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RESOLUTION 25-XXX

RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF EL PASO DE ROBLES ~~APPROVING-ADOPTING~~
MITIGATED NEGATIVE DECLARATION (SCH 2024120426) AND MITIGATION MONITORING
AND REPORTING PROGRAM FOR THE NIBLICK ROAD COMPLETE AND SUSTAINABLE BIKE
AND PEDESTRIAN ENHANCEMENTS PROJECT (P25-0012)

WHEREAS, the Niblick Road Corridor is one of three main east west corridors within the City. The corridor serves a mix of residential, educational, commercial, and industrial uses. Niblick Road has a general accident rate that ~~exceeds-is higher~~ statewide averages, experiences rush hour delays, and does not efficiently serve all modes of transportation; and

WHEREAS, ~~as a condition of development~~, residential development in specific plan areas on the southeast side of the City are ~~conditioned-required to~~ make improvements to Niblick Road to reduce their transportation impacts to the extent feasible; and

WHEREAS, ~~On-on~~ March 4, 2025, the City Council awarded a contract to GHD Engineering Group for work on a ~~Citywide~~ Traffic Signal Master Plan, which will serve as a strategic guide for operating, managing, and maintaining traffic signals throughout the City to create a more efficient, safe, and responsive traffic management system. Objectives of the plan include ~~improving-better~~ coordination between traffic signals so signals work seamlessly together and reducing vehicle idling/wait times at intersections; and

WHEREAS, according to the Federal Highway Administration, “pedestrian and bicyclist fatalities comprise about 19 percent of all traffic fatalities with approximately 6,000 pedestrian deaths and 850 bicyclist deaths. Another 76,000 pedestrians and 47,000 bicyclists are injured in roadway crashes annually”; and

WHEREAS, nationwide, pedestrian deaths from vehicle collisions have been on the rise for more than a decade. The Governors Highway Safety Association’s 2023 report, Pedestrian Traffic Fatalities by State, indicates there were 7,318 pedestrian deaths in 2023, up from 4,302 in 2010, a 70% increase in 13 years; and

WHEREAS, the City’s Local Roadway Safety Plan (LRSP), adopted by the City Council in 2021, identified 6 pedestrian-involved collisions in Paso Robles in 2015 and 15 pedestrian-involved collisions in 2019, a 150% increase. Between 2015 and 2019, in the Niblick Road corridor, pedestrians were struck at or near the intersections with Spring Street, River Road, Bearcat Lane, and Creston Road, with a particular concentration at River Road. During the same time period, an average of 6.4 cyclist-involved accidents occurred citywide. Between 2020 and 2024, 4 bicycle collisions were reported on Niblick Road; and

WHEREAS, beginning in the 2021-2022 school year, the Paso Robles School District cancelled most general-education bus service within the district, reducing alternative transportation mode options for families with school aged children; and

WHEREAS, the 2023 San Luis Obispo Council of Governments (SLOCOG) Regional Transportation Plan identifies Niblick Road as an Active Route of Regional Significance; and

Commented [AF1]: BBK: Optional revision to soften language and mitigate any appearance that accident rates result from City’s maintenance over this area. Feel free to adjust/remove as City seems necessary.

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WHEREAS, deficiencies and challenges with the Niblick Road corridor present an opportunity to both improve the roadway facilities and implement travel demand management strategies to reduce congestion and improve the corridor for all users; and

WHEREAS, on May 11, 2018, the City was awarded a \$212,472 Caltrans Sustainable Communities Grant to develop an improvement and implementation plan for Niblick Road. On July 17, 2018, the Council ~~adopted~~ approved Resolution 18-103 accepting the grant and allocating \$50,000 to match grant funds and pay for miscellaneous expenses associated with grant development; and

WHEREAS, on May 11, 2018, the City was awarded a \$212,472 Caltrans Sustainable Communities Grant to develop an improvement and implementation plan for Niblick Road; and

WHEREAS, with the Caltrans Sustainable Communities grant funding, City staff held at least ~~seven~~ 7 events to collect public input for envisioning improvements to Niblick Road; and

