



City of Lafayette
Staff Report
City Council

Meeting Date: January 22, 2024

Staff: Patrick Golier, Transportation Program Manager

Subject: Candidate Transportation Project Priorities

Staff is seeking input on candidate transportation-related projects that would require a dedicated funding source to initiate. City Council direction regarding the following list of projects would provide direction to Staff on grant opportunities that may be sought to fund project phase(s), as appropriate, and as these opportunities are made available and staff time permits.

The project list that follows is separate from the projects identified on the 2024 Transportation Work Plan, expected to be reviewed with City Council at the February 12, 2024 City Council meeting after review and discussion from the Transportation & Circulation Commission at their January 16, 2024 meeting. The Work Plan represents a list of funded projects, at least in part, that is likely to be addressed over the upcoming year, though some overlap exists between the projects in this staff report and the draft Work Plan. In contrast, the list of projects identified in this staff report represent unfunded efforts that may be addressed in the future, subject to confirmation of funding. For reference, the draft 2024 Transportation Work Plan is provided as Attachment A.

Summary

Each year a number of grant funding opportunities typically become available to local California jurisdictions to help fund, in full or in part, the development of transportation projects. These grant opportunities can include federal, state, or local funding sources, and each grant program comes with its own set of priorities, requirements, project types and community characteristics that are eligible for funding, and any number of additional criteria including local match requirements and project delivery schedules.

Relatively short timelines between a grant program’s call-for-projects and the application due date preclude the ability of City staff to vet potential projects through public processes on a case-by-case basis. Thus, it is useful for Staff to have a number and variety of identified future projects that may be candidates when grant programs are announced.

The list below represents potential projects that may be prioritized for grant program applications, subject to further consideration and analysis. Once a prioritized list of future projects is identified, Staff can seek appropriate grant opportunities to help fund their development.

Preparation of a grant application for a project does not preclude a public engagement process. Subject to a successful application and receipt of funds, an engagement process would be initiated for that project in order to solicit public input on the development of that project.

Cost estimates for each project below represent very high-level assessments based on a preliminary scope of work as described below for each project. It should be clearly noted that more detailed scopes of work and associated cost estimates would be prepared for any relevant grant application and that only after assurance of funding would engineering plans and cost estimates be generated. Therefore, the Council should consider this list to be a placeholder for types and locations of proposed projects with construction details to be worked out at a later time.

In addition, affirmation by City Council of the proposed list of projects described in this staff report does not necessarily mean that funding will be sought for those projects in 2024; this is subject to the availability of appropriate grant funding programs and sufficient staff time to prepare a grant application and manage funded projects.

A brief description of each potential project follows. The list was discussed at the September 18, 2023 Transportation & Circulation Commission meeting. At that meeting, Commissioners expressed support for the pursuit of funding for the following project list. However, some recommended that the project description for the Pleasant Hill Pathway Project be re-phrased to be more neutral with regard to the pathway alignment. Additionally, upon further review, some of the candidate projects reviewed by the Transportation & Circulation Commission have been removed from the list of 2024 Candidate Transportation Project Priorities. This includes the Moraga Road Safety and Circulation project, Sidewalk/Walkway Construction project, and the School Safety Project. These projects were removed because additional work and process would be required before staff could be ready to initiate grant proposals. These projects may be pursued in a future year or may be considered where appropriate as part of a planned capital improvement project as opposed to a stand-alone grant project.

Projects in the list below are organized by phase but otherwise are not listed in any priority order, nor is the list of potential future projects intended to be exhaustive. Additional alternate priorities may be identified through this or other processes. The timeline associated with each of the projects represents the appropriate timeframe in 2024 when staff should start to seek funding.

Potential Projects

EBMUD Aqueduct Pathway Project

This study would update and re-evaluate the feasibility and design options for the construction of a 1.5-mile ADA-compliant low-stress pedestrian and bicycle pathway through Downtown Lafayette and further eastward along Deer Hill Road to Pleasant Hill Road along the EBMUD Aqueduct right-of-way. Funding would be required to update the project's 2012 study and would result in constructible context-sensitive options that reflect existing conditions and is aligned with existing and future land uses in the city's Downtown and updated General Plan Elements (e.g., Housing Element and Land Use Element). The final deliverable for the project would include final designs for the pathway and connections to the adjacent transportation network. This would be developed through a robust public engagement process that would include relevant partner agencies (BART, EBMUD, Caltrans, etc.) and community stakeholders.

