

CITY OF SANTA ROSA
DESIGN REVIEW BOARD

TO: CHAIR WEIGL AND MEMBERS OF THE BOARD

FROM: CHRIS CATBAGAN, ASSOCIATE CIVIL ENGINEER
TRANSPORTATION AND PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT

SUBJECT: HIGHWAY 101 BICYCLE AND PEDESTRIAN OVERCROSSING

AGENDA ACTION: PROVIDE COMMENTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS TO STAFF

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended by the Transportation and Public Works Department that the Design Review Board provide comments on the Highway 101 Bicycle and Pedestrian Overcrossing's proposed 1) eastern touchdown landing, 2) fencing and railing, 3) lighting, planting, and finishes.

BACKGROUND

1. Project Description

The Highway 101 Bicycle and Pedestrian Overcrossing (BPOC) project will construct a bicycle and pedestrian bridge over Highway 101 located south of Steele Lane and north of College Avenue. The BPOC will have a 14.5-foot-wide traveled way between railings with mode-separation and adhere to Caltrans accessibility requirements. The bridge structure type will be a cable-stayed bridge with a single tower on the east side. The BPOC will cross from Edwards Avenue on the west side of Highway 101 to Elliott Avenue on the east side. The west approach of the BPOC which follows the northern edge of Edwards Avenue, will span over Cleveland Avenue and touch down adjacent to the Dick's Sporting Goods building to connect to bicycle and pedestrian routes serving the Coddington Mall, Smart Sonoma Marin Area Rail Transit (SMART) facilities, and other destinations to the west. The east bridge approach, parallel with Elliott Avenue, will span over Armory Drive and touch down east of Illinois Avenue and connect to bicycle and pedestrian routes connecting the Santa Rosa Junior College (SRJC), Mendocino Avenue, and destinations to the east.

Pursuant to Zoning Code Section 20-10.050 (G), the Project is not subject to City

planning entitlements.

A bicycle and pedestrian crossing over Highway 101 has been included in local and regional planning documents for over 15 years. Since 2007, the City and Caltrans have generated a Feasibility Study, a Project Initiation Document (PID), a Project Report (PR), and an environmental document that considered and evaluated several alignments over Highway 101 for a BPOC between the Steele Lane interchange and the College Avenue interchange. Ultimately, the Final PR and the Final Environmental Document concluded that the Edwards Avenue - Elliott Avenue bridge alignment was the preferred alignment.

Three (3) bridge structure types, which included a truss, a cable-stayed, and an arch structure, were considered. However, at the conclusion of the environmental document approval process, which took into consideration comments provided by the Design Review Board (DRB) during an April 2019 meeting, it was determined that the cable-stayed bridge was the preferred bridge structure type.

In November 2021, the DRB stated the preference of a cable-stayed bridge to implement an asymmetrical tower configuration for the BPOC. However, the DRB also requested a future update regarding the Project's fencing and railing, and more insight regarding the configuration of the Project's eastern landing.

2. Surrounding Land Uses

North: Public Highway

South: Public Highway

East: Santa Rosa Junior College and Residential

West: Commercial and Residential

3. Existing Land Use – Project Site

The bicycle and pedestrian overcrossing (BPOC) will be within existing public right of way. The bridge will span over Highway 101 between the Steele Lane Avenue interchange and the College Avenue interchange, over Cleveland Avenue at Edwards Avenue and over Armory Drive at Elliott Avenue, and touchdown on Edwards Avenue on the west side and Elliott Avenue on the east side.

The touchdown and approach on the west side fronts a commercial site and is across the street from an office building and multi-family residences. The touchdown and approach on the east side fronts the Santa Rosa Junior College (SRJC) campus and is across the street from the SRJC Police Station, and single-family residences.

4. Project History

Santa Rosa's Highway 101 Bicycle and Pedestrian Overcrossing (BPOC) Project has been included in local and regional planning documents and has been actively pursued by the City since the initiation of a Feasibility Study in 2007.

The Santa Rosa Bicycle and Pedestrian Bridge Feasibility Study, prepared by Steven Grover & Associates (SGA) and accepted by the City in November 2010, defined the Project's purpose and need used to assess alternatives.