WHEREAS, three alternatives were developed based on accident history, speed, and traffic volume, existing corridor physical conditions, and most importantly, public input. On July 9, 2020, the City Council adopted Resolution 20-116 approving their favored alternative, which would maintain the existing number and width of vehicle travel lanes, while repurposing the westbound bicycle lane and sidewalk on the north side of the road into a 10-foot-wide elevated bicycle and pedestrian path; and

WHEREAS, in December 2022, the City applied for a Cycle 6 Active Transportation Program (ATP) Grant. The California Transportation Commission (CTC) awarded the City a \$13.9 ~~million~~ million grant that requires the City to match \$3.4 ~~million~~ million for a project total of \$17.3 ~~million~~ million; and

WHEREAS, on May 2, 2023, the City Council adopted Resolution 23-051, awarding a contract to Stantec Consultant Services for the PAED phase of the Niblick Road Corridor Plan; and

WHEREAS, on December 5, 2024, the City held a public open house to share the Project Approval and Environmental Document for the Niblick Road Corridor and ~~to~~ gather further input from the community; and

WHEREAS, pursuant to Section 15071 of the State CEQA (California Environmental Quality Act) Guidelines, Initial Study and Mitigated Negative Declaration SCH 2024120426 for the Niblick Road Complete and Sustainable Bike and Pedestrian Enhancements Project was prepared by Stantec Consultant Services; and

WHEREAS, pursuant to Section 15072 of the State CEQA Guidelines, on December 9, 2024, a Notice of Intent to adopt Mitigated Negative Declaration SCH 2024120426 was mailed or emailed to the public, responsible agencies, trustee agencies, transportation planning agencies and public agencies which have transportation facilities within their jurisdictions which could be affected by the project, and the San Luis Obispo County Clerk. On December 12, 2025, the Notice of Intent was printed in the San Luis Obispo New Times, a newspaper of general circulation; and

WHEREAS, pursuant to Section 15205 of the State CEQA Guidelines, on December 11, 2024, a Notice of Intent to adopt Mitigated Negative Declaration SCH 2024120426 was submitted to the State CEQA Clearinghouse; and

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WHEREAS, pursuant to Sections 15073, 15105, and 15205 of the State CEQA Guidelines, the 30-day public review period for the mitigated negative declaration was between December 12, 2024 and January 10, 2025. During the circulation period, 7 comments were received; and

WHEREAS, the Planning Commission discussed the mitigated negative declaration at their meeting on February 11, 2025, to consider the facts as presented in the staff report prepared for this project, and to accept public testimony regarding the Niblick Road Complete and Sustainable Bike and Pedestrian Enhancements Project. The Commission received 3 comments from the public, and voted to adopt Resolution PC 25-001 to recommend the City Council ~~approve~~ adopt the MND for the project; and

WHEREAS, the Planning Commission also provided comments and recommendations for desired changes to the Preliminary Design Concepts and recommended the City Council review additional methods to increase traffic capacity on Niblick Road; and

WHEREAS, the City Council discussed the mitigated negative declaration at their meeting on March 18, 2025, to consider the facts as presented in the staff report prepared for this project, and to accept public testimony regarding the Niblick Road Complete and Sustainable Bike and Pedestrian Enhancements Project.

NOW, THEREFORE, THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF EL PASO DE ROBLES DOES HEREBY RESOLVE AS FOLLOWS:

Section 1. All of the above recitals are true and correct and incorporated herein by reference.

Section 2. Based on the entire record before the City Council, all written and oral evidence presented to the City Council, including all public comments received, and pursuant to State CEQA Guidelines Sections 15063 and 15064, the City Council finds as follows~~information contained in the staff report, testimony presented, and responses thereto, the City Council hereby finds and determines that:~~

