



STAFF REPORT CITY OF SOLANA BEACH

TO: Honorable Mayor and City Councilmembers
FROM: David Ott, City Manager
MEETING DATE: November 16, 2011
ORIGINATING DEPT: Engineering Department *MS.*
SUBJECT: **West Side Highway 101 Improvements – Final Design Review**

BACKGROUND:

After the City Council directed Staff to move forward with the design of the Highway 101 project in 2009, the design team which included Nasland Engineering (Nasland), City Staff, and other consultants moved forward with preliminary and final design of improvements to the Highway 101 corridor. The preliminary design was discussed before the Highway 101 Standing Committee and the full City Council on numerous occasions to provide an update on the progress of the project and to obtain direction on various design features. Additionally, the design team met with a number of property owners to discuss how the project will interface with their property and how best to address the property owners' concerns.

On August 31, 2011, a special City Council meeting was held to provide an overview of the project development process and an update of various features of the proposed project. The design team presented the preliminary design of the proposed project and responded to the questions from the City Council. Later during the public testimony session, the City Council received feedback from the general public and organized groups. Finally, after deliberation, the City Council provided direction regarding various aspect of the project.

This item is before the City Council in response to comments/concerns raised at the previous City Council meeting, to present the final design of the proposed project, to receive direction on any remaining design features that have not been resolved and to receive authorization to advertise the project for construction bids.

COUNCIL ACTION:

DISCUSSION:

Previous Council Direction

As mentioned above, the project was last brought before the City Council on August 31, 2011. At that meeting, the City Council provided direction on a number of items and asked Staff to study several other items before the project is brought before the City Council again. All of these items and the resolution to each item are listed below.

Parking

During previous City Council meetings, Solana Beach residents and business owners provided public testimony expressing concerns regarding reverse angle parking. After much discussion during these meetings, the consensus is to move forward with head-in angled parking. Upon receiving final direction from the City Council, the design team revised the plans to accommodate head-in angle parking. Within the project limits, there will be an increase of 27 parking spaces over the existing condition. The proposed project will result in a total of 104 parking spaces or an increase of 35 percent.

Decorative Poles and Street Furniture

A suggestion was made that all of the street light poles and traffic signal poles should be decorative and should complement all other street furnishings. The final design of the project includes many new street light and traffic signal poles. All of these new poles will be decorative in appearance and will match all other streetscape features of the project. It is important to note that a number of the existing traffic signal poles will remain in place. In an effort to maintain consistency, the existing poles will have a skirt at the base and will be painted to match the new equipment. All new street furniture, such as trash cans, benches and drinking fountains will also be complimentary to the decorative poles and decorative concrete.

Median Trees

During the preliminary design, as well as at numerous public meetings, the importance of trees in the medians has been discussed and emphasized many times. The community expressed concerns about the fact that the proposed project would result in removal of almost all trees in the median within the project corridor.

In order to provide an ADA compliant sidewalk, maintain the same number of lanes, implement the desired streetscape features and construct the much needed angled parking, the existing median will have to be removed and reconstructed to the east of the existing median and be narrower in width. The design team has been through many iterations of median design. After consideration of all options and after receiving feedback from the Highway 101 Standing Committee and the full City Council, the design team is moving forward with a median design that allows for trees to be planted where the median is at least eight feet wide. This will allow for a 38 percent increase in medians trees (as compared to the existing situation) without compromising public safety. There will be other drought tolerant landscaping in segments of the median where the width is less than eight feet wide. Additionally, the median design will include concrete strips to facilitate maintenance and replanting.

Landscape Selection

Although the consultant team is still working with the Highway 101 Standing Committee to finalize the landscape pallet for the project, the City Council was clear about inclusion of drought tolerant landscaping to the maximum extent possible. In addition to a strong desire by the City Council and the community to use drought tolerant landscaping, the California Coastal Commission typically makes the requirement a condition of approval as part of the Coastal Development Permit.

Direction was also received at the August 31st meeting to install larger trees. A comment was made that all trees specified should come in a minimum of 36 inch boxes and that some of the more prominent trees should come in 48 inch boxes. In order to bring the construction cost in line with the available funding, alternate bid items will be included in the project specifications to allow enough flexibility to select smaller tree sizes should the construction bids be higher than the available funding.

