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SELMA SECURES PRESTIGIOUS GRANTS TO BOOST COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT



By Francisco Ramirez

March 31, 2025

SELMA, CA – The Selma City Council meeting on March 31, 2025, brought exciting news for the city's future, as the Community Development Department announced it has secured two prestigious grant awards. While formal announcements are still pending, these grants—one from Cal APA and another for Tactical Urbanism—promise to enhance Selma's downtown vitality and pedestrian safety, reinforcing the city's commitment to growth and community well-being.

Interim Community Development Director Steven Phipps shared the news during the council's consent agenda, confirming that Selma has won a Cal APA award for its Downtown Strategic Plan. "This is recognition for the work we've put into revitalizing downtown Selma," Phipps stated, highlighting the plan as a roadmap to boost economic activity and improve the area's appeal. The Downtown Strategic Plan, developed with input from local stakeholders, outlines strategies to attract businesses, enhance infrastructure, and create a vibrant community hub—an effort now validated by this esteemed award from the California chapter of the American Planning Association.



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The second grant, a Tactical Urbanism award, will fund a collaborative pilot project with Selma Unified School District. Scheduled for April 16 or 17, 2025, this initiative targets pedestrian safety near Thompson Avenue, a busy corridor near school facilities. Phipps explained, "We're working with the school district to implement traffic-calming measures, like painted crosswalks in school colors, led by high school students." The project aims to slow traffic and enhance safety for students and residents, blending practicality with community engagement.

Councilmember John Trujillo praised the efforts, saying, "These grants show we're moving in the right direction for Selma's development." The awards come at a pivotal time, as the city continues to address infrastructure and safety needs while fostering economic growth. Mayor Pro Tem Amy Westfall echoed this sentiment, noting, "It's great to see our planning recognized and supported with funding to make it happen."

Though specific award amounts weren't disclosed at the meeting, the grants are expected to provide significant resources. The Cal APA award celebrates Selma's strategic vision, while the Tactical Urbanism grant offers hands-on improvements, with students playing a key role in painting crosswalks—an idea sparked by Selma Unified's community outreach efforts. City Manager Fernando Santillan confirmed the timeline, stating, "We're coordinating with the district to execute this mid-April, weather permitting."

These wins underscore Selma's proactive approach to community development. The Downtown Strategic Plan's recognition could pave the way for further investment, while the Tactical Urbanism project promises immediate, visible benefits. As Selma prepares for these initiatives, residents can look forward to a safer, more vibrant city—proof that thoughtful planning pays off.