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Local Road Safety Plan in the works

By Vera Kochan

The State of California is federally required to have a Strategic Highway Safety Plan aimed at reducing traffic accident fatalities and serious injuries on its public roads. To that end, Moraga's town council unanimously approved the hiring of Pleasanton-based TJKM Transportation Consultants to develop a Local Road Safety Plan.

During its Feb. 23 meeting, council members agreed to award \$51,355 (which includes a 15% contingency of \$6,698) to TJKM to create the plan. Funding for the study is within the Fiscal Year 2021-22 Adopted Budget of \$85,000. The Highway Safety Improvement Program Grant (Fund 005) will provide \$40,000 toward costs with Measure J (Fund 210) taking care of the rest.

According to the staff report by Public Works Director/Town Engineer Shawn Knapp and Senior Civil Engineer Bret Swain, "The SHSP, and a LRSP, are developed to address the 4 E's of traffic safety: Engineering, Enforcement, Education, and Emergency Services. California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) and the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) establish guidelines for the preparation of a LRSP."

TJKM has broken up the project into tasks. Task 1, Visioning, Project Initiation, and Management, will entail the development of a vision statement for the LRSP; include attendance at 3-5 virtual stakeholder meetings; include attendance of 2-3 town council meetings; attendance at community engagement meetings; preparing materials for all meetings; and provide budget and work progress updates.

In Task 2, Document Review, TJKM will review pertinent documents designed to help establish goals for improved safety accommodations for motorists and pedestrians. Much of the review will pertain to guidelines set forth by Moraga's General Plan, Caltrans, SHSP, the United States Department of Transportation and FHWA.

The third Task is Data Collection, in which TJKM will examine the latest available five-year collision history in order to investigate before identifying potential countermeasures. They will also conduct a field review in order to get a grasp of Moraga's roadway network and collect roadway characteristics such as travel patterns, roadway width, speed (posted and actual), traffic volumes, curves and roadway classifications.

Task 4, Collision and Roadway Data Analysis, will involve the review of data with regards to predominant collision types and the roadway features that may have been in place. The characteristics will be reviewed to determine if there were flaws in the roadway designs.

In Task 5, Propose Ordinances and Policies, TJKM may offer suggestions as to new ordinances and policies in order to enhance local road safety.

Task 6, Countermeasure Selection, involves proposing countermeasures based on the information gathered in various scenarios dealing with collisions identified, roadway design and conditions. Countermeasures could include signals at intersections, roadway segments and the use of crash reduction factors.

Developing Safety Projects is Task 7. TJKM will create a prioritized list of safety projects and will include cost estimates, mapping and a cost/benefit ratio of proposed safety improvements.

Lastly, Task 8 is the presentation of the administrative Final Local Roadway Safety Plan to town staff and Caltrans for comments and revisions.

It is hoped that TJKM completes the LRSP in time for the town council's July 13 meeting for adoption.

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