



CITY COUNCIL AGENDA REPORT

CITY HALL

CITY OF SONORA 94 N. WASHINGTON STREET, SONORA, CA 95370 P: (209) 532-4541
SERVICE, INNOVATION, INTEGRITY, COLLABORATION, RESPECT, LEADERSHIP

DATE: October 6, 2025

TO: Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council

FROM: Rebecca Neilon, Grant Writer and Funding Specialist

SUBJECT: Receive a Presentation on Three (3) Potential Grant Opportunities for the City of Sonora: an Evacuation Route Improvement Plan, the Sonora Creek Restoration and Parking Lot Removal & Replacement Plan, and the Downtown Walkability Plan, with Direction to Support Grant Writing Efforts, Including a Budget Amendment and Task Order in the Amount of \$75,000.

RECOMMENDATION:

Consider Approving Consultant Staff to Apply to Three Grant Programs and Approving Dewberry's Amendment Request for the City Engineering Task Order to Accomplish this work.

- Planning Study Grant for a **City-Wide Parking and Evacuation Plan** through the Caltrans Sustainable Transportation Planning Program.
- Planning Study Grant- **Sonora Creek Restoration & Farmers Market Parking Lot Removal and Replacement Plan**, Through the CA Wildlife Conservation Board (WCB) Stream Restoration Planning Grant Programs.
- Planning and Construction Grant – **Downtown Sonora Walkability Improvements**, California Transportation Commission's Active Transportation Program (ATP).

BACKGROUND:

The City of Sonora is currently facing numerous challenges concerning transportation resilience, including congested corridors, parking shortages, and flooding issues. This staff report discusses three grant funding programs that can help advance solutions for three projects aimed at addressing these known challenges. These challenges could be addressed by improving the City's stormwater system, restoring Sonora Creek, and resolving existing problems related to the conditions of the streets along Main Street/Washington and the connecting side streets.

All three projects are included in the 2024-2034 CIP, and all are the result of previous planning opportunities, including the Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMPG). Eligibility for each of these funding opportunities is made possible by the planning work already completed by the City. An excellent example of the benefits of early planning work is the inclusion of many Vision Sonora



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Elements in the Caltrans State Highway Operation and Protection Program (SHOPP) project to rehabilitate pavement on Highway 49 through Sonora and Jamestown.

Because the City has the foresight to create this planning document, it can be incorporated into the Caltrans project.

DISCUSSION / ANALYSIS:

Aligning the City's infrastructure needs with available funding programs has identified three candidate opportunities outlined in Table 1 below.

Table 1: Proposed Projects and Grant Programs

Project Name	Phase to be Funded	Grant Program	Amount to be Requested	Approximate Match Request	Amount to be Requested
Sonora City-Wide Evacuation Route Improvements Plan	Planning Study	Caltrans Sustainable Transportation Planning Program	\$350,000	\$40,000 <i>(staff time can be used as an In-Kind Match)</i>	\$350,000
Sonora Creek Restoration & Farmers Market Parking Lot Removal and Replacement Plan	Planning Study	CA Wildlife Conservation Board (WCB)	\$250,000	\$0	\$250,000
Downtown Sonora Walkability Improvements	All Phases Start to Construction	CA Active Transportation Program	\$6,000,000	\$60K to \$1.2M <i>(lower matches will make the grant less competitive)</i>	\$6,000,000

Sonora City-Wide Evacuation Route Improvements: If successful, this grant will fund a planning study to evaluate routes through Sonora and investigate options for increased capacity. These options will



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include, but are not limited to, identification of parallel routes and parking modifications. This application will be submitted through the Caltrans Sustainable Transportation funding program and will require an 11.47% funding match. This is an excellent program for local agencies to improve the resiliency of their transportation network. This application has a high probability of obtaining funding.

Sonora Creek Restoration & Farmers Market Parking Lot Removal and Replacement Plan: If successful, this grant will fund a Planning study to evaluate the feasibility of creating a retention basin on Sonora Creek below the parking lot bounded by Stewart Street, Theall Street, and Shepherd Street. This study will evaluate the feasibility and benefits of converting this parking lot into a retention basin to slow down large stormwater flows, thereby alleviating flooding issues at the confluence of the Main Drain and Sonora Creek. Additionally, this study will investigate the creation of a creek walk along Sonora Creek, which would open this space to the community and expand options for non-motorized transportation. An important component of this study will be the identification of alternative parking options and locations for the Farmers Market, which currently takes place at the existing parking lot. This program does not have match requirements; however, providing a match will improve the competitiveness of the application.

Downtown Sonora Walkability Improvements: This grant application, submitted through the State's Active Transportation Program (ATP), will request funding for all phases of a project to enhance walkability in downtown Sonora. The project area will include sidewalk improvements through the downtown core and on connecting side streets. The exact limits will be determined as an initial item of work. Additionally, components of Vision Sonora will be incorporated throughout. This program is extremely competitive; however, we have had success with it in the past and understand what needs to be included to submit a strong application.

FISCAL IMPACT:

The estimated total cost of this work is \$75,000. To accommodate the \$75,000 budget adjustment for FY25/26, Staff propose to reallocate funds from the approved FY25/26 budget as follows:

- Source of Funds:
 - \$30,000 Main Drain Grant Funds
 - \$45,000 City Sidewalk Assessments
- Use of Funds:
 - \$20,000 Caltrans Sustainable Transportation Planning Program
 - \$20,000 CA Wildlife Conservation Board (WCB)
 - \$35,000 CA Active Transportation Program



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This reallocation ensures that the City can fund these critical programs without exceeding the approved FY25/26 budget. The adjustment maintains fiscal neutrality, as the total reallocated amount of \$75,000 is fully covered by the identified funding sources. No additional appropriations are required.

If the council decides to pursue these applications, the budget for each will be added to the City Engineer's contract.

ATTACHMENTS:

Task Order No. 26-6 Funding Opportunity Grant Applications

CORE COUNCIL PRIORITIES:

Fiscal Responsibility and Stability, Infrastructure and Engineering, Public Safety and Disaster Preparedness, Economic Development/Growth and General Plan, Homelessness Issues, Staffing - Salary, Benefits, Training, and Retention