

Lompoc City Council Agenda Item



City Council Meeting Date: January 8, 2013

TO: Laurel M. Barcelona, City Administrator

FROM: Michael W. Luther, P.E., Assistant PW Director/City Engineer
m_luther@ci.lompoc.ca.us

SUBJECT: Funding Options for a New Bicycle/Pedestrian Bridge Within the Highway 246 Corridor

Recommendation:

Staff recommends the City Council take the following actions:

- 1) Authorize the Mayor to sign the attached letter to SBCAG requesting RSTP funding to study the feasibility of providing either bicycle/pedestrian improvements to the existing SR 246 Santa Ynez River Bridge, or a separate bicycle/pedestrian bridge over the Santa Ynez River connected to SR 246; and
- 2) Direct Staff to work with SBCAG, County, and Caltrans Staff(s) to complete the additional tasks outlined in the staff report to move forward with the proposed project; or
- 3) Provide alternate direction.

Background/Discussion:

As requested by Mayor Linn and approved by Council at the August 21st City Council Meeting, staff has reviewed how best to proceed with funding the installation of a pedestrian walkway on HWY 246.

The Measure "A" investment plan included a project named "Hwy 246-Santa Ynez River Bridge" and listed that project to receive \$8 million dollars of the estimated \$1.05 billion of local sales tax revenue to be generated by Measure "A". During development of the Strategic Plan to implement Measure "A", the Hwy 246-Santa Ynez River Bridge Project was split into two phases:

Phase 1: MSA-08-1 Hwy 246-Santa Ynez River Bridge - Feasibility Study, \$300,000; and,
Phase 2: MSA-08-2 Hwy 246-Santa Ynez River Bridge - \$7,700,000.

The description for MSA-08-1 stated: This phase of the project is for a Feasibility Study only in order to assess all options (for the larger MSA-08-2 project which proposes to improve existing Highway 246 to the east side of the City of Lompoc, either through

replacing the existing Highway 246 Bridge, widening the roadway and shoulders and elevating the bridge and roadway above the base flood elevation; or by establishing a new alignment with a new bridge at a different location, such as an extension of Central Avenue.

The project is necessary in order to provide a reliable eastern connection to the City, elevated above the base flood elevation, allowing adequate lane and shoulder widths to accommodate safely vehicles, bicycles, pedestrians, and farm equipment. The project will reduce conflicts between different vehicle types.) MSA-08-2 is scheduled in the Measure "A" Strategic Plan to begin construction in the year 2034.

MSA-08-1 PROJECT WORK PROGRESS:

Phase 1 or MSA-08-1 was scheduled in the Measure "A" Strategic Plan to be performed between 2010 and July of 2013, and to be managed by Santa Barbara County Association of Governments (SBCAG) staff. However, at the July 6, 2011, North County Subregional Planning Committee (NCSPC) Meeting, the NCSPC voted recommending that the previously scoped RFP not be released and that a smaller study be conducted to examine interim bicycle and pedestrian improvements on the SR 246 Bridge. According to the Minutes of the August 18, 2011, SBCAG Board Meeting, the Board voted to authorize the chair to send a letter to Caltrans requesting that Caltrans provide information on the feasibility of making interim improvements to the SR 246 Santa Ynez River Bridge to accommodate pedestrians and bicyclists. SBCAG staff sent a letter to Caltrans dated September 12, 2011, in accordance with the August 18, 2011, direction of the SBCAG Board.

SBCAG staff received a response letter from Caltrans dated October 6, 2011, stating that an engineering analysis would be required to determine whether bicycle/pedestrian improvements can be made to the existing SR 246 Santa Ynez River Bridge. Caltrans' letter additionally stated that a feasibility study or project initiation document would be the appropriate path to take to determine the possibilities of improving the existing bridge or to evaluate alternative crossings of the Santa Ynez River at this location, and that Caltrans does not plan to perform such an analysis at this time. Following receipt of the October 6, 2011, letter, SBCAG staff also received from Caltrans sixteen (16) sheets of scanned "As-Built" plans from the bridge construction in approximately 1938 to 1939.

