

REPORT TO THE CITY COUNCIL

City of Salinas, California

DATE: May 6, 2014

FROM: Gary Petersen, C.A.E. Public Works Director

THROUGH: Robert C. Russell, Deputy Director/City Engineer

BY: Ron Sissem, Contract Consultant

SUBJECT: **MITIGATED NEGATIVE DECLARATION AND MITIGATION
MONITORING AND REPORTING PROGRAM FOR THE SANBORN
ROAD/U.S. HIGHWAY 101/ELVEE DRIVE IMPROVEMENTS PROJECT, CIP
9117**

RECOMMENDATION:

It is recommended that the City Council:

1. affirm the CEQA Findings and the Project Findings contained in the attached resolution;
2. adopt the Mitigated Negative Declaration (MND) and the Mitigation and Monitoring Reporting Program (MMRP) for the Sanborn Road/U.S. Highway 101 and Elvee Drive Improvements Project, CIP 9117; and
3. approve the remaining agreements and actions necessary to complete this project.

DISCUSSION:

The proposed project is being initiated by the City. It is designed to improve operational traffic and circulation conditions at the Sanborn Road/U.S. Highway 101 interchange. As part of the traffic impact analysis conducted for the Salinas-Ag Industrial Center Program Environmental Impact Report in 2009, a range of existing circulation network operational deficiencies were identified that would worsen with implementation of that project. In 2010, the City adopted changes to the City of Salinas Traffic Impact Fee Ordinance (TFO) and Traffic Improvement Program (TIP) to incorporate additional traffic network improvements needed to rectify operational deficiencies so that the network operates at improved performance levels under current conditions plus buildout of the Salinas-Ag Industrial Center project. The proposed project includes several of the network improvements that were added to the TIP in response to the prior traffic impact analysis. Once constructed, its operation would result in positive impacts on traffic operations and traffic safety in the vicinity of the Sanborn Road/U.S. Highway 101 interchange. City staff has been collaborating with Caltrans and the Transportation Agency for Monterey County throughout the project design and review process. Both agencies support the project.

The discretionary action required by the City Council is to affirm the CEQA Findings and the Project Findings, adopt the MND and MMRP, and approve the remaining agreements necessary to complete

this project. City staff will return to the City Council at a later date with a request to adopt a resolution approving plans and specifications and invitation to bid and approve a construction contract.

Approval of a Caltrans encroachment permit will be needed subsequent to the City Council's decision to approve the invitation to bid and the construction contract. Because the proposed clear span bridge over the Reclamation Ditch requires improvements within the Reclamation Ditch right-of-way that is controlled by the Monterey County Water Resources Agency (MCWRA), approval of that agency for construction within the right-of-way will be required. City staff has also communicated with MCWRA over time about the project and its potential effect on the function of the Reclamation Ditch, and also received assistance with modeling the effects of the proposed project on flood elevations along the Reclamation Ditch. The model results led to modification of the project design to ensure the change in flood elevation is minimized.

Project Description

The proposed project includes improvements in the immediate vicinity of the Sanborn Road/U.S. Highway 101 interchange. The attached Exhibit A (Figures 1 and 2) shows the location and types of proposed improvements. The improvements are summarized as follows:

1. Signalize the Sanborn Road/Fairview Avenue/northbound U.S. Highway 101 off-ramp intersection, with associated striping modifications to Fairview Avenue;
2. Construct a ramp meter on the northbound U.S. Highway 101 on-ramp from Fairview Avenue;
3. Extend the dedicated right-turn lane to Work Street on westbound Sanborn Road by removing the existing raised traffic island at the entrance to Pilot Travel Center and reconstructing that entrance from Sanborn Road to reduce driver confusion about right turns into the Pilot Travel Center versus right turns onto Work Street;
4. Construct an 890-foot extension of Elvee Drive from the existing north end of Elvee Drive to Work Street, including curb, gutter, sidewalk, and street trees on both sides of the new extension. The cross-section of the new segment will be similar to the segment north of the Reclamation Ditch which is 56 feet wide and includes two travel lanes. See Exhibit B (page 11) for the applicable roadway cross-sections;
5. Provide an access road from the west side of Elvee Drive to the Reclamation Ditch to retain existing access opportunities as requested by MCWRA for maintenance reasons.
6. Reconstruct the existing driveway access located on the west side of Elvee Drive to the city-owned parcel currently being used by Granite Construction. A new driveway access to the city-owned parcel immediately north, will be provided as well;
7. Evaluate the new Elvee Drive/Work Street intersection for signalization;
8. Construct a 49-foot clear-span bridge (with a bridge opening of 38 feet) to allow the extension of Elvee Drive to cross over the Reclamation Ditch. The superstructure of the bridge would be constructed of pre-cast, pre-stressed concrete slabs. No falsework construction (temporary supports to hold the bridge in place until the bridge is completed) within the Reclamation Ditch

would be required, nor would any modification of the bed or bank of the Reclamation Ditch. A preliminary profile of the bridge is shown in attached Exhibit B (page no. 11).