Ultimately, the project would result in the construction of a safe and fully accessible active transportation pathway designed for all ages and abilities that identifies connection opportunities to adjacent commercial areas, existing and future housing sites, the Lafayette BART station, and the expanding citywide and regional low-stress active transportation network. Depending on the size and scale of the grant program that might be used to fund this project, construction funding may also be included in the grant request, though construction costs could not be accurately estimated without further planning and design work.

- Phase: Planning and Design
- Cost Estimate: \$600,000 - \$750,000
- Timeline: Immediate

Update to Lafayette's Walkways and Bicycle Master Plans

The City's Walkways and Bicycle Master Plans are documents that guide decisions related to the City's bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure and design, safety, access and more. Each plan includes lists of potential and prioritized bicycle and pedestrian projects that the City would consider over time. Neither plan has been updated in quite a while and may not reflect current priorities, design standards, an understanding of the gaps in and an articulation of the desired build-out of the bicycle and pedestrian networks, and the recent updates to the City's General Plan. Further, the plans generally do not articulate levels of technical feasibility and complexity for each proposed project and, thus, may not reflect realistic expectations around the City's ability to construct unbuilt segments of infrastructure. Preparation of updated Master Plans can help make the individual projects that are identified in the Plans more competitive for future grant funding opportunities.

At present, for expediency, it is expected that updates to the Master Plans may take place as part of the General Plan Update process for the Circulation Element. While that process is expected to result in updates to the Plans' priorities and proposed networks, it is unlikely to result in a standalone comprehensive document that includes all of the subject matter that is typically routine for a Master Plan.

- Phase: Planning
- Cost Estimate: \$100,000 - \$125,000
- Timeline: Immediate

Traffic Signal Design and Construction at Deer Hill Road / Oak Hill Road

This key intersection in Lafayette, which includes multiple lanes of traffic on both Deer Hill Road and Oak Hill Road, carries large numbers of multi-modal traffic. Both streets are adjacent to the Lafayette BART station and carry County Connection buses. Further, Deer Hill Road is identified as a bicycle route in the Bicycle Master Plan, and is on the City's High Injury Network as identified in the 2023 Lafayette Local Road Safety Plan. Oak Hill Road provides direct access to downtown Lafayette and contains an off-ramp for eastbound SR-24 approximately 600' south of the intersection. A traffic signal at this intersection may reduce right-of-way confusion, make the crossings more comfortable for pedestrians and cyclists, and more efficiently manage vehicle flow. Design and installation of traffic signals can cost in excess of \$1,000,000, not including maintenance, and, thus, an alternate funding source for this project may be required by the City.

Design and construction phases should be closely aligned with the Smart Signal process.

While this project has not been publicly proposed in the past, it received support from the Transportation & Circulation Commission as part of the discussion at their September 18, 2023 meeting.

- Phase: Design and Construction
- Cost Estimate: \$1,100,000 - \$1,400,000
- Timeline: Immediate

Traffic Study: Right-Turn on Red Restrictions Along Mt. Diablo Blvd

This project would result in right-turn on red restrictions at key intersections, to be determined, along Mt. Diablo Boulevard in downtown Lafayette to enhance safety and comfort for pedestrians by reducing conflicts between drivers and pedestrians. Restrictions would be facilitated with the use of an LED sign to reinforce the restriction, similar to the electronic signs at the Moraga Road / Brook Street intersection that restrict vehicle movement when the pedestrian crossing is activated.

The project is supported by the Local Road Safety Plan and public input from the 2022 online survey that was conducted for the LRSP. As part of this survey, respondents and participants were asked to identify locations within Lafayette where people feel safe or unsafe and to offer ideas about how road safety may be improved. Respondents identified the intersection of Mt. Diablo Boulevard and Moraga Road more than any other location, and the challenges of crossing Mt. Diablo Boulevard, particularly on the east leg of that intersection, were documented through this process. This is despite the signal improvements and safety infrastructure that have already been installed, including a warning sign for northbound drivers at the intersection with Moraga Road that alerts drivers of the presence of pedestrians in the crossing when the pedestrian crossing button is activated. Input from residents have also identified the Mt. Diablo Boulevard intersections with Oak Hill Road and First Street as presenting safety and comfort challenges for pedestrians.