BICYCLE/PEDESTRIAN BRIDGE FEASIBILITY STUDY:

SBCAG staff has advised City staff that if the Lompoc City Council desires to study the feasibility of providing either bicycle/pedestrian improvements to the existing SR 246 Santa Ynez River Bridge, or a separate bicycle/pedestrian bridge over the Santa Ynez River within the SR 246 corridor, approximately \$343,000 of Regional Surface Transportation Program (RSTP) (State) funding may be available for such an effort. That RSTP funding is remaining in SBCAG account(s) as left-over revenue which had been allocated to the City's Allan Hancock Bicycle Connector Project completed in 2011. The RSTP funding could be made available for the subject feasibility study effort by action of the SBCAG Board.

SBCAG staff recommends the following steps to pursue the RSTP funding for the subject use:

1. The City Council would provide a letter to SBCAG staff requesting such a change in the use of the RSTP funding.
2. SBCAG staff would take the subject to the NCSPC and to the Technical Transportation Advisory Committee (TTAC) for review, comment, and recommendation to the SBCAG Board.
3. SBCAG staff would take the subject to the SBCAG Board, which would need to approve such funding change by a simple majority vote.
4. Upon SBCAG Board approval, City of Lompoc staff would work with SBCAG, Caltrans, and County staffs to prepare an RFP for the engineering analysis/feasibility study required.
5. City of Lompoc staff would manage project work, in coordination with appropriate entities, and obtaining necessary approvals along the way to secure an engineering analysis/feasibility study for the bicycle/pedestrian facility project.

If the project is determined feasible, the SBCAG Board could consider allocating the remaining portion of RSTP funding not expended for the feasibility study toward completing the remaining phases of the project. Additional potential project funding sources may include State Bicycle Transportation Account (BTA) funding; Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP) funding; Transportation Enhancement (TE) funds; and Measure "A" North County Bicycle, Pedestrian and Safe Routes to School funding.

Another potential project funding source is reprogramming of the \$300,000 of MSA-08-1 (Hwy 246 Eastern Connection Feasibility Study) funding as discussed below.

CONSIDERATIONS FOR ALTERNATIVE USE OF MSA-08-1 FUNDING:

SBCAG staff advised City staff that prior to seeking reprogramming of the \$300,000 of MSA-08-1 (Hwy 246 Eastern Connection Feasibility Study) funding, a feasibility study should be completed as discussed above to confirm that such reprogramming is intended for a project which has been found feasible. Once the project has been found feasible, and the necessary additional project funding has been estimated, the Lompoc City Council may provide a letter to SBCAG requesting a change in the use of the MSA-08-1 funding for the subject bicycle/pedestrian river crossing project. The request would likely be considered by the NCSPC, TTAC, and then decided upon by the SBCAG Board. That request will likely be construed as a significant change in the originally planned use of the MSA-08-1 funds, and may require a 2/3 vote of the SBCAG Board for approval.

Fiscal Impact:

With the proposed use of RSTP funds, the proposed feasibility study will have no impact on City General funds. RSTP funds can also be used to cover the cost of City Staff time spent working on the project.

Conclusion:

SBCAG staff recommended that prior to seeking reprogramming of the \$300,000 Measure "A" funding for a bicycle/pedestrian river crossing project, a feasibility study should be completed. Once the project has been found feasible, the City could request SBCAG reprogram the Measure "A" funding for the project. The new project is a significant change from the originally planned use of the MSA-08-1 funds, and will likely require a 2/3 vote of the SBCAG Board before approval.

SBCAG staff also recommended that the City use RSTP funds for the feasibility study. Approximately \$343,000 of RSTP funding is available from SBCAG. This funding is left over grant funding due to cost savings on the Allan Hancock Bicycle Connector Project completed in 2011. The RSTP funding could be made available for the feasibility study effort by action of the SBCAG Board.

Michael W. Luther, P.E., Assistant PW Director/City Engineer

APPROVED FOR SUBMITTAL TO THE CITY ADMINISTRATOR:

Kevin P. McCune, P.E., Public Works Director

APPROVED FOR SUBMITTAL TO THE CITY COUNCIL:

Laurel M. Barcelona, City Administrator

Attachment: [Draft Letter to SBCAG](#)