9. Reconstruct approximately 1,400 feet of existing Elvee Drive in front of Leonard's Lockers Self Storage, Caltrans Maintenance Station, and Coast Counties Peterbilt to provide two, 20-foot travel lanes, and add curb, gutter, sidewalk, and street lighting;
10. Reconstruct approximately 450 feet of Elvee Drive from Sanborn Road to the Coast Counties Peterbilt driveway to improve the condition of the deteriorated roadway and install asphalt dikes within the public right-of-way; and
11. Restrict Elvee Drive access from Sanborn Road to right-in/right-out by constructing a raised median on Sanborn Road.

Restricting left turn ingress to or egress from Elvee Drive at Sanborn Road is forecasted to improve the level of service (LOS) of the southbound U.S. Highway 101 Sanborn Road off-ramp intersection with Sanborn Road and Elvee Drive from LOS C/D during the AM/PM peak hours, respectively to LOS C/C. The proposed signalization of the intersection of the northbound loop off-ramp and Fairview Avenue with Sanborn Road will immediately improve the LOS of the ramp terminal intersection from a deficient LOS F to an acceptable LOS B. These improvements are also expected to result in improved traffic safety conditions at these locations. Other benefits of the project include:

- Improving ramp junction and weaving operations on the U.S. Highway 101 northbound mainline between the Fairview Drive loop on-ramp and loop off-ramp to Sanborn Road;
- Improving operational safety and turning efficiency for large commercial trucks that access businesses located on the Sanborn Road segment between the U.S. Highway 101 interchange and Work Street;
- Implementing circulation and capacity improvements planned/envisioned as part of the 2002 City of Salinas General Plan to facilitate planned growth; and
- Removing existing circulation operations constraints and create capacity in the circulation system to facilitate critical new economic development.

It is anticipated that construction would begin in the winter of 2014 and be completed in the winter of 2015.

Project Funding

The cost to construct the project is estimated at \$3.4 million dollars. Approximately \$2.2 million dollars of City traffic impact fee funds will be utilized. City staff and the Transportation Agency for Monterey County are currently collaborating to pursue state funding [Trade Corridor Improvement Funds (TCIF) from the California Transportation Commission (CTC)] in the amount of \$1.7 million dollars to fund the balance of the project cost. If state funding is secured, City traffic impact fees in the amount of \$0.5 million dollars could be saved and used for another TFO eligible project. As of the date of this staff report, an advisory board to the CTC has recommended that state funding be allocated to the proposed Salinas project. This suggests a high probability that the project will be funded. A final decision by the CTC is expected in August of 2014. If the CTC does not approve the funding request,

the City anticipates obtaining these funds from the Regional Surface Transportation Program (RSTP funds).

The CTC will not consider the City's application for funding to be complete until evidence is provided that the City has adopted environmental documentation for the proposed project. The evidence would consist of the signed resolution as well as the MND and MMRP documents. The City Council's timely adoption of these documents is critical as described in the "Time Considerations" section below.

SURROUNDING LAND USES:

The following provides an overview of the land uses and zoning districts adjacent to the locations of the proposed improvements:

North: US HWY 101

South: Industrial General, Commercial Thoroughfare and Residential Low-Density
(at the Sanborn Road/U.S. Highway 101 northbound off-ramp)

East: Industrial General, Commercial Thoroughfare and Residential Low-Density
(at the Sanborn Road/U.S. Highway 101 northbound on-ramp)

West: Industrial General

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW:

The environmental impacts of the proposed project have been analyzed in accordance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). An Initial Study was prepared to evaluate the potential impacts associated with the project. Based upon review of the Initial Study, the proposed project has several potentially significant impacts. Several of these, including hydrology and water quality effects, are reduced to less than significant by virtue of the project design and required conformance with existing development standards. The project has potentially significant biological, cultural resources, and hazards and hazardous materials impacts for which mitigation measures are required. The proposed project will not have a significant effect on the environment because the mitigation measures outlined in the proposed MMRP would reduce these potential impacts to a less-than-significant level. An MND was prepared to reflect this determination (see attached Exhibit B and Exhibit C)

Public Review

The Initial Study, MND, and MMRP were routed to responsible state agencies; distributed to multiple local stakeholders; and notice of availability of the documents was sent to all owners of property that border the project area. The documents were also posted at the County Clerk's Office on March 21, 2014. The deadline for submittal of public comments was April 21, 2014.

Eight comment letters were received. Each is listed below with brief descriptions of issues raised, if any:

- Monterey County Department of Public Works - No comments on the CEQA documentation.
- Ron Frieberg, Salinas Valley Ford - No substantive comments on the CEQA documents were raised. The commenter did note that: 1) his prior request to remove eucalyptus trees along U.S. Highway 101 to improve visibility of the Elvee Drive extension was not addressed in the CEQA documents, 2) signage for the project must be something different than normal street sign

design, and 3) traffic information submitted by the commenter regarding the Elvee Drive/Sanborn Road intersection location should be considered.

