

SEISMIC GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE (SGC) MEETING MINUTES BRIDGE IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM

February 25, 2021

SGC Members in Attendance:

Richard Llewellyn, City Administrative Officer, Chair (CAO)

Matias Farfan, Chief Legislative Analyst Office (CLA)

Jennifer McDowell, Office of the Mayor (Mayor)

The meeting was called to order at 9:00 a.m.

Public Comments:

- Dr. Tom Williams

Agenda Item 1, Approval of Minutes

- The August 27, 2020 meeting minutes were approved.

Agenda Item 2, Verbal Report by the City Engineer on the Status of the Sixth Street Viaduct Replacement Project – Information Only

Julie Allen (BOE) for the Sixth Street Viaduct Replacement Project (SIX) provided the following report:

- The contractor, Skanska Stacy and Witbeck (SSW) continues to construct the deck of the bridge and completed the bridge deck through to the LA River. Falsework for the bridge across the last set of railroad tracks was completed. It is now possible to walk from the east end of the bridge at the 101 Freeway to almost the terminus point of the bridge along the temporary structure.
- Challenges – SSW was supposed to have placed the first three sets of arches along the eastern end of the bridge by December 2020. The delay is mainly because SSW had not completed their construction engineering calculations to ensure that all the imbedded items inside the concrete have been properly calculated to be in the right position. The anchors that support the cables have very limited tolerance. These cables go from the arch down into the deck. Proper alignment is critical to ensure that the network of cables do not conflict with each other. SSW was performing this work with their internal engineering team but changed to have their construction engineer, COWI, support that effort. On February 20, 2021, SSW submitted the final locations for Span 10 to the City. The engineer of record, HNTB, is reviewing and is expected to respond to SSW this week, which will allow them to finally do the work that supports pouring concrete into the first pair of arches at Span 10. SSW has indicated they expect to provide the submittal for the two further east arches at Spans 11 and 12 also this week, and the City will do a very expedited review and get those back so the three arches can be poured in March 2021.

- Schedule - The last schedule update submitted by SSW, with the data date of January 1, 2021, had a delay of 16 days. SSW is working on the newest schedule update with a data date of February 1, 2021, which reflects a delay of approximately 2 ½ months. On February 23, 2021, a meeting was held with Gary Lee Moore, Julie Allen, the US CEO of Skanska along with the executive vice president, where it was communicated that the City expects SSW to make up the time and recover the delays, and fully expects the project to be completed based on the contractual milestones. The Skanska executive VP indicated they will be submitting a recovery schedule and are aware it is going to be a large undertaking to recover the projected 2 ½ months of delay. They are working on the means and methods to do that, but have not yet provided the City with any details. SSW has brought in additional falsework for future spans up for the arches at Frame 5, or Spans 8 and 9. SSW is trying to advance other work to hopefully recover some of that delay.
- The project was affected with COVID cases in December 2020. At one point, ten percent of the people on the project were impacted by positive cases or by potential exposures and were quarantined. Many of the office staff was able to work from home, and SSW was able to shift crews in the field to cover critical tasks that were ongoing. Ultimately, SSW did not show a schedule impact due to COVID, and there are no current ongoing cases. SSW has indicated that they have had issues with their suppliers, home office, and various other places where COVID is impacting related stakeholder groups that participate in the project.
- SSW completed the concrete repairs at Frame 6, and they are expected to submit their final report to close those out. They have changed their approach to use shotcrete, a sprayed-on concrete, which is expected to have a better outcome than the cast-in-place repairs they did on Frame 6. They have done a couple of test panels and are doing another test tomorrow, February 26, 2021. The City expects it will be an effective method. SSW made some adjustments to the mix design to obtain improved results.
- The California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) approval of the Supplemental Agreement Change Order (SACO) that executed the global agreement with SSW on the project is still pending. There have been a number of meetings held with Caltrans, including Gary Lee Moore, the Caltrans District 7 director, and Jennifer McDowell from the Mayor's office. Originally, Caltrans staff indicated they did not agree that the SACO would be eligible, but when the City asked for details, Caltrans did not provide any documentation or reasoning. The City continued to elevate the issue. At the most recent meeting held January 6, 2021, Caltrans had their construction experts join the meeting and when the issues that were resolved through the global agreement were discussed, the Caltrans experts agreed there was merit to the City's decision. That acknowledgment was only verbal; nothing has been received in writing from Caltrans. They indicated they would be asking for additional documentation to support the cost that was agreed upon, but the City has not received any request for information to date.

