



City Council Agenda Item

City Council Meeting Date: June 17, 2025

TO: Dean Albro, City Manager

FROM: Robin S Dickerson, PE, Acting Assistant Public Works Director/City Engineer
r_dickerson@ci.lompoc.ca.us

SUBJECT: State Route 246 Capital Preventive Maintenance and Robinson Bridge Project Initial Study with Proposed Mitigated Negative Declaration and Section 4(f) de minimis Determination Comment Letter

Recommendation:

Staff recommends the City Council:

- 1) Review, amend, and provide direction on the draft comment letter (Attachment 1) regarding the State Route 246 Capital Preventive Maintenance (CAPM) and Robinson Bridge Project Initial Study with Proposed Mitigated Negative Declaration and Section 4(F) De Minimis Determination (Initial Study);
- 2) Authorize the Mayor or City Manager or their designee to sign the letter; and
- 3) Authorize staff to submit the letter on behalf of the City to Caltrans prior to close of the comment period.

Background:

Caltrans' State Route 246 CAPM and Robinson Bridge Project (Project) is on State Route 246 in Santa Barbara County in and near the City of Lompoc, from Route 1 to 0.047 miles east of the Domingos Road intersection.

The Project proposes to replace the "Robinson Bridge" over the Santa Ynez River (Bridge Number 51-0128) built in 1939 at post mile 9.8, preserve 21.7 lane miles of flexible Class 2 pavement using CAPM strategies, place 0.20 foot of Rubberized Hot Mix Asphalt overlay, rehabilitate culverts, upgrade sign panels, upgrade existing curb ramps to be Americans with Disabilities Act compliant, and upgrade guardrails to Manual for Assessing Safety Hardware standards.

On April 15, 2025, the City Council authorized the City Manager or his designee to execute the State Route 246 Capital Preventive Maintenance (CAPM) and Robinson Bridge Project Section 4(F) De Minimis Concurrence, as requested by Caltrans, which

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concluded with Caltrans that the Project's impact on City public park resources is de minimis. The request was signed by the City Manager on April 23, 2025.

Caltrans must undertake environmental review of the Project pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). On May 21, 2025, Caltrans issued the CEQA Initial Study for public comment. On May 29, 2025, Caltrans held a public workshop in the City Council Chambers that was fairly well attended by the community, City Council Members, staff, and representatives of Santa Barbara County Association of Governments (SBCAG).

During the June 3, 2025, City Council Meeting, Council requested staff prepare a draft letter regarding City Comments on the Initial Study and bring it to the Council for review and consideration on June 17, 2025, so it could be submitted to Caltrans before the close of the public comment period on Friday June 20, 2025.

Discussion:

Staff has reviewed the Initial Study prepared by Caltrans and prepared the attached draft comment letter for the City Council's review and direction. The study provides four design options for the bridge with the biggest differences being the number of piers/columns 4 piers/8 columns (Options 1 or 3) or 2 piers/4 columns (Options 2 or 4); and including a multiuse path on the westbound side of the bridge in Options 3 and 4, but not in Options 1 and 2. All options include a 12-foot travel lane in each direction, two 8-foot shoulders and elevating the bridge 6 feet.

Raising the bridge elevation 6 feet will elevate the roadway on the bridge above the 100-year base flood elevation but Caltrans does not currently propose elevating roadway segments east of Sweeney Road above the 100-year base flood elevation. Staff requested in the attached letter that Caltrans sufficiently elevate and provide adequate drainage for State Route 246 so it can serve as a reliable connection to the City during storm events.

After reviewing all four design options, staff recommends supporting Design Option 4 with the addition of the requests included in the attached letter, for the following reasons:

- Most supports the needs and desires of the voters who approved the Measure A funding, as reiterated by community member comments on May 29, 2025, as well as the purpose and need statements of the Initial Study.
- Reduces the number of piers/columns in the river and locates them farther from the center of the river channel, which has potential to reduce scour.
- Provides pedestrian and bike access on both sides of the bridge.
- Provides the best opportunity to complete bike and pedestrian improvements from Twelfth St/State Route 1 to River Park .

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Staff also noted the safety concerns for this section of State Route 246 including the diverse types of vehicles and users within the narrow existing roadway making it challenging to safely navigate. Staff recommends in the attached letter that Caltrans widen the paved shoulders of State Route 246 east of the City to address those needs.

Fiscal Impact:

The subject project is funded by Caltrans and by Measure A regional funding dedicated to the Robinson Bridge replacement by the Measure A Investment Plan approved by Santa Barbara County voters in 2008. No City funding has been committed to the project.

Conclusion:

Approving the letter and authorizing its execution and transmittal to Caltrans allows the City's comments to be documented and addressed before the Initial Study is completed.

Respectfully submitted,

Robin S. Dickerson, P.E., Acting Assistant Public Works Director/City Engineer

APPROVED FOR SUBMITTAL TO THE CITY MANAGER:

Craig Dierling, P.E., Interim Public Works Director

APPROVED FOR SUBMITTAL TO THE CITY COUNCIL:

Dean Albro, City Manager

Attachment: Letter to Caltrans District 5 regarding comments to Initial Study