

# Agenda Report

October 15, 2018

**TO:** Honorable Mayor and City Council  
**FROM:** City Manager  
**SUBJECT:** Orange Grove Boulevard Complete Streets Project

## **RECOMMENDATION:**

It is recommended that the City Council:

1. Find that the proposed actions are exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act ("CEQA") pursuant to State CEQA Guidelines Section 15061(b)(3), the General Rule the CEQA only applies to projects that may have an effect on the environment and;
2. Remove the Complete Streets - Orange Grove Boulevard (Pedestrian and Bicycle Improvements) Project (Priority 5.40) from the Future Projects Section of the Capital Improvement Program, thereby eliminating the "road diet" option for Orange Grove Boulevard.

## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:**

On September 17, 2018, Councilmember Gordo requested that the City Council agendaize for discussion the Orange Grove Boulevard Complete Streets Project. To facilitate that discussion staff has prepared this report, which recommends terminating the project and removing it from the Capital Improvement Program Budget.

## **BACKGROUND:**

The City Council, through the General Plan Mobility Element, has adopted several policies intended to promote multi-modal transportation and enhance safety for drivers, bicyclists and pedestrians. These policies help guide the development of the Capital Improvement Program (CIP).

Since Fiscal Year 2012 the CIP has included the Complete Streets - Orange Grove Blvd. (Pedestrian and Bicycle Improvement) Project. This project would convert Orange Grove Boulevard from Allen Avenue to Sierra Madre Villa Avenue (1.8 miles) from a

vehicular-oriented street to a “complete street” by removing two vehicular traffic lanes to manage vehicle speeds, enhance pedestrian crossings and provide space for bicycles. The proposed street configuration, commonly referred to as a “road diet” would include pedestrian curb extensions to shorten crossing distances at some intersections; dedicated bike lanes in both directions made possible by the lane reduction; a center turn lane/median, and one lane of traffic in each direction. The project is currently unfunded and as such, is part of the Future Projects section of the CIP.

Typically, it takes several years for unfunded projects to move into the funded category of the CIP. However, with the passage of SB 1 and the pending influx of additional funds for street maintenance, the Public Works Department proposed to reconstruct and resurface Orange Grove Boulevard from Lake Avenue to Sierra Madre Villa Avenue. Because the pavement reconstruction project would preclude modification of the pavement surface for approximately seven to ten years, the Transportation Department took the opportunity to accelerate many of the unfunded capital project’s goals through the restriping of Orange Grove Blvd. as a part of the reconstruction work

Accordingly, the Department initiated a public outreach effort that included resident surveys and community meetings. While many residents indicated support for the proposed modifications, a significant number, voiced concern about the proposed reconfiguration, many of whom live adjacent to the Orange Grove corridor. These concerns included fears that widespread congestion would be created, which would increase travel times and push traffic into adjacent neighborhoods. These concerns were clearly articulated at a community meeting held on March 22, 2018 at PCC Community Education Center attended by several hundred residents, the Mayor and two Councilmembers and the City Manager.

At the meeting staff announced that the reconstruction and resurfacing of Orange Grove would be delayed for appropriately 12 months to allow time for the Water and Power Department to install a new distribution line in the street prior to moving forward with reconstruction. In retrospect, despite the Complete Streets project being included in the CIP for several years, it appeared to have been rushed as a result of the resurfacing project. However, given that the project would now be delayed for approximately one year, staff hoped to re-engage with the community, through the establishment of a broad-based community working group focusing on the area east of Lake Avenue. A separate working-group would also be established to focus on the area west of Lake. To date, efforts have been made to establish these groups, as illustrated below:

East Working Group		West Working Group	
Orange Grove Boulevard Resident	Confirmed	Keep Pasadena Moving	Confirmed
Orange Grove Boulevard Resident	Confirmed	Keep Pasadena Moving	Confirmed
Orange Grove Boulevard Resident	Confirmed	Pasadena Complete Streets Coal.	Confirmed
Orange Grove Boulevard Resident	TBD	Pasadena Complete Streets Coal.	Confirmed
Orange Grove Boulevard Resident	TBD	Madison Neigh. Partners MNP	Invited
Keep Pasadena Moving	Confirmed	Mountain Place Neigh. Assn.	Invited
Keep Pasadena Moving	Confirmed	Villa Parke Neigh. Assn.	Confirmed
Pasadena Complete Streets Coalition	Confirmed	Asociacion de Vecinos Unidos	Confirmed