Crosswalks

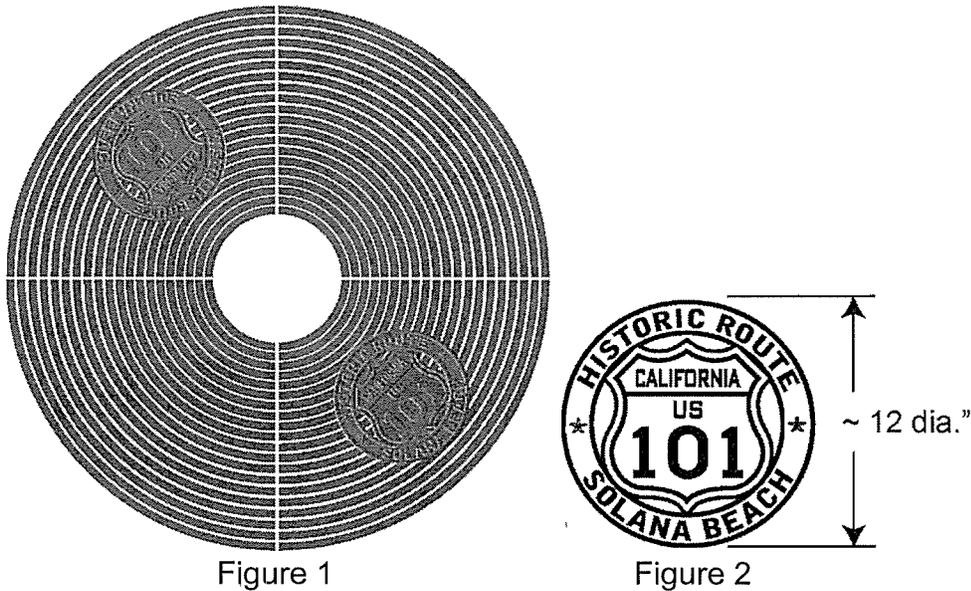
At previous meetings, there was considerable interest in providing additional pedestrian crossing opportunities and making these crossings pedestrian friendly. The preliminary design has added four new crosswalks to the project area; two at mid-blocks and two at intersections. One new mid-block crosswalk is proposed between Dahlia Drive and Lomas Santa Fe Drive and the second mid-block crossing is proposed near the stairs/elevator at the train station loading zone. The two intersection pedestrian crossings are proposed at the Estrella Street and Cliff Street intersections where there will be full traffic signals as well. As directed by the City Council, the two mid-block crossings will be controlled by Rectangular Rapid Flashing Beacons (RRFB). The RRFB was chosen because the compliance rate for vehicles yielding to pedestrians in the crosswalk is very high, it can be solar powered and it can be installed and repaired without digging up the road.

There was also discussion about inclusion of raised crosswalks at the new mid-block pedestrian crossings. In general, traffic calming features that provide a vertical deflection (such as raised crosswalks or speed humps) are not recommended for major roadways such as Highway 101. There are two primary reasons for not including raised crosswalks as part of this project. The first reason is that Highway 101 is a designated primary emergency response route. The inclusion of raised crosswalks could lead to an increase in response time for emergency vehicles. The second reason is that Highway 101 is a prominent bicycle route. Vertical deflections can be difficult for bicycles to navigate. Also, one of the goals of this project is that upon completion, the vehicular speed is anticipated to be reduced to approximately 35 miles per hour. If at a future date the goals are not achieved or there is a need for additional reduction of speed, this option may be further explored.

Tree Grates

The current project plans call for 46 tree grates. The grates will be cast iron, five feet in diameter and will have a simple ring design to accommodate the logo placement. A clear, polyester powder coat finish with anti-slip coating will be applied to all of the tree grates. Since there is no cost difference between placing the logo on one or two

quadrants, the logo will be placed on two quadrants of the grates as shown below in Figure 1. Figure 2 is a detail of the logo that will be on the grates



Bench Seating

At the August 31st meeting, the City Council inquired as to whether there was adequate seating along the corridor. In response to this request, the landscape architect has been exploring options to determine if there are areas where additional bench seating can be included. More benches will be included where practical as long as it does not interfere with other functions of the design, such as providing a wider sidewalk.

