



MEMORANDUM

TO: City Council

FROM: Brian Pedrotti, Community Development Director

BY: Robin Dickerson, PE, City Engineer

SUBJECT: Consideration of Project Update and Approval of the Local Road Safety Plan (LRSP)

DATE: January 25, 2022

SUMMARY OF ACTION:

Consideration of a project update and adoption of a Resolution approving the Local Road Safety Plan (LRSP) to allow the City to continue to be eligible for Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP) Funding, which requires an approved LRSP starting with Cycle 11 in 2022. The LRSP also identifies the intersections and road segments with the highest relative severity of collisions and provides a list of improvement projects (which qualify for HSIP funding) and strategies to meet the listed goals of the Plan.

IMPACT ON FINANCIAL AND PERSONNEL RESOURCES:

The approval of the LRSP does not require any additional funding at this time. Projects identified in the LRSP will be incorporated into the City's Capital Improvement Program and submitted to Council for funding approval in the future as HSIP funding becomes available.

RECOMMENDATION:

Receive the project update and adopt the Resolution approving the LRSP.

BACKGROUND:

In 2019, Caltrans announced that starting in April 2022, applications for Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP) Cycle 11 funds will require a LRSP. In October 2019, the City Council authorized GHD, one of the City's on-call engineering consultants, to prepare the City's LRSP. The LRSP is a traffic safety planning document for local agencies to address unique roadway needs in their jurisdictions, including key safety activities and projects to ensure a safe public transportation system for all modes. The comprehensive document will help to guide the City's implementation of safety countermeasures and allow eligibility for funding in future HSIP grant applications. In November 2019, a Stakeholders Working Group was established as part of the LRSP process. From

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December 2019 to April 2021, four meetings were held with the Stakeholders Working Group to formulate and finalize the LRSP.

In May 2021, the City completed a Systemic Safety Analysis Report (SSAR), Attachment 2, with the assistance of a specialized consultant (GHD). The SSAR is a proactive safety report that focuses on evaluating an entire roadway network using a defined set of criteria. The SSAR analyzes crash history on an aggregate basis to identify high-risk roadway characteristics, rather than looking at high-collision concentration locations through site analysis. The goal of the SSAR is to assist local agencies to identify safety projects to submit for HSIP funding consideration.

The LRSP was completed in September 2021, and was presented to the Planning Commission on October 19, 2021 for review and comment to the City Council. Several comments were received from the Planning Commission focusing on the following areas, summarized below:

- The Commission expressed a desire for more public comment and engagement opportunities in the future;
- Questions were discussed regarding bike and pedestrian improvements, with a focus on the safety of pedestrians and bicyclists, particularly around schools; and
- The Commission recognized the importance of Police enforcement of safety requirements.

During the discussion, staff explained that many of the concerns regarding pedestrian and bicycle safety and improvements will be addressed in a future Active Transportation Plan (ATP), rather than the LRSP which is not a design document, and that the ATP will include a robust public outreach program.

In addition, staff hosted a meeting between a Planning Commissioner and GHD to facilitate the receipt of additional input, which resulted in revisions to the organization and readability of the document.

ANALYSIS OF ISSUES:

The HSIP is a Federal-aid program that incorporates a data-driven, strategic approach to improving highway safety that focuses on performance. California's Strategic Highway Safety Plan (SHSP) provides a strategic direction for the State's safety investment decisions, and the HSIP supports and finances projects that implement countermeasures to improve the safety of targeted roadways and intersections. As mentioned above, in 2019, Caltrans notified local agencies that the starting in 2022 (Cycle 11), an approved LRSP will be required with all future HSIP applications.

A LRSP provides a framework for organizing stakeholders to identify, analyze, and prioritize roadway safety improvements on local and rural roads. The process of developing an LRSP can be tailored to local protocols, needs, and issues. However,

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safety projects stemming from the plan need to be consistent with Federal and State project funding requirements if those funds will be used for project implementation. The plan should be viewed as a living document that can be continually reviewed and updated to reflect changing local needs and priorities, at a minimum it should be reviewed and updated every five years.

While the SHSP is used as a statewide approach for improving roadway safety, an LRSP can be a means for providing local and rural road owners with an opportunity to address unique highway safety needs in their jurisdictions while contributing to the success of the SHSP.

