stakeholders: Asian Health Services; Oakland Chinatown Coalition; Lincoln Elementary School Community; Oakland Museum of California; Oakland Asian Cultural Center; Asian Pacific Environmental Network; East Bay Asian Local Development Corporation; Laney College; and the Oakland Public Library. Letters of support have also been received by AC Transit BART District 2 Councilmember, the Mayor of Oakland, and Alameda County Transportation Commission.

To ensure that these groups and the general public of Chinatown stay engaged throughout the process, all major deliverables generated by this Plan will be translated, distributed via an email list to stakeholders, and made available on the City's website. All major public meetings will be facilitated with simultaneous translation where necessary. Finally, the tactical urbanism demonstration piece of this project's outreach scope will display a publicly visible temporary installation of proposed project elements out on the street. This exciting aspect of the project is designed to garner interest and engagement in project proposals from people who may not be aware of or be inclined to engage with City projects.

## **COORDINATION**

This project will be managed by OakDOT in coordination with AC Transit, the Alameda County Transportation Commission, the City of Oakland Planning & Building Department, and Caltrans. This project schedule is purposefully timed to coordinate with the roll-out of the Downtown Oakland Specific Plan, for which the Oakland Planning department will be involved at a deep level in establishing context and making corridor design decisions and will coordinate closely with the City's Waterfront Ballpark District at Howard Terminal Project team. Additionally, several community organizations including, but not limited to, the Chinatown Chamber of Commerce, Asian Health Services, the Chinatown Improvement Initiative, Friends of Lincoln Square Park, East Bay Asian Local Economic Development Corporation, members of the Chinatown Coalition, Bike East Bay, and Walk Oakland Bike Oakland will be key stakeholders and/or paid team members.

The Office of the City Attorney and Budget Bureau were also consulted in preparation of this report.

## **SUSTAINABLE OPPORTUNITIES**

**Economic:** Creating a safer, calmer, more multi-modal Chinatown transportation network that prioritizes people taking transit, walking, and biking ensures that more people, particularly disadvantaged communities, will be able to safely access jobs, services, schools, and entertainment in Oakland, therefore contributing to local economic activities. This may also allow households to reduce their transportation costs.

**Environmental:** Safety for people walking and biking in Chinatown is the biggest current barrier to mode shift in this neighborhood, and the biggest impediment to reducing GHG emissions from single-occupancy vehicles in Downtown Oakland. The safety and access improvements developed through this Plan will remove those barriers, shift people to low-emission modes of travel, and contribute to the State's climate and GHG reduction goals. These projects will shift people to active modes, preserve and protect vulnerable communities, and reduce GHG emissions related to transportation in Oakland.

**Race & Equity:** Chinatown has a higher population of at-risk and historically under-served populations than the City as a whole. The Chinatown Complete Streets Plan will move forward with implementation of major corridor projects in Chinatown aimed at addressing the ongoing pedestrian safety crisis and creating safe spaces for people walking, biking, and accessing transit. This Plan will especially benefit the community members and residents of the Plan's project area, which has a higher proportion of seniors, disabled individuals, People of Color, people who are low-income, and people who do not own personal vehicles than the rest of the City.

## **CALIFORNIA ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY ACT (CEQA)**

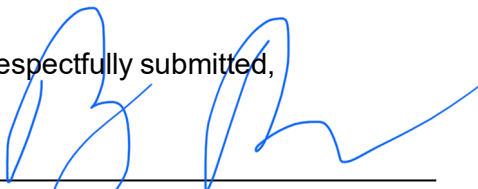
The proposed Chinatown Complete Streets Plan is statutorily exempt under CEQA Guidelines Section 15261 through 15285--There are no physical facilities or improvements proposed to be constructed at the time the plan is approved and it assumes future CEQA compliance of actual facilities proposed to be constructed. A Notice of Determination/Notice of Exemption shall be filed for this Plan.

**ACTION REQUESTED OF THE CITY COUNCIL**

Staff Recommends That City Council Adopt A Resolution Authorizing The City Administrator To Accept And Appropriate Sustainable Communities Competitive Grant Funds Totaling Five Hundred Thousand Dollars (\$500,000) To Implement The Chinatown Complete Streets Plan, Allocate Seventy Thousand Five Hundred Dollars (\$70,500) In Measure BB Funds As The Required City Local Match; And Adopt Appropriate California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Findings.

For questions regarding this report, please contact Craig Raphael, Funding Program Manager, at CRaphael@oaklandca.gov.

Respectfully submitted,



RYAN RUSSO

Director, Department of Transportation

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Attachments (1):

A: Location Map: Chinatown Complete Streets

**Attachment A**

**Chinatown Complete Streets**

City of Oakland Department of Transportation Sustainable Communities Strategy Grant

**Area Map**



**Local Street Map**