In September 2012, the City adopted the North Santa Rosa Station Area Specific Plan. The Plan included a proposed bicycle and pedestrian path on the Coffey Lane extension south of Guerneville Road and bicycle lanes on Range Avenue and Elliott Avenue.

In September 2016, a Caltrans Project Initiation Document (PID) was completed by SGA and received approval from Caltrans.

On March 29, 2018, a public meeting was held to obtain input on project goals, the overcrossing's location, and design priorities to guide the design team in the preliminary engineering and environmental analysis phase.

On April 18, 2019, the project was presented to the Design Review Board (DRB) for comment. Two (2) alignment alternatives, a crossing at Edwards and Elliott Avenues and a crossing at Bear Cub Way, and three (3) types of bridge structures, truss, cable-stayed, and arch, were presented. The DRB was in favor of the Edwards Avenue - Elliott Avenue alignment and the cable-stayed structure type, but directed the design team to study the feasibility of a single tower cable-stayed bridge.

On April 20, 2020, a public scoping meeting was held to inform the community of the upcoming circulation of the Environmental Document for the Project. Comments were received at the meeting for consideration in the evaluation of the Project.

On June 30, 2020, a public meeting was held to provide information on the Project's Environmental Document that was in circulation and encourage submitting comments.

On July 21, 2020, a study session with City Council was held to discuss the Project's draft Environmental Document. A majority of the Council expressed support for the Edwards Avenue - Elliott Avenue alignment and some type of future public art installation.

In March 2021, the Final Environmental Document for the Project was approved. Additionally, a Caltrans Project Report was completed by BKF Engineers (BKF) and received approval from Caltrans. Both documents concluded that the Edwards Avenue - Elliott Avenue alignment was the preferred bridge overcrossing alignment that would carry forward into the design development phase.

In March 2021, through the highly competitive California Active Transportation Program, the Project was recommended to receive \$12 million in grant funding for construction by the Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC). This funding award was approved by the California Transportation Commission (CTC) in June 2021.

On April 27, 2021, City Council approved a professional services agreement with BKF Engineers to provide professional design and right-of-way services for the BPOC Project.

On July 21, 2021, a neighborhood meeting was conducted, via a virtual Zoom meeting, to obtain input on the design of the touchdowns at Edwards Avenue and Elliott Avenue.

On September 17, 2021, the Project was presented to the City of Santa Rosa's Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Board (BPAB). The design options for the touchdowns and approaches at Edwards Avenue and Elliott Avenue were discussed and feedback was requested. The BPAB was supportive of the design presented.

On November 4, 2021, the Project was presented to the DRB for comment. The DRB confirmed the preference of a cable-stayed bridge with single tower configuration, provided comments on the proposed overcrossing landings and provided input to staff regarding future art installation designs.

On December 8, 2021, a public meeting was held, via a virtual Zoom meeting, to update the community about the Project and to provide a forum for sharing new questions and comments about the Project.

On April 4, 2022, the Project was presented to Santa Rosa's Art in Public Places Committee. The Committee supported making the public art around the bridge a project with the City's Public Art Program.

5. Public Comments

Comments from the Community were received in response to the circulation of

the Draft Environmental Document and issuance of the Final Environmental Document, as well as through public meetings. General Public Correspondence received after the November 4, 2021, DRB meeting is available as Attachment 6 to this staff report.

The Community strongly supported the project design as proposed. Design concerns expressed by the community related to ensuring safety, maintaining parking, and retaining visual access to and from commercial buildings.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

In accordance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), an Initial Study was conducted for this project which resulted in the drafting and adoption of a Mitigated Negative Declaration by the lead environmental agency, Caltrans, in March 2021. A Categorical Exclusion under NEPA was also certified for this project by Caltrans in March 2021.

BOARD/COMMISSION/COMMITTEE REVIEW AND RECOMMENDATIONS

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NOTIFICATION

Not applicable.

ISSUES

At this phase of the Project, there are no unresolved issues.

ATTACHMENTS

- Attachment 1 – Disclosure Form
- Attachment 2 – Location Map
- Attachment 3 – November 4, 2021 - DRB Meeting Minutes and Slides
- Attachment 4 – Overcrossing Bridge Renderings
- Attachment 5 – Overcrossing Landings Renderings
- Attachment 6 – Public Correspondence

CONTACT

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