The LRSP utilizes a Vision Zero approach which strives to eliminate all traffic fatalities and severe injuries while increasing safe, healthy, and equitable mobility for all. Traditionally, traffic fatalities and severe injuries have been considered inevitable side effects of modern life. The reality is that these tragedies can be addressed over time by taking a proactive, preventative approach that prioritizes traffic safety as a public health issue.

The LRSP development process is broken down into six steps. The 6 steps are 1) establishment of a Stakeholders Working Group, 2) analysis of safety data, 3) determine challenge/emphasis areas, 4) identify strategies, 5) prioritize and incorporate strategies, and 6) evaluate and update the plan. These strategies are discussed further below.

Stakeholders Working Group

The LRSP is a data-driven process similar to the SSAR, except the LRSP includes a local stakeholders working group that represents the 5E's (Engineering, Enforcement, Education, Emergency Response and Emerging Technologies) to guide and develop the LRSP. The Stakeholders Working Group included staff representatives from the City's Community Development, Police, and Public Works Departments, the Five Cities Fire Authority, San Luis Obispo County, the City of Grover Beach, the City of Pismo Beach, Caltrans District 5, the Lucia Mar Unified School District, the San Luis Obispo Bike Club, and Bike SLO County. Preparing the LRSP facilitates local agency partnerships and collaboration, resulting in a prioritized list of improvements that contribute to the SHSP's overall vision and goals. The SHSP focuses on reducing fatal and severe injury collisions in certain "challenge and emphasis areas." The LRSP is a collaborative process that builds on the collision analysis from the SSAR through the local Stakeholders Working Group and guides the formation of the plan. The holistic approach of engaging stakeholders and the community in the development of the LRSP allows certain areas of concern to be analyzed that may not have otherwise appeared through crash pattern data. It also fosters, local, State, and agency partnerships to advance local road safety.

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The LRSP, through collaboration with the stakeholders working group, has developed 12 goals and established a process for measuring the success of each goal. The 12 goals are as follows:

1. Reduce the potential for fatal and severe injury collisions Citywide.
2. Reduce the potential for rear-end collisions Citywide.
3. Reduce the potential for bicycle and pedestrian collisions Citywide.
4. Improve the health and vitality of the community with a safety plan that encourages safety for pedestrians and bicyclists that is targeted to Arroyo Grande's local roadway needs.
5. Improve safety around schools with a connected multimodal system and improved crossings.
6. Increase walking, biking, and rolling (wheelchairs, skateboards, scooters, etc.) to the downtown district, to work, and to school.
7. Improve safety at uncontrolled intersection.
8. Increase driver and pedestrian education.
9. Reduce distracted driving.
10. Improve bicycle safety with additional bikeways and green bike lanes for vehicle to bicycle conflict areas.
11. Increase traffic enforcement.
12. Receive grant funding for LRSP identified projects.

Analysis of Safety Data

Focusing on roadway safety needs, the stakeholders working group evaluated collision data Citywide from the SSAR from 2014 to 2020. From 2014 to 2020, there were total of 276 collisions identified on City streets, which included 5 fatalities and 18 severe injuries. Broadside collisions were the most common type of collision and accounted for 84 incidents, followed by rear-end collisions at 76. The top violation category was unsafe speed, which accounted for 59 collisions, followed by automobile right-of-way violations resulting in 51 collisions. Based on this collision data, the top locations and segments in the City for collisions were identified as part of the LRSP.

Challenges/Emphasis Areas

The next step in the LRSP process was to determine the challenge or emphasis areas. The California SHSP identifies 16 challenge/emphasis areas for development of the LRSP. Based on the LRSP stakeholders working group recommendations, the LRSP focused on multiple challenge areas, including but not limited to bicyclists, intersections, pedestrians, distracted driving, aggressive driving/speeding, emerging technologies, and emergency response.

Due to the challenges of COVID over the past two years, public outreach included the use of a Social Pinpoint website hosted and managed by the City's consultant, GHD. Comments pertaining to speeding, pedestrian improvements, and bicycle improvements

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were received from the interactive map provided through the website, and detailed results can be found in Appendix A of the LRSP (provided in Exhibit A - Attachment 2).