The next step in elevating the protection of pedestrians at this intersection is the restriction of right-turns on red for drivers. This project could potentially be coordinated with the upcoming Smart Signals project.

While this project has not been publicly proposed in the past, it received support from the Transportation & Circulation Commission as part of the discussion at their September 18, 2023 meeting.

- Phase: Planning, Design and Construction
- Cost Estimate: \$80,000 - \$100,000
- Timeline: Immediate

Construction of St. Mary's Drop-Off and Sidewalk Gap Closure Project

As part of the Connecting Lafayette: Downtown Pathways and Schools Safety Project, funding has been allocated towards the planning and design of a formal drop-off / pick-up location on St. Mary's Road to serve Stanley Middle School and for an expansion of the pathway along the north side of St. Mary's Road between Acampo Drive and Topper Lane. This work is expected to be completed by the end of 2024 along with the design of the proposed pathways on School Street and Topper Lane. To date, construction funding for this project has not been identified, and it is expected that grant opportunities would be required in order to fund this work.

- Phase: Construction
- Cost Estimate: TBD, dependent on result of planning and design phases
- Timeline: Late 2024, after the project's design and cost estimate are determined

Pleasant Hill Road Center-Median Multi-Use Pathway Project

The City received funding, facilitated by Assembly Member Bauer-Kahan to complete design work for a center median pedestrian and bicycle pathway between Mt. Diablo Boulevard and the Deer Hill Road / Stanley Blvd intersection. The intent of this project is to eliminate conflicts between pedestrians and bicyclists at the multiple on- and off-ramps with SR-24. In addition, the project would result in the closure of a gap in both the pedestrian and bicycle networks through the provision of a complete, fully separated pathway where today incomplete networks exist. The project would not result in any change to the existing vehicle lane configuration; no lanes of traffic would be eliminated and no changes to the operation of the intersections would be required. Grant funding would be required to construct the project, once design is complete. At this time, funding for construction is not available.

In addition, Staff has also received direction to advance a planning and design effort related to an alternate multi-use pathway alignment along the east side of Pleasant Hill Road, between Stanley Boulevard and Mt. Diablo Boulevard. In 2024 Staff will prepare a strip map for the alignment with a pros/cons analysis and conduct an analysis of the results of the Rectangular Rapid Flashing Beacon (RRFB) installation at the crossings of the ramps. This work is not expected to be completed until late in 2024 or early 2025.

Further pathway alignment input may be provided as part of a proposed Corridor Management Study to be led by the Contra Costa Transportation Authority (CCTA). The timeline for that study has not yet been determined.

- Phase: Construction
- Cost Estimate: TBD, dependent on result of current design phase
- Timeline: Late 2024, after the project's design and cost estimate are determined

Grant Programs

The following list represents some of the recurring grant programs that are typically available to Lafayette. The list is not meant to be exhaustive but instead provide some representative examples of the recurring grant programs that may be available for some Lafayette projects.

- Active Transportation Program (ATP) – This is the largest bike/ped grant funding program available in California. The purpose of this statewide program is to encourage an increased use of active transportation modes of transportation such as biking and walking. Eligible projects include infrastructure projects, non-infrastructure projects (e.g., education, encouragement and enforcement activities that further the goal of the ATP), projects that combine Infrastructure and Non-Infrastructure components, and Plans. Subsequent cycles for this Program are typically advertised every other year. It is administrated in a bifurcated manner: there is an initial statewide application review by Caltrans and a separate application review by MTC. The reality is this is the most time-consuming grant application to prepare and, unfortunately, despite submitting several applications in past cycles, Lafayette has never been successful in receiving

funding. The program prioritizes projects that are located in underserved communities throughout the state and, thus, Lafayette typically does not compete well.