Regarding the eucalyptus trees, their removal is not part of the project description, so was not evaluated in the CEQA documentation. The trees are in Caltrans' right-of-way, removal would require coordination with Caltrans. Caltrans representative, David Silberberger and commenter are in communication to address this concern. Regarding signage, the commenter's recommendation will be addressed by City staff as part of the project implementation process. The issue of signage has been discussed over time between City staff and the commenter. Regarding the Elvee Drive/Sanborn Road intersection location, the information submitted suggests that the location of this intersection could be located further to the south. City staff has previously reviewed the information and found that moving the intersection is infeasible due to the need to acquire right-of-way from Pilot Travel Center.

- Monterey County Water Resources Agency - No comments on the CEQA documentation.
- Monterey Bay Unified Air Pollution Control District - Requests that the City consider a bike lane on Elvee Drive.

Due to right-of-way constraints, a bike lane was not considered for Elvee Drive. Further, a bike lane is not programmed for this location in the City's Bikeways Plan.

- Transportation Agency for Monterey County (TAMC) - No comments on the CEQA documentation. TAMC's letter supports this project because it improves operational traffic and circulation at the Sanborn Road/HWY 101 interchange.
- Monterey County Environmental Health Department - No comments on the CEQA documentation.
- Caltrans - No comments on the CEQA documentation. Caltrans supports this project as there will be positive impacts to the US 101 off-ramps at Sanborn Road interchange.
- State Clearinghouse - No comments on the CEQA documentation.

The comments received are attached to this staff report as Exhibit D.

Findings

The City Council will need to adopt the attached resolution to adopt the proposed MND and MMRP by establishing the findings set forth therein.

ISSUE:

Shall the City Council affirm the CEQA Findings and the Project Findings set forth in the attached Resolution, adopt the resolution to adopt the Mitigated Negative Declaration (MND) and the Mitigation and Monitoring Reporting Program (MMRP) for the Sanborn Road/U.S. Highway 101 and Elvee Drive Improvements Project, CIP 9117 and approve the remaining actions and agreements necessary to complete this project?

FISCAL IMPACT:

There is no fiscal impact from adoption of the MND and MMRP for the proposed project. Adoption is needed to enable the City to complete its application to the California Transportation Commission for project funding.

TIME CONSIDERATIONS:

Adoption of the MND and MMRP is critical for City staff and the Transportation Agency for Monterey County to meet deadlines for completing the request for project funding from the CTC. City Council action is needed no later than its May 6, 2014 public hearing.

ALTERNATIVES/IMPLICATIONS:

1. Affirm the findings set forth in the attached Resolution, and adopt the MND and MMRP; or
2. Affirm the findings set forth in the attached Resolution, and adopt the MND and MMRP with modifications; or
3. Find that the proposal is not appropriate and establish findings at the public hearing stating the reasons for not recommending adoption of the MND and/or MMRP, this action would postpone the approval of MND and MMRP and can potential forfeit the \$1.7 million state funds.

CITY COUNCIL GOALS:

The following goals were adopted by the City Council on May 7, 2013: 1) Economic Diversity and Prosperity; 2) Safe, Livable Community; 3) Effective, Sustainable Government; 4) Excellent Infrastructure; 5) Quality of Life.

The proposed project supports City Council goals 1, 2, 4, and 5. Goal 1 regarding Economic Diversity and Prosperity is supported because the proposed project implements a mitigation measure for the Salinas-Ag Industrial Center project (as summarized in the Discussion section above). The Salinas-Ag Industrial Center project has potential to generate more than 4,000 jobs and enhance the City's agricultural economic base. By improving operation conditions on Sanborn Road, the proposed project will also improve the efficiency of agricultural goods movement, which also indirectly benefits the City's agricultural economy. Goal 2 regarding Safe, Livable Community is supported because the project will improve vehicle and pedestrian/bicycle safety at the Sanborn Road/U.S. Highway 101 interchange. Goal 4 regarding Excellent Infrastructure is supported because the proposed project will improve circulation infrastructure along a critical transportation corridor. Goal 5 regarding Quality of Life is supported because the project will help reduce commute times/costs for residents and workers by reducing traffic congestion, reduce air emissions/improve localized air quality due to reduced truck/car idling time, and improve potential for implementation of the Salinas-Ag Industrial Center, whose job creation would improve the standard of living for residents employed by that project.

CONCLUSION:

At its meeting of May 6, 2014, the City Council is requested to take the actions outlined in this report so that this project can continue through to completion.

Distribution:
City Council
City Manager
City Attorney
Department Directors

Back Up Pages:
Exhibit A- Location Maps (Figure 1 and Figure 2)
Exhibit B- MND and MMRP dated March 20, 2014
Exhibit C- Appendices
Exhibit D- Comments on the IS/MND
Resolution

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