



City of Rialto

Legislation Text

File #: EDC-22-158, **Version:** 1

FOR Economic Development Committee [February 23, 2022]
TO: Honorable Economic Development Committee Members
FROM: David S. Hammer, P.E., City Engineer

Request Economic Development Committee Review the Pacific Electric Trail Expansion Feasibility Study and Recommend Approval by City Council.

BACKGROUND

On November 30, 2018, staff submitted an application for an SB1- 2018 Sustainable Communities Grant to conduct a feasibility analysis for the expansion of the City's Pacific Electric Trail. A successful planning grant project must directly benefit the multi-modal transportation system. Sustainable Communities Grants will also improve public health, social equity, environmental justice, and the environment, while addressing the needs of disadvantaged communities, engaging the public and community stakeholders, and integrating transportation and land use planning.

The City of Rialto (City) received an award letter dated May 17, 2018, from Caltrans Office of Transportation Planning stating that the State selected the City of Rialto to receive a grant award of \$264,705 with a local match of \$34,295, for a total amount of \$299,000 toward the proposed Pacific Electric (PE) Trail Feasibility Study. On June 11, 2019, City Council accepted the grant. The California Transportation Commission (CTC) allocated the funds, and the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) issued a Notice to Proceed effective November 15, 2019.

The Rialto PE Trail Expansion Feasibility Study determines constraints, opportunities, and alignment options for extending the PE Trail. The PE Trail is an existing 20-mile pedestrian and Class I bicycle path located on right-of-way previously used by the Pacific Electric railway. The proposed study will evaluate the feasibility of extending the trail from its current terminus at Cactus Avenue to the eastern boundary of the City at Pepper Avenue. The San Bernardino County Transportation Authority (SBCTA) and Union Pacific Railroad (UPRR) currently own the right-of-way. SBCTA has expressed support for the project through a letter of support for the grant application. The study will investigate right-of-way availability and coordinate with businesses actively using an existing railway on the corridor. The extension would provide an active transportation option for disadvantaged communities and connect the trail to Downtown Rialto. The feasibility study includes extensive opportunities for stakeholder and community input during preparation of a concept plan.

On September 22, 2020, City Council awarded a Professional Service Agreement to Alta Planning + Design in the amount of \$268,875 for the Pacific Electric Trail Expansion Feasibility Study.

ANALYSIS/DISCUSSION:

The City's Pacific Electric Trail Expansion Feasibility Study looks at benefits to the local community stemming from implementation of a multi-use pedestrian/bicycle facility along an existing rail corridor.

This study assesses opportunities, issues and constraints related to extending the PE Trail from its current terminus at Cactus Avenue to the eastern City boundary at Pepper Avenue. The ultimate project would provide the following benefits to the community:

- Expansion of the existing PE Trail across the entire City
- Recreational opportunities for disadvantaged and low-income residents
- Public health enhancements through reduced vehicle trips
- A safe route for non-motorized travel between residences, workplaces, points of interest and schools

This study documents the basis of design, right-of-way constraints, environmental concerns, stakeholder input and public feedback with respect to proposed design alternatives.

On April 28, 2021, a draft version of the study was presented to the Economic Development Committee. The direction received was to investigate coordination with San Bernardino regarding the eastern trail terminus; look at opportunities for continued project funding; address safety and wayfinding in the study.

On November 17, a draft version of the study was presented to the Economic Development Committee. It was recommended that the feasibility study be revised to show use of the full railroad right of way given the live track will be decommissioned.

The feasibility study should show use of the full right of way with the trail aligned similar to the PE trail to the west and landscaping throughout the rest of the right of way consistent with the PE trail to the west.

In order to prepare a study that is reflective of community desires, public input was solicited to better understand existing usage, concerns, and amenity preferences. The project team worked closely with City staff to identify key project stakeholders, as well as opportunities to engage with a breadth of community stakeholders. This work culminated in a comprehensive outreach and engagement approach that provided opportunities for stakeholders to learn about the PE Trail Feasibility Study and its goals, share concerns, and inform the decision-making process and ultimate project recommendations.

A preferred alternative has been selected based on this input. The recommended improvements include:

- 10-ft wide PCC (Class I) Multi-Use Trail with 2-ft graded shoulders
- 4-ft high barrier fence the full length of the trail
- Pedestrian-scale lighting the full length of the trail
- Trailhead/parking lot on the east side of Cactus Avenue
- ADA compliant curb ramps and driveways at all street crossings
- Landscape and Irrigation improvements along the trail
- New and/ or modified existing railroad crossing signals
- Other amenities (bike racks, hydration stations, benches, etc.) along the trail
- Signage and striping per CA MUTCD

The Preliminary Engineer's Opinion of Probable Construction Cost for the proposed improvements is \$5,757,300, which includes a 25% contingency to account for potential design changes and cost

escalation. It is also estimated that final design and construction management would cost approximately \$575,730 each, for an estimated overall project cost of \$6,909,000.

Funding for implementing the PE Trail Feasibility Study recommendations may come from a variety of sources including matching grants, sales tax or other taxes, bond measures, or public/private partnerships. Funding streams are increasingly becoming more competitive, requiring justifications that focus on equity, feasibility, and greenhouse gas emission reduction goals. A description of funding opportunities is provided in the Study.

This Feasibility Study is the first step in the project delivery process. Subsequent activities include completion of construction documents (final design), followed by advertisement, bid and award for construction. Depending on available funding the project may be constructed at once, in segments, or with elements such as landscaping amenities deferred to a later date when additional funding is available.

A copy of the Pacific Electric Trail Feasibility Study is included as **Attachment 1**.

RECOMMENDATION:

Staff requests that the Economic Development Committee recommend approval of the Pacific Electric Trail Expansion Feasibility Study by City Council.