- One Bay Area Grant (OBAG) – This is a relatively “rich” grant program administered by MTC. Calls for projects are approximately 3-5 years apart. It is a rather general program, although its legislative basis is to address critical climate and focused growth goals of Plan Bay Area 2050 and it is used to coordinate and deploy strategies that are best suited for regional implementation. This includes project types such as Complete Streets projects, projects that directly address traffic safety, and Safe Routes to Schools programs. Projects are prioritized if they are located in MTC-designated Priority Development Areas. Of note, funds in this program are typically federally sourced, which triggers NEPA and other federal reporting requirements. Lafayette was successful in the most recent OBAG program, which is providing partial funding for the ‘Connecting Lafayette: Downtown Pathways and Schools Safety Project’.
- Transportation Development Act (TDA) – Locally, the TDA grant is administered through MTC, via Contra Costa County Public Works Department, and this source of funding is designated for pedestrian and bicycle projects. Eligible TDA-3 project types include the construction and/or engineering of a bicycle or pedestrian capital or quick-build project, among other project types aimed at improving mobility and safety. Projects must be included in a locally approved bicycle, pedestrian, transit, multimodal, Complete Streets, or other relevant plan, must be ready to be implemented, and must be completed within the three-year eligibility period. In the past, Lafayette has been successful in receiving funds through this program; however, TDA funds received by Lafayette in past years have not exceeded \$100,000.
- Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP) - The Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP) is a core Federal-aid program with the purpose of achieving a significant reduction in traffic fatalities and serious injuries on all public roads, including non-State-owned roads. Adoption of our Local Road Safety Plan (LRSP) makes Lafayette eligible to apply for funding through this program, and future projects should be identified in the LRSP as being a safety issue.
- State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) - The STIP is a multi-year capital improvement program of transportation projects on and off the State Highway System, funded with revenues from the Transportation Investment Fund and other funding sources. STIP programming generally occurs every two years. The purpose of this program is to provide state transportation funds for state highway improvements, intercity rail, and regional highway and transit improvements. Funded STIP projects are large-scale infrastructure projects and typically Lafayette does not have projects large enough to be competitive in this program.

Not included in this list of recurring grant opportunities are other recent funding opportunities, such as the following. At this time it is unclear whether these grant opportunities will have recurring future funding cycles.

- Congressional Directed Spending Requests/Federal Appropriations - commonly referred to as "earmark" requests, this is a process through which members of the U.S. Congress can request specific funding allocations for projects or programs within their districts or states. Lafayette has been successful in recent years in obtaining some funding through this source.

- Federal and State Government Community Benefits Grants – these grants represent financial resources provided by various government entities to support initiatives that serve the public good and address specific community needs. These grants fund projects and programs that have a positive impact on communities.
- BART’s Safe Routes to BART – this grant, administered by BART, is designed to help local agencies improve safety and access for BART customers traveling to BART stations by walking and biking. The grant would fund construction for ‘shovel-ready’ safety and access projects for people traveling to/from a BART station by foot or bicycle.
- Caltrans’ Sustainable Transportation Planning Grant – this state grant opportunity funds local and regional multimodal transportation and land use planning projects that further the region’s Regional Transportation Plan (Plan Bay Area), contribute to the State’s greenhouse gas reduction targets, address the needs of underserved communities, and assist in achieving the Caltrans Mission and Grant Program Objectives.
- MTC’s Local Parking Management Program – this grant, administered through MTC, is intended to support projects that develop parking management plans or conduct specific planning activities necessary to implement parking management projects or programs. In 2023 Lafayette was successful in obtaining \$170,000 in funding through this grant for a Downtown Lafayette Parking Management Program.
- US Department of Transportation’s Safe Streets and Roads for All (SS4A) Program - The purpose of SS4A grants is to improve roadway safety by significantly reducing or eliminating roadway fatalities and serious injuries through safety action plan development and refinement and implementation focused on all users, including pedestrians, bicyclists, public transportation users, motorists, personal conveyance and micromobility users, and commercial vehicle operators.


Recommendation

Receive staff report and public input regarding the candidate citywide transportation projects and information on possible grant opportunities.