Newspaper Racks

A request was made to incorporate and consolidate the various newspaper racks along the corridor. The City currently has a newspaper rack permit process in place. During construction of the project, the majority of the newspaper racks will be removed. In order to reinstall the newspaper racks, the owners of the racks will have to obtain a new permit from the City. At that time, the City can create conditions as to the location and appearance of the racks.

CEQA COMPLIANCE STATEMENT:

During the final design of the project, a California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) analysis was performed. For the purposes of CEQA compliance, this project qualifies for Categorical Exemptions pursuant to the 2011 State CEQA Guidelines. This project is exempt from CEQA pursuant to Section 15301(c) (Class 1 - Existing Facilities) and 15302(c) (Class 2 - Replacement & Reconstruction) of the State CEQA Guidelines.

As part of this Staff Report, Staff is requesting that the City Council find the project exempt from CEQA. Once the project is found to be exempt from CEQA, Staff will prepare the formal Notice of Exemption. The Notice of Exemption will be filed with the San Diego County Clerk as well as with the State Office of Planning and Research/State Clearinghouse.

FISCAL IMPACT:

The Capital Improvement Program (CIP) section of the Fiscal Year 2011/2012 Budget re-appropriated \$803,000 for the project. The funding sources listed in the budget for this project are from TransNet/Transnet II (Funding Sources No. 218/228).

Although there are no costs associated with the actions taken as part of this Staff Report, funding for the construction portion of the project will have to be identified before construction starts. It is anticipated that the construction funding will be taken from the advance the City will receive on its share of future TransNet II revenues. Once those funds are available, they will be appropriated into the project accounts by a future Council action.

WORKPLAN:

This Project is identified in the Fiscal Sustainability/Redevelopment section of the Fiscal Year 2011/2012 Workplan.

OPTIONS:

- Approve final design and authorize advertisement of construction bids.
- Modify and approve final design and authorize advertisement of construction bids.
- Provide alternative direction to Staff.

DEPARTMENT RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends that the City Council:

1. Adopt Resolution 2011-152:
 - a. Approving the final design of the Highway 101 West Side Improvement Project.
 - b. Finding the project exempt from CEQA and authorize the Community Development Director to file a Notice of Exemption on behalf of the City.
 - c. Authorizing the City Engineer to advertise the project for construction bids.

CITY MANAGER'S RECOMMENDATION:

Approve Department Recommendation



David Ott, City Manager

Attachments:

1. Resolution No. 2011-152

RESOLUTION 2011- 152

A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF SOLANA BEACH, CALIFORNIA, APPROVING THE FINAL DESIGN OF THE HIGHWAY 101 WEST SIDE IMPROVEMENT PROJECT AND AUTHORIZING ADVERTISEMENT FOR CONSTRUCTION BIDS

WHEREAS, during the past eight months, Nasland Engineering (Nasland), the design consultant for the Highway 101 West Side Improvement Project, has been performing preliminary design for an improvement project on Highway 101 between Dahlia Drive and Cliff Street; and

WHEREAS, during the design process, Nasland has met with a number of property owners to discuss the impacts of the project to their properties and the design team has met with the Highway 101 Standing Committee and the Business Liaison Committee; and

WHEREAS, at a special meeting of the City Council on August 31, 2011, Nasland provided an overview of the project development process and an update of various features of the proposed project and the City Council provided direction regarding various aspect of the project.

NOW, THEREFORE, the City Council of the City of Solana Beach, California, does resolve as follows:

1. That the above recitations are true and correct.
2. That the City Council approves the final design of the Highway 101 West Side Improvement Project.
3. That the City Council finds the project exempt from CEQA and authorize the Community Development Director to file a Notice of Exemption on behalf of the City.

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4. That the City Council authorizes the City Engineer to advertise the project for construction bids.

PASSED AND ADOPTED this 16th day of November, 2011, at a specially scheduled meeting of the City Council of the City of Solana Beach, California by the following vote:

AYES: Councilmembers –
NOES: Councilmembers –
ABSTAIN: Councilmembers –
ABSENT: Councilmembers –

LESA HEEBNER, Mayor

APPROVED AS TO FORM:

ATTEST:

JOHANNA N. CANLAS, City Attorney

ANGELA IVEY, City Clerk