


CITY OF LOS ANGELES
INTER-DEPARTMENTAL CORRESPONDENCE

Date: February 18, 2021

To: Seismic Governance Committee
Richard H. Llewellyn, City Administrative Officer, Chair
Sharon M. Tso, Chief Legislative Analyst
Liz Crosson, Office of the Mayor

From: Shirley Lau, PE, Principal Civil Engineer 
Bridge Improvement Division
Bureau of Engineering

Subject: Status Update for the Soto St Bridge over Valley Bl and Union Pacific Railroad Widening and Rehabilitation Project

RECOMMENDATION:

That the Seismic Governance Committee (SGC) receive and file this report.

Background

The Soto St Bridge over Valley Bl and Union Pacific Railroad Widening and Rehabilitation Project (Project) rehabilitates and widens the existing Soto Street bridge by approximately 25 feet to the west to a total width of 79 feet. The Project is deemed functionally obsolete by Caltrans, and the existing bridge is narrower than the approach roadways. In addition to the widening and retrofit of the bridge structure, the Project will also widen the roadway approaches to the bridge. In 2018, the City started construction of the Project, and it is approximately 50% complete. Anticipated completion of construction is the end of 2021.

In November 2016, Caltrans issued a memo redirecting funds totaling \$15.2 Million from current City of Los Angeles bridge projects to fund additional costs for the Sixth St Viaduct Replacement Project. This Project's construction funds of \$10.8 Million were included as part of the funding transaction, and Caltrans recommended a five-year postponement of construction. At that time, BOE's Bridge Improvement Division (BID) was near completion with the plans and specifications, and spent years to obtain environmental clearance, utility clearance, right-of-way easements, and the construction and maintenance agreement with Union Pacific. Deferral of the construction for five years would result in unnecessary City costs to redesign, revalidate the environmental document, reapply for all easements and construction permits. Due to the readiness of this Project at the time, the BID subsequently requested Caltrans to reconsider allowing the City to proceed with the project under Advanced Construction (AC) procedures, where a local agency will use its own funds to perform work eligible for future federal reimbursement.

On February 23, 2017, the SGC approved the Bureau of Engineering's recommendation to move forward with construction of this Project using AC procedures, and to establish a cash flow account for the Project prior to federal authorization of funds to establish the reimbursement date for a phase of work (E-76). On August 18, 2017, Caltrans approved the use of AC procedures.

Status of Funding

In April 2020, the City requested and received written confirmation from Caltrans District 7 that AC conversion would occur in November 2020, which would allow the City to invoice incurred expenditures of approximately \$6.5 Million. On December 5, 2020, Caltrans District 7 notified the City that the AC conversion has been pushed back for two years due to a shortage of funds in the Highway Bridge Program. The City had anticipated the funds to be reimbursed by the end of 2020, therefore no additional front funding was allocated to carry the project through completion. Funding in the amount of \$4,000,000 will be necessary to maintain the Project's anticipated completion date of December 2021.

Without the immediate AC conversion and reimbursements from Caltrans, the City will need to stop construction activities by the end of February 2021 at 50% of project completion. The bridge structure work will have been mostly completed but roadway/civil improvements will not. If construction is halted, additional funds will be wasted in demobilizing and remobilizing construction activities once the Caltrans reimbursement is received. In addition, leaving the Project incomplete with lane closures and unfinished sidewalks will significantly impact the communities of El Sereno as well as students and faculty attending the University of Southern California's Health Science campus adjacent to the Project. Through many discussions with Caltrans, it has been confirmed that the AC conversion for this Project will be on the agenda for discussion at the February 2021 Highway Bridge Program Advisory Committee, and the City will be notified of the final determination thereafter.

SL/sl

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