- Railroad Flagging Costs – During the last six months, the City continued to work with the railroads and update the expected costs to complete for flagging services. It was determined additional flagging costs were needed mainly for: 1) Metrolink’s change of internal safety policy which required doubling the flagging support for the project. Metrolink has tracks on both sides of the river, requiring six fulltime flaggers providing support both day and swing shifts. The City tried working with Metrolink to get some relief from that since there was no work ongoing at the track level. Gary Lee Moore worked with Metrolink CEO, Stephanie Wiggins, and determined a way to reduce the flagging cost while still addressing Metrolink’s safety concerns. The City constructed a temporary field office for Metrolink at the track level, which has power, heating, and cooling services they can use to perform their work, with views of the tracks in the area above and down in the river. 2) Union Pacific Railroad Company (UPRR) informed the City they had not been invoicing correctly for prevailing wages since the start of the project and therefore, issued invoices for back charges to cover all the prevailing wages they had invoiced incorrectly. Lastly, the increase also accounts for the City’s need to have sufficient flaggers to support the project, working almost fulltime, for the next 1 ½ years. It is not a budget increase for the project, as existing funding set aside for the expected railroads increase and some of the contingency for construction engineering are being used.
- The bicycle lanes currently in design were to have bollards installed every 26 feet. In working with the Los Angeles Department of Transportation (LADOT), the Mayor’s Office, and Council District 14 (CD 14), it was preferred that rolled curbs should be installed to provide an additional visual and physical protection for bicyclists. When this was discussed approximately one year ago, it was determined that LADOT would provide these materials and install them subsequent to the bridge opening, but it was recently determined that it would be better to have those installed prior to bridge opening. The City team is continuing to coordinate with LADOT, providing them information and offered if they completed the design now, a change order could be issued to SSW to get the curbing installed before the bridge is opened.
- The project was highlighted in the January 2021 issue of the Engineering News Record. The article can be found online as well as the hard copy of the magazine.
- Matias Farfan (CLA/SGC) asked if the LADOT work would be a separate project with its own budget. Julie Allen (BOE) stated LADOT indicated that they do not have funding for this item, so it would be rolled into the cost of the Sixth Street Viaduct Replacement project to issue a change order. The bollards were already included in the project so the added costs of the curbing would be absorbed by the change order contingency. Matias Farfan (CLA/SGC) asked for verification that the contingency is sufficient to absorb this additional work. Julie Allen (BOE) stated the curbing is not expected to be a major expense so the contingency would be sufficient to absorb the cost.
- Matias Farfan (CLA/SGC) stated the progress is sounding more like a standard project moving forward. Julie Allen (BOE) agreed that should be the expectation, especially after SSW gets through the first arch, and stated every first new element

has been a struggle for SSW but expects work to go more smoothly after all the kinks are worked out for the first arch.

- Members of the Committee thanked Julie Allen (BOE) for her report.

Agenda Item 3, Verbal Report by the City Engineer on the Status of the Bridge Improvement Program – Information Only

Shirley Lau (BOE) for the Bridge Improvement Program (BIP) provided the following report:

- First item to report is related to the State Street Bridge over the I-10 Bus lanes and Southern California Regional Rail Authority (SCRRA). State Street is a major corridor that leads into the LA County/ University of Southern California's (USC) hospital, and is comprised of four connected bridge structures that cross over the I-10 Freeway, the I-10 Bus lanes, and SCRRA. The City's State Street Bridge project will widen and retrofit two out of the four bridge structures and is currently 90 percent designed. Over a year ago, BOE reached out to Caltrans District 7 to evaluate the condition of the other two Caltrans' bridges that connects to our bridge which represent 2/3 of the length of the State Street corridor. The bridge railings have been hit by trucks and in need of replacement. In addition, the Caltrans bridges will need to be widened to match the City's future widened bridge.

In the most recent meeting with Caltrans on February 8, 2021, District 7 has provided positive news that they have programmed approximately \$9 million of State Highway Operation and Protection Program (SHOPP) to replace the railing for the Caltrans' portion of the corridor and widening of the bridge that is adjacent to the City's bridge. BOE will be coordinating with District 7 staff in the coming months on how to merge the two projects. These coordination efforts to improve the entire corridor by both agencies aim to reduce the construction impacts to the community.

- Second item to report is related to staff costs and reimbursements for the BIP. Reimbursements from Caltrans have been slower, resulting in cash flow issues for the program. For example, the Riverside Drive/LA River Project received \$2.9 million in reimbursement funds, however the billing has taken almost 4 months for approval. Other billings totaling \$1.9 million are also being reviewed and not yet approved. In addition to the cash flow issues, advanced construction funds for conversion has been halted due to Caltrans financial constraints on their Highway Bridge Program. These financial issues have taken a toll on the BIP, and there are delays in reimbursing staff costs to other departments. However, the BIP had four retirements that occurred in December 2020 (1 Senior Civil Engineer, 1 Senior MA, 2 full Structural Engineers) and three other BIP staff were diverted to work on other mobility program projects. It is now projected that staff costs for this fiscal year will be significantly less than previously estimated. BOE will continue to provide the SGC and the CAO's office updates of the financial issues.

Agenda Item 4, Bureau of Engineering – Status Update of the Soto Street Bridge over Valley Boulevard and Union Pacific Railroad Widening and Rehabilitation Project

Shirley Lau (BOE) for the Bridge Improvement Division (BID) provided the following report:

- The Soto Street Bridge over Valley Boulevard 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, and will also widen the roadway approaches to the bridge. In 2018, the City started construction of the Project, and it is approximately 50 percent complete. Anticipated completion of construction is the end of 2021.

In November 2016, \$10.8 million of this project's construction funds were diverted to the Sixth Street Viaduct project by Caltrans. BOE was near completion with the plans and specifications, and deferral of the construction phase for five years as proposed by Caltrans would result in unnecessary City costs to redesign and reapply for permits. On February 23, 2017, BOE brought a report to this committee, recommending to move forward on advance construction (AC) procedures which was subsequently approved by Caltrans.

- In April 2020, BOE 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, District 7 notified BOE 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, so no additional front funding was allocated to carry the project through completion. BOE estimates that funding in the amount of \$4 million 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 percent of project completion, which will significantly impact the communities of El Sereno as well as students and faculty attending the USC's Health Science campus adjacent to the Project. Caltrans held a Highway Bridge Program Advisory Committee meeting last week during which this item was discussed. Caltrans indicated that there are several projects in the same situation so they need to determine how much funding is available for allocation. The City anticipates a formal response in about a week.

- Meeting adjourned at 9:33 a.m.