



## CITY OF SANTA BARBARA

### COUNCIL AGENDA REPORT

**AGENDA DATE:** June 25, 2013

**TO:** Mayor and Councilmembers

**FROM:** Engineering Division, Public Works Department

**SUBJECT:** Las Positas Road At Cliff Drive Intersection Improvements Project Update

**RECOMMENDATION:** That Council:

- A. Receive an update on the status of the Las Positas Road at Cliff Drive Intersection Improvements Project; and
- B. Authorize staff to proceed with final design of a new traffic signal at the intersection of Las Positas Road and Cliff Drive.

#### **DISCUSSION:**

#### PROJECT SETTING AND PURPOSE

The Las Positas Road at Cliff Drive Intersection (Intersection) is located in the southwesterly area of the City, at the southern terminus of Las Positas Road, and is currently owned and operated by Caltrans as State Route 225 (SR 225). The Intersection provides residential, commercial, and recreational access to the surrounding areas, including Arroyo Burro Beach County Park, Douglas Family Preserve, Elings Park, and the Santa Barbara Waterfront.

The purpose of the Las Positas Road at Cliff Drive Intersection Improvements Project (Project) is to improve traffic operations and reduce congestion at the Intersection. The existing all-way stop-controlled intersection experiences deficient traffic operations during both the morning and evening peak hours, including recurrent congestion and queuing during the evening peak hour. The Intersection currently operates at Level of Service (LOS) F, on a scale of A (best) through F (worst), during the evening peak hour. This means the number of vehicles passing through the Intersection significantly exceeds the Intersection capacity, causing substantial delay, and as such, it is considered deficient based upon the City of Santa Barbara's acceptable intersection Level of Service standard of LOS C. Traffic operations at the Intersection are projected to continue to worsen without the implementation of any improvements at this location.

## BACKGROUND

In order to qualify for grant funding, in 2001 the City initiated the preparation of a Caltrans Project Study Report (PSR); Caltrans subsequently approved the PSR in 2002. The PSR evaluated two alternatives, a traffic signal and a roundabout, to improve traffic operations at the Intersection. Based on the potential operational improvements, and considering that the construction cost estimates for each alternative were similar at that time, the roundabout was considered the preferred alternative in the approved PSR.

During the course of preparing the PSR, discussions developed between the City and Caltrans about the relinquishment of SR 225 to the City. Relinquishment of SR 225 to the City would eliminate the need for the Project to be reviewed and approved by Caltrans, as the Intersection would no longer be within the State right of way.

Upon approval of the PSR in 2002, the Santa Barbara County Association of Governments recommended the Project for \$750,000 of grant funding (full funding at that time). Since then, the funding has been reprogrammed several times due to the state's ongoing cash flow deficiencies. The funding is currently programmed in the Fiscal Year 2015-2016 State Transportation Improvement Program for the construction phase only. The City is funding the design phase. Due to rising costs over the past 11 years, the purchasing power of the \$750,000 in grant funding has been reduced by approximately 30 percent.

## CURRENT STATUS

In January 2012, Council approved a contract with Penfield & Smith (P&S) for preliminary design services for the Project. P&S's scope of work included the preparation of preliminary designs and cost estimates for the two build alternatives, the traffic signal and the roundabout. P&S, with support from their sub-consultant Kittelson & Associates, who are experts in roundabout design, completed preliminary designs and cost estimates for both build alternatives in October 2012.

The preliminary cost estimates prepared for each alternative determined that the traffic signal alternative could be constructed within the grant funding amount, while the roundabout alternative would have a significant construction and total project shortfall. On November 8, 2012, staff presented the alternatives to the Transportation and Circulation Committee (TCC) and requested direction on how to proceed with the Project, given the significant funding shortfall for the roundabout alternative, which had previously been identified in the approved PSR as the preferred alternative. Upon consideration, the Committee made the motion "that staff keep the roundabout as the preferred alternative for another six months and look for further funding sources and return to the Committee."

Staff subsequently pursued numerous possible grant funding opportunities in an effort to identify additional funding to cover the cost of the roundabout alternative. The potential funding sources included local, state, and federal grants; unfortunately, none of the

potential funding sources provided a strong likelihood for the Project to receive sufficient funds to cover the shortfall needed to complete the roundabout alternative.

On May 23, 2013, staff returned to the TCC with an update on the Project funding and to request the Committee's input prior to returning to Council. Since no additional funding had been identified for the roundabout alternative, and the traffic signal alternative would be fully funded, staff recommended that the City move forward with final design of the traffic signal alternative. The Committee again indicated that the roundabout alternative is still their preferred alternative and that they would prefer that Council make fiscal decisions to fund the roundabout alternative. If that is not feasible, then a traffic signal could be installed.

### ALTERNATIVES ANALYSIS

Both the traffic signal and roundabout alternatives would result in a significant improvement in delay and level of service at the Intersection, thus meeting the Project goals of improving operations and reducing congestion at the Intersection. As summarized in the table below, the roundabout would reduce delay slightly more than the traffic signal alternative; however, overall, both alternatives would provide comparable and noticeable improvements in operations at the Intersection.

At this time, the traffic signal alternative is fully funded and final design could be completed within the timeframe necessary to utilize the grant funding as it is currently programmed, for Fiscal Year 2015/2016.

The roundabout alternative is estimated to have a total project shortfall of approximately \$1,150,000, and no additional funding sources are anticipated to be identified in the near future. If this alternative were to continue to be pursued, the City would risk losing the \$750,000 in grant funding that is currently programmed for the construction phase, without any assurance that the funding necessary for the shortfall could be identified. Furthermore, as more time elapses, the cost estimate for both alternatives is expected to continue to rise as the purchasing power of the \$750,000 in grant funding (assuming it can be reprogrammed to a future fiscal year) will continue to decrease.

Project Alternative	Evening Peak Hour Average Intersection Delay (seconds)		Fundable Within Grant Amount?
	2012	2035	
No Project	38.6 (LOS E)	76.1 (LOS F)	N/A
Traffic Signal	14.5 (LOS B)	19.2 (LOS C)	Yes
Roundabout	10.9 (LOS B)	12.9 (LOS B)	No

Because both the traffic signal and roundabout alternatives achieve the Project goal of improving operations and reducing congestion at the Intersection to meet the City's acceptable level of service goal, staff is recommending that Council authorize staff to move forward with the final design of the alternative that is currently fully funded, the traffic signal.

**BUDGET/FINANCIAL INFORMATION:**

The following summarizes total Project costs, as currently estimated, for the traffic signal alternative. This estimate assumes that final design will be completed by in-house Engineering staff. There are sufficient Streets Capital funds to cover the design costs of this Project and construction costs will be fully covered by grant funding.

**ESTIMATED TOTAL PROJECT COST  
 Traffic Signal Alternative**

*\*Cents have been rounded to the nearest dollar in this table.*

Preliminary Design by Consultant (Completed)	\$45,196
Final Design (City staff)	\$80,000
Other Design Costs – Environmental Clearances, Right of Way, Community Outreach, etc.	\$20,000
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>\$145,196</b>
Estimated Construction Contract w/Change Order Allowance	\$645,000
Estimated Construction Management/Inspection (City staff)	\$95,000
Estimated Other Construction Costs (testing, etc.)	\$10,000
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>\$750,000</b>
<b>TOTAL PROJECT COST</b>	<b>\$895,196</b>

**PREPARED BY:** Pat Kelly, Assistant Public Works Director/City Engineer/AS/sk

**SUBMITTED BY:** Christine F. Andersen, Public Works Director

**APPROVED BY:** City Administrator's Office