ATTACHMENT A

2024 Transportation Work Plan

2024 TRANSPORTATION & CIRCULATION COMMISSION WORK PROGRAM

ID	WORK ITEM	STATUS	2024 TIMEFRAME (ESTIMATED)				JANUARY 2024 STATUS UPDATE
			Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	
Projects Currently Underway							
a	School Zone Speed Limit Study	Study underway to determine reduced speed limits around schools					Study is underway and will set recommended speed limits around all of the City's schools
b	Olympic Roundabout Safety Improvements	Designs to be finalized in anticipation of a summer 2024 construction project					Input needed on 80% design set for improvements at roundabout and approaches to the roundabout
c	Pleasant Hill Road Center Median Pathway Project	Input to be sought on 60% design plans					Project expected to be discussed at TCC after a public Open House in winter 2024
d	Pleasant Hill Road East Side Pathway Project	Develop strip map with pros/cons versus center median pathway and evaluate results of RRFB installation					Staff work will not start until 4th Quarter 2024
e	2024 Overlay Project	Designs to be finalized in anticipation of a summer 2024 construction project					Input needed on sidewalk design proposed along segment of Mt. Diablo Blvd as part of overlay project
f	Connecting Lafayette: Downtown Pathways and Schools Safety Project	Concept designs and public engagement phases are underway					Concept designs for project elements to be discussed at TCC prior to 2nd public Open House in spring 2024. Detail design phase expected to be completed towards end of 2024
g	Five Year CIP	Priorities for transportation capital projects for next five years are being considered					Input on anticipated capital projects for upcoming five-year period
h	Pedestrian Pathway Near Springhill School	Design phase to begin in 2024					Design phase to begin on pathway project in 2024
i	Smart Signal Project	Design phase to begin in 2024					Informational item to be discussed at TCC
Ongoing Programs							
j	2024 Traffic Calming Projects	Design of 2024 Traffic Calming projects to begin in 1Q24					Public hearing needed for proposed 2024 traffic calming projects
k	School Safety Near-Term Implementation	Near-term priority projects continuing to be installed					Substantial completion of near-term list of priority projects expected in 2024
l	TAR Updates	Ongoing as needed					TCC input on staff response to TARs that have been received
m	Development Project Review	Ongoing as needed					TCC input on proposed development projects
n	Grants to be pursued (TBD)	Ongoing as needed					Viable grant opportunities are TBD

2024 TRANSPORTATION & CIRCULATION COMMISSION WORK PROGRAM

ID	WORK ITEM	STATUS	2024 TIMEFRAME (ESTIMATED)				JANUARY 2024 STATUS UPDATE
			Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	
Anticipated New Tasks/Initiatives							
o	Moraga Road Planning Exercise	Engagement on potential changes to Moraga Road in anticipation of 2026 repaving effort					Public process expected to begin in 2024 on potential post-paving improvements along Moraga Road
p	Downtown Parking Management Planning Study	Study will identify parking management strategies that seek an efficient balance between future parking demand, new housing, and increased multi-modal travel through downtown Lafayette					Study will begin once grant funding is obtained by MTC, anticipated in late spring 2024
q	Circulation Element Update	Update to Circulation Element expected to be initiated in 2024 after update to Land Use Element					Input on update to Circulation Element, to reflect updated state guidelines and requirements around Lafayette's multi-modal transportation network
r	Mt. Diablo Blvd. Corridor Plan	Mt. Diablo Corridor Plan may be combined with Circulation Element Update, and is expected to commence in 2024					Planning Department Staff are taking the lead on this effort to plan multi-modal transportation routes and connections while preserving and enhancing downtown character
s	Right Turn on Red Restrictions along Mt. Diablo Blvd	Consideration of pedestrian safety improvements at key downtown intersections					Consideration of project has not yet begun
Desired Initiatives (Schedules Unknown)							
t	EBMUD Aqueduct Pathway	Staff is seeking funding to initiate detailed design					Staff considering desired connections between EBMUD Aqueduct Pathway and other existing and proposed ped/bike pathways
u	Olympic Blvd Corridor Study	Conduct design for potential future projects to be prepared for future grant opportunities					CCTA expected to lead multi-jurisdictional corridor plan to update design for Lamorinda Trail to Iron Horse Trail project