Pasadena Complete Streets Coalition	Confirmed	Villa Marengo HOA	Confirmed
East Orange Grove Neigh. Assn.	Confirmed	Community Arms Residents Council	Invited
Daisy-Villa Neigh. Assn.	Confirmed	Lincoln Triangle Neigh. Assn.	Invited
No. Pasadena Heights Neigh. Assn.	Confirmed	Sunset Avenue Neigh. Assn.	Invited
Bungalow Heaven Neigh. Assn.	Confirmed	Madison Elementary School	Invited
Loma Vista Neighbors	Invited	Friends Western School	Invited
Jefferson Park Neigh. Assn.	Confirmed	CM Kennedy Recommendation	Confirmed
Crawford Vista LMD Association	Confirmed	CM Kennedy Recommendation	Confirmed
Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary School	Invited	CM Kennedy Recommendation	Confirmed
Norma Coombs Elementary School	Confirmed	CM Kennedy Recommendation	Confirmed
		CM Gordo Recommendation	Confirmed
		CM Gordo Recommendation	Confirmed
		CM Gordo Recommendation	Confirmed

Staff planned for the working groups to meet a total of four times beginning this month, with the final meeting to occur in January 2019. Through the course of the meetings, and with the assistance of a facilitator, the working groups would consider various options to achieve the goal of enhancing public safety along the route for all users and help to determine the preferred solution(s). Once the working groups reached consensus on the potential projects, the findings would then be presented to the community at large. Subsequently, staff would develop recommendations for City Council consideration.

While staff is prepared to continue with this effort, should that be Council direction, the City Manager believes it would not be productive to do so and instead is recommending removal of the Compete Streets - Orange Grove Boulevard (Pedestrian and Bicycle Improvements) Project from the CIP. This recommendation is based on the following three reasons:

1. **Inability to achieve community consensus.** As evidenced at the March 22, 2018 community meeting and at recent City Council meetings, it is clear that any project that would remove travel lanes along Orange Grove is not supported by a significant number of residents along the corridor, possibly the majority. Perhaps, had there been longer lead time and more structured community involvement, a different consensus would have emerged. Unfortunately, given what has transpired to date, any further process is likely to be met with a lack of trust and suspicion that is not conducive to achieving buy-in and consensus from the community.
2. **Lack of funding for alternative options.** As indicated above, the Complete Streets - Orange Grove Boulevard (Pedestrian and Bicycle Improvements) Project is currently unfunded. While the Transportation staff saw a cost-effective way to achieve many of the project goals through the Orange Grove Blvd. pavement reconstruction project, no funds have been identified that would be available to pay for alternatives to the proposed restriping that might be identified as preferred options resulting from the Working Group process.

3. **Focusing resources on greatest needs.** In the interest of addressing safety and mobility issues in Pasadena with the limited funding currently available, resources may be better spent focusing on areas with the greatest need for remediation (whether on Orange Grove Boulevard or elsewhere) rather than attempting to achieve cost-effectiveness through projects of opportunity.

It is therefore recommended by the City Manager that this particular effort be terminated and that the City Council remove the project from the CIP. It is important to note that this recommendation in no way suggests that the City should abandon the policies it has adopted as part of the Mobility Element. There have been numerous successful projects within the City that advance these aims and there is every reason to expect that with proper planning and robust community engagement, success will continue in this regard.

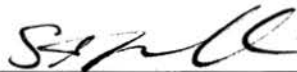
### **ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS:**

The proposed action has been reviewed for compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act and is exempt per Section 15061 (b) (3). This action is covered by the general rule that CEQA only applies to projects that have the potential for causing a significant effect on the environment.

### **FISCAL IMPACT:**

There is no fiscal impact to the FY 2019 Adopted Operating Budget as the costs for conducting the working groups have already been incorporated into the existing operating budget as Other Contract Services (10124003-811400). The potential costs of a modification to the Complete Streets Project - Orange Grove Boulevard (Pedestrian and Bicycle Improvements Project) in the Capital Improvement Program to include other safety enhancements as options to lane reconfiguration cannot be quantified until those potential safety enhancements are identified and cost estimated are developed.

Respectfully submitted,



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STEVE MERMELL  
City Manager