



# CITY OF SANTA BARBARA

## COUNCIL AGENDA REPORT

**AGENDA DATE:** March 6, 2018

**TO:** Mayor and Councilmembers

**FROM:** Transportation Planning and Parking Division, Public Works Department

**SUBJECT:** Resolution In Support Of Widening And Installing State Street Sidewalks And Buffered Bike Lanes Under Highway 101

### **RECOMMENDATION:**

That Council adopt, by reading of title only, A Resolution of the Council of the City of Santa Barbara to Include Widening of the State Street Sidewalks and the Installation of Buffered Bike Lanes Under Highway 101 into the City's Capital Improvement Program, and Direct Staff to work with Caltrans for Project Approval and to Apply for Funding Grants.

### **DISCUSSION:**

The State Street undercrossing at Highway 101 was constructed in 1991. At that time, the undercrossing needs were thought to be five 11-foot vehicle lanes, bike lanes, and 5-foot sidewalks on either side. Since 1991, transportation demands have changed significantly. Pedestrian volumes through the undercrossing have grown exponentially while traffic volumes have remained constant. The State Street sidewalks to the north and south of the undercrossing have been widened, while the number of vehicle lanes north and south of the undercrossing have been reduced. The lack of sidewalk space in the undercrossing has created a bottle neck and barrier to pedestrian travel between the newly-completed Waterfront portion of State Street to Downtown. Additionally, the excessive number of vehicle lanes and road slope have promoted higher vehicle speeds, which have resulted in a number of collision injuries, the majority of which are bicyclists. The undercrossing is an unattractive environment for pedestrians due to vehicle noise and the darkness of the location, even during the day.

The City's Capital Improvement Program includes a project to explore solutions to address the undercrossing as a pedestrian barrier. The City recently held a public workshop to develop ideas to remove or reduce the various barriers for pedestrians using the undercrossing. Participant comments frequently focused on the narrowness of the sidewalks. Community members suggested various creative ways to improve the experience, including widening the sidewalks and buffered bike lanes. Widening of the sidewalks and construction of buffered bike lanes can be accomplished by reducing the number of lanes from five to three. This reduction in lanes is adequate to accommodate

existing and future traffic volumes as this configuration matches the number of lanes on the State Street blocks to the north and south of the undercrossing. In addition to addressing community concerns, such a project should also reduce the number of bicycle collisions resulting in injuries. The lower State Street corridor is an area within the City that has a high number of reported bicycle injuries. The project components are expected to significantly improve safety and reduce such collisions.

The undercrossing was originally constructed by Caltrans as a part of the Crosstown Freeway Widening. The City contracted an engineering firm to assess the feasibility of widening the undercrossing sidewalks and to explore options working with Caltrans on a formal proposal that could meet Caltrans approval. The conclusion of this work is that widening of the sidewalks is feasible and can be performed within Caltrans' guidelines for such projects. Additionally, staff estimates that this sidewalk widening would be a competitive Active Transportation Planning grant application.

The purpose of this action is to formally create a project and include it in the City's Capital Improvement Program by resolution. The action also directs staff to work with Caltrans to gain project approval and funding, as well as to apply for an Active Transportation Planning grant that would be due this July. The Transportation and Circulation Committee heard this item on February 22 and recommended Council adoption on a 5-0 vote.

**BUDGET/FINANCIAL INFORMATION:**

The undercrossing sidewalk widening project is estimated to cost between \$5 million and \$5.5 million. This project is uniquely positioned to be competitive for an Active Transportation Planning Grant. Currently, staff plans to submit a grant application in July. Staff is working to determine if matching funds will increase the likelihood of a successful grant application. No money has been budgeted to date for this purpose.

**ATTACHMENT:** Updated Capital Improvement Plan Project Description

**PREPARED BY:** Robert J. Dayton, Transportation Planning and Parking Manager/mj

**SUBMITTED BY:** Rebecca J. Bjork, Public Works Director

**APPROVED BY:** City Administrator's Office