

INDIAN WELLS CITY COUNCIL

September 5, 2024



To: City Council
From: Public Works Department
Prepared by: Ken Seumalo, P.E., Public Works Director
Subject: **Comprehensive Traffic Safety Action Plan**

RECOMMENDED ACTIONS:

Council **APPROVES** the Comprehensive Traffic Safety Action Plan and the accompanying Resolution; and

FINDS the project to be exempt from the provisions of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) pursuant to Section 15061 (b)(c).

BACKGROUND:

At the regularly scheduled City Council meeting held on June 20, 2024, the City Council received and filed a presentation about the City-wide Comprehensive Traffic Safety Action Plan (SAP). The SAP identifies areas with higher-than-average injury or property damage accidents. It also provides a "Tool Box" of potential fixes to specific issues (e.g. rear-end collisions, etc.). The SAP is also a supporting document for applications in the City's efforts to win Regional, State and Federal funding grants. Many of the grant applications ask for information about the approval date and a copy of the approved Grant Resolution which was not a part of the "Receive and File" action. Some grant applications require the adoption of the SAP.

Staff is preparing for the next round of Highway Safety Improvement Program and Safe Streets for All grant applications. The grants will help fund the proposed entrance at Casa Dorado and provide additional funding for any improvements resulting from the community outreach process in the Safer Streets project. The SAP does not obligate the City to build specific improvements, it is a support document that underscores the priority the Council's places on traffic safety throughout the City.

Over the past few years, Public Works staff have been tasked to identify traffic safety issues in the community, in response to community and Council requests to examine speed, traffic collisions, and various other traffic safety issues. The completion of a traffic study would assist staff in identifying areas of concern and addressing specific community traffic-related concerns. Staff sought funding from various state and federal grant authorities.

In January 2023, the City was awarded a "Safe Streets for All" grant in the amount of \$200,000 from the Federal Highway Administration ("FHWA"). After conducting a request for proposal process, Kimley-Horn & Associates was selected to conduct the Safety Action Plan (SAP). The project began in October 2023 with internal meetings between Kimley-Horn and Staff to share any collection of data, relevant city documents, and discuss areas of potential safety issues. The project also included a series of community engagement meetings to gather feedback from the community and public safety officials. Meetings were held on:

- January 20, 2024 – Stakeholder's Meeting 1
- February 7, 2024 – Public Workshop 1
- March 20, 2024 – Safety Summit
- March 26, 2024 – Stakeholder's Meeting 2
- April 17, 2024 – Public Workshop 2

The Stakeholder's Meetings included law enforcement, fire department, education, ADA Advocate, Resident Pedestrian Advocate, Resident Bicycle Advocate, Chambers of Commerce, SunLine Transit, CVAG, Caltrans District 8, City of Palm Desert and City of La Quinta. The two Public Workshops and the Safety Summit included residents, interested public members, and other stakeholders.

In addition to the in-person meetings, the City hosted an extensive online engagement from February 15, 2024, to March 15, 2024. Through an interactive map, members of the public were allowed to identify categories of interest (walk, bike, ADA, vehicle and other) on a map and leave comments and concerns they perceived about specific locations. Approximately 47 stakeholder comments were left on the map with concerns including traffic speeds throughout the City, proximity of vehicles to pedestrians along Eldorado Drive and Fairway Drive, Westbound Highway 111 vehicles using the right turn pocket at Cook Street as a passing lane, etc.

An online survey was also conducted during the same time period, including an email blast to residents. The City received approximately 500 stakeholder responses, with the most common concerns including the need for additional bicycle lanes at various locations, additional pedestrian walkways, speed/congestion issues, and facilities improvements (e.g., like use of traffic circles, speed humps, etc.). The feedback provided by the public from both the interactive map and the survey is available in Appendix of the SAP (Attachment #1).

Additionally, on February 7, 2024, Kimely Horn staff, City staff, and interested stakeholders conducted a field visit to observe 10 different intersections to observe their operation and have a better understanding of any issues at each location. The site visits provided an opportunity for all stakeholders to see the traffic operations firsthand and observe the potential issues that reduce safety in the area.