Strategies, Prioritization and Incorporation

Based on the collision data, input from the stakeholders working group, and public input from the Social Pinpoint website, a list of improvement projects was developed, prioritized and incorporated into the LRSP. The Engineering Strategies for the plan include pedestrian improvements at signalized intersections, non-pedestrian improvements at signalized intersections, pedestrian improvements at uncontrolled locations, bike lane improvements along identified segments, road diets, signage improvements, curve-related improvements, striping and pavement marking improvements, and speed management. A full list of improvements and locations can be found in the LRSP. (See Exhibit A - Attachment 2.)

To complete the remaining 4 E's, the following strategies are also incorporated into the plan. Education Strategies include various education campaigns targeting pedestrians, drivers, bicyclists, and students. Emerging technologies include bicycle and video detection, use of changeable message signs, the use of a data collectors for speed and traffic volumes, and updating older technologies. Enforcement measures include the addition of full time and part-time motorcycle officers planned in the City's current biennial budget, targeted speed enforcement, and DUI saturation patrols. The final strategy, Emergency Response, includes continuing to provide administrative staff, continued dissemination of emergency preparedness information and the continued use of the Save a Life- PulsePoint Responder smart phone app designed to empower Five Cities Fire personnel and everyday citizens to save a life.

Letters of support from both Caltrans' District 5 office and the Lucia Mar Unified School District have been received and are incorporated into Appendix A of the LRSP (Exhibit A - Attachment 2).

Implementation, Evaluation, and Updates to the LRSP

In evaluating how to implement safety projects, a prioritized list of projects has been developed and can be found in Appendix C of the LRSP (Exhibit A - Attachment 2). Staff will look for opportunities to incorporate safety enhancements with the City's Capital Improvement Program. Obtaining funding for these projects will be critical. Additional funding opportunities are anticipated through grant funding, including HSIP, Active Transportation Program (ATP), Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality (CMAQ), Safe Routes to Schools, Sustainable Transportation Planning Grants, also known as Sustainable Communities, and Senate Bill 1 (SB1) grant and funding programs.

To evaluate the success of the plan, yearly collision analysis and an annual reconvening of the stakeholders group should take place over the next five years. In addition, staff continues to receive public feedback through individual citizens and ad-hoc groups that

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coalesce around neighborhood-specific traffic safety issues. Staff will continue to communicate and respond to these neighborhood or advisory groups as they organize. The information provided during this process would then be compared to the established goals in the LRSP. The goals will be updated and modified based on future data and feedback. The LRSP is a living document and will guide the City's roadway safety needs for the next five years. Applications for State and Federal funding to implement projects and strategies as identified in the plan will come back to the Council for approval. In addition, future modifications and updates to the plan itself are anticipated to come back to the City Council for review and adoption.

ALTERNATIVES:

The following alternatives are provided for the Council's consideration:

1. Receive the project update and adopt the Resolution approving the LRSP;
2. Receive the project update and do not approve the LRSP and provide further direction to staff regarding necessary changes to the LRSP; or
3. Provide other direction to staff.

ADVANTAGES:

The LRSP creates a framework to systematically identify and analyze local safety problems and recommended safety improvements for future HSIP funding and other available funding sources. The LRSP also provides the City with a prioritized list of improvements, strategies, and actions that contribute to California's SHSP overall visions and goals. Implementing the improvement projects and strategies identified in the LRSP will allow the City to meet the goals set forth in the plan.

DISADVANTAGES:

Future funding will be needed to implement the improvements and actions identified in the LRSP.

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW:

This action does not constitute a "project" within the meaning of California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines Section 15378 and is also exempt under CEQA Guidelines Section 15306 (information collection) and 15262 (planning or feasibility studies). Therefore, no environmental review is required. Each future project completed will evaluate environmental impacts on a project-by-project basis. The individual projects developed from the LRSP will include the necessary environmental reviews and studies.

PUBLIC NOTIFICATION AND COMMENTS:

The Agenda was posted at City Hall and on the City's website in accordance with Government Code Section 54954.2. Comments received through the public input process assisted in identifying some of the projects identified in the LRSP. Additional comments from the Planning Commission review have transformed the LRSP into the current document. At the time of report publication, no additional comments have been received.

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Attachments:

1. Proposed Resolution
2. Exhibit A to the Proposed Resolution (LRSP with appendices)
3. Systemic Safety Analysis Report (SSAR)