1. That the Project is consistent with the General Plan Circulation Element, because all necessary findings can be made based on the following policies and action items, which demonstrate that the project meets applicable mobility, accessibility, and safety objectives:
 - a. Policy CE-1A is to “address the mobility needs of all users of the streets, roads and highways including motorists, movers of commercial goods, seniors, children, pedestrians, disabled persons, users of public transportation, and bicyclists”, supported by:
 - i. Action Item 6, which is “Implement the City’s adopted Traffic Calming Program when designing new or modifying existing street improvements. Neighborhood preservation and context shall be a factor in the consideration of community mobility objectives”, and
 - i. Action Item 7, which is “Continue to actively seek federal, state, and regional grants and funding”, and
 - ii. Action Item 9, which is “Install all transportation improvements in accordance with current accessibility standards”, and
 - iii. Action Item 14, which is “Maintain and/or improve emergency vehicle access on all existing streets. New development and redevelopment projects shall provide

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- emergency vehicle access as required by all applicable codes and the Emergency Services Department”, and
- iv. Action Item 16, which is to “View all transportation improvements, new or retrofit, as opportunities to improve safety, access, and mobility for all travelers and recognize bicycle, pedestrian, and transit modes as integral elements of the transportation system”, and
 - v. Action Item 19, which is “Transportation improvements shall improve accessibility and promote physical activity.”
- b. Policy CE-1B, which is “The City shall strive to reduce VMT generated per household per weekday by making efficient use of existing transportation facilities and by providing direct routes for pedestrians and bicyclists through the implementation of sustainable planning principles”, supported by:
- i. Action Item 1.c, which is “Lane configurations for new intersections shall be limited to provide for moderate speeds and pedestrian and cyclist safety. Congestion during certain time periods shall be accepted in exchange for shorter pedestrian and cyclist crossing distances, less overall paved area, reduced costs, and preservation of small-town character. Corner curb extensions (bulb-outs) should be considered to improve and shorten pedestrian crossings”, and
 - ii. Action Item 1.d, which is “Circulation systems shall provide for all modes of travel, and shall typically include sidewalks, bicycle lanes, and transit stop amenities”, and
 - iii. Action Item 2, which is “Develop well connected routes for bicycles throughout the City in accordance with the most current City Council adopted BPTP [Bicycle and Pedestrian Transportation Plan]”.
- c. Policy CE-1F, which is “Provide safe and convenient pedestrian and bicycle access to all areas of the City”, supported by:
- i. Action Item 5, which is, “Improve streetscapes and install curb extensions at intersections where appropriate to reduce driving speeds and shorten pedestrian crossing distances”, and
 - ii. Action Item 7, which is “Support warning beacon type crosswalks where pedestrian traffic volumes are high or safety considerations warrant implementation.”
2. The Project is consistent with the General Plan Circulation Element because Niblick Road is identified as a 4-Lane Existing Arterial and will remain a 4-lane arterial after completion of the project.
3. The Project is consistent with the Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan because Niblick Road is identified as a Tier 2 Route of Regional Significance.
4. The City Council has considered the Mitigated Negative Declaration, the Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program (“MMRP”), and all public comments received during the public review process pursuant to State CEQA Guidelines section 15074, and on this basis, the City Council finds that the Mitigated Negative Declaration was prepared in compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act (Pub. Res. Code Section 21000 et seq.: “CEQA”) and the State CEQA Guidelines and contains a complete, objective, and accurate reporting of the environmental impacts associated with the Project and reflects the independent judgment of the **Planning**

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~~Commission~~City Council. The City Council further finds that there is no substantial evidence that the Project will have a significant effect on the environment.

Section 3. ~~The For the reasons specified above, the~~ City Council hereby ~~approves~~adopts the Mitigated Negative Declaration (SCH 2024120426) prepared for the Niblick Road Complete and Sustainable Bike and Pedestrian Enhancements Project (“Project”) as depicted by the following exhibits:

<u>EXHIBIT</u>	<u>DESCRIPTION</u>
A	Initial Study and Mitigated Negative SCH 2024120426
B	Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Plan
C	Response to Comments

Section 4. The City Council hereby directs the City Clerk to file a Notice of Determination for Mitigated Negative Declaration (SCH 2024120426) with the San Luis Obispo County Clerk Recorder within 5 days of adoption of this resolution.

APPROVED this 18th day of March 2025, by the following vote:

AYES:
NOES:
ABSENT:
ABSTAIN:

John R. Hamon, Jr., Mayor

ATTEST:

Melissa Boyer, City Clerk