At the conclusion of these community and stakeholder meetings, Kimely Horn developed the City of Indian Wells' Safety Action Plan which includes a variety of options, called a "toolbox" to address any issues.

The completion of a comprehensive traffic study can also be utilized by staff to seek transportation improvement grants. Those cities that have adopted a traffic safety plan score more competitively on grant applications. Certain grants require a SAP to be completed to even be considered.

DISCUSSION:

The City of Indian Wells' Safety Action Plan (SAP) meets a Council Goal to identify and improve the safety of the City's transportation network. The SAP examines and compiles data on the various types of accidents in the community, identify locations in the City where accidents are more prevalent, locations where traffic improvements may improve traffic safety, and address other modes of transportation concerns, common in the community (e.g., pedestrian, bicycle, and golf carts). The plan analyzes crash data throughout the City to identify high-risk accident locations and analyses potential causes of the accidents. This analysis utilized crash history from January 1, 2018 through December 31, 2022, to thoroughly review the City's transportation network to:

1. Identify factors in the transportation network that inhibit safety for all roadway users;
2. Improve safety at specific high-crash locations, and reduce serious injury and fatal collisions; and,
3. Develop safety measures using the four E's of safety: Engineering, Enforcement, Education, and Emergency Response to encourage safer driver behavior and lower severity outcomes.

With this plan, the City continues its safety efforts to enhance the City's transportation network, reduce traffic fatalities and serious injury-related crashes, and the goals set forth in the City's General Plan (IIC1, IIC2, IIC3):

- Provide a safe and efficient street system that links all parts of the area for the movement of people and goods.
- Provide Indian Wells' residents with a choice of travel modes.
- Provide a street system that contributes to residents' quality of life and minimizes impacts on the environment.

In addition, this plan further meets these General Plan Goals thru the following objectives:

1. Identify areas with a high risk of crashes.
2. Illustrate the value of a comprehensive safety program and the systemic process.
3. Plan future safety improvements for near-, mid-, and long-term.

4. Define safety projects for federal, state, and regional funding considerations.

The SAP identified seven (7) project locations as priority projects based on an evaluation of crash data, community and stakeholder input, and equity considerations, that were chosen to be representative of the corridor and intersection configurations throughout the city:

1. Intersection: Fred Waring Drive & Eldorado Drive
2. Mini Corridor: Highway 111: Village Center Drive to Province Way
3. Intersection: Fairway Drive & Rancho Palmera Drive
4. Intersection: Fairway Drive & Eldorado Drive
5. Intersection: Highway 111 & Indian Wells Lane
6. Corridor: Highway 111: Miles Avenue to Mountain Cove
7. Intersection: Washington Street & Miles Avenue

The SAP provides a variety of strategies and potential improvements (countermeasures) to address issues in the community. It is important to note that these countermeasures are only suggestions to open a dialogue within the community on how to best address methods to improve traffic safety in Indian Wells. Projects will be examined by staff and potential solutions will be part of the City's Capital Improvement Program budget approval process, after extensive community discussion on the wants and desires of the community.

It is important for the City Council to adopt this traffic study as a valid official document of the City, similar to the City's General Plan, Housing Element, or Pavement Condition Index (PCI) study.

OPTIONS:

The City Council has the following options available to them.

1. Adopt the Comprehensive Traffic Safety Action Plan and corresponding Resolution (Attachment #3).
2. Not approve the Comprehensive Traffic Safety Action. This action may reduce the city's competitiveness for additional transportation related grants.
3. City Council can provide alternative direction.

FISCAL IMPACT:

There is no fiscal impact.

CALIFORNIA ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY ACT (CEQA):

This project has been assessed in accordance with the authority and criteria contained in the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), the State and local CEQA Guidelines, and the environmental regulations of the City. The City acting as Lead Agency, has determined the [identify project or entitlement type here] qualifies as being Categorical Exempt from CEQA pursuant to Section 15061(b)(3).

ATTACHMENTS:

1. Draft Indian Wells Traffic Safety Action Plan
2. Complete Streets Safety Assessment – Berkeley SafeTREC Study
3. Resolution