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June 1, 2011

Honorable Bill Rosendahl, Chair
Transportation Committee
Los Angeles City Council

c/o City Clerk, Room 395
City Hall, 200 North Spring Street
Los Angeles, CA 90012-4801

Dear Councilmember Rosendahl and Honorable Members:

**NORTH SPRING STREET VIADUCT WIDENING AND REHABILITATION PROJECT –
CERTIFICATION OF ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT/ ENVIRONMENTAL
ASSESSMENT AND APPROVAL OF PROJECT BY THE CITY COUNCIL**

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Certify that the Revised Final Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment (EIR/EA) has been completed in compliance with CEQA; that the City Council has reviewed and considered the information contained in the Revised Final EIR/EA prior to approving the project; that the Revised Final EIR/EA reflects the City's independent judgment and analysis; and that the documents constituting the record of proceedings in this matter are in the custody of the City Clerk, and in the files of the Department of Public Works, Bureau of Engineering (BOE).
2. Adopt the Findings.
3. Adopt the Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program.
4. Approve Alternative 2 with Design Option A as described in the Revised Final EIR/EA.
5. Select the Viaduct Design Concept with Differentiated Features – Double Arch Option as presented in the Revised Final EIR/EA.



TRANSMITTALS

1. Revised Final EIR/EA, dated June 2011.
2. Findings, dated June 2011
3. Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program, dated June 2011.

DISCUSSION

Background

The Draft EIR/EA for the project was released for public review in March 2010. The Final EIR/EA was prepared, and the Board of Public Works submitted it to City Council with a recommendation for certification and project approval. The Los Angeles City Council Transportation Committee considered the project on June 9, 2010. After reviewing the alternatives presented in the environmental document, the committee recommended that the City formulate additional design options to address community concerns on the extent of impacts to the historic fabric of the bridge. Design options and concepts developed in response to the comments made by the Transportation Committee are discussed below.

Stakeholder Working Groups

Subsequent to the Transportation Committee direction, BOE formed a working group to reevaluate stakeholder feedback in collaboration with a variety of interested parties, including historic preservationists, design professionals from the Mayor's Design Advisory Panel, (MDAP), traffic operations engineers, bikeway specialists, and Council District 1, (CD1). The working group reevaluated the project parameters and developed design options and concepts that would reduce impact to the historic resource yet still meet the project purpose and need.

Viaduct Design Option A: Single-Sided Widening

The working group considered several design options for feasibility and developed conceptual plans for a single-sided widening option that would reduce impacts to the historic fabric of North Spring Street Bridge and preserve the complementary relationship between the bridge and the adjacent North Broadway Bridge. The single-sided widening would fit sidewalks, bike lanes, and the minimum required roadway width to meet the project purpose and need. Although the design would not fully comply with the Secretary of Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation, the impact to historic fabric would be significantly reduced by widening one side only. The reduced single-sided widening is identified in the environmental document as Viaduct Design Option A. The Revised Final EIR/EA recommends Alternative 2 with Design Option A as the proposed project.

Viaduct Design Concept with Differentiated Features: Double Arch Option

The proposed project could be either similar to the original Beaux Arts design or a new design that is compatible with the historic viaduct. The Department of City Planning Cultural Heritage Commission (CHC) as well as the Department of Cultural Affairs MDAP stressed the need for thoughtful alternatives to differentiate any additions from the original bridge. The working group, in consultation with the CHC and MDAP, explored compatible, distinguishable, & reversible design concepts that would respect the original bridge with economic and technical feasibility. Design concepts were presented in a community open house and are included in the Revised Final EIR/EA. With feedback from the stakeholders and community, CD1 selected the Viaduct Design Concept with Differentiated Features: Double Arch Option as the preferred design concept.

Revised Final EIR/EA

The Final EIR/EA for this project has been revised to incorporate the minor changes described above. Section 15088.5(a) of the California Environmental Quality Act Guidelines requires recirculation of an EIR when significant new information is added to the EIR after public review of the Draft EIR, but before certification of the Final EIR. "Significant new information" is defined to include information that reveals a new significant environmental impact or a substantial increase in the severity of an environmental impact.

The reduced, single-side widening design option that has been added to the Revised Final EIR/EA reduces the environmental impact of the project and does not result in any new impact. The minor change to the final EIR is, therefore, considered an insignificant modification and does not represent new significant information. No recirculation of the EIR is required.

If you require additional information, please contact Jim Treadaway at (213) 485-5239.

Sincerely,



Gary Lee Moore, P.E.
City Engineer

GLM/GD/J:\GLM\Word\N Spring Street 061111.doc:gd
Attachments: No. 1 – Revised Final EIR/EA, dated June 2011

cc: Cynthia M. Ruiz, President, Board of Public Works
Valerie Shaw, Commissioner, Board of Public Works
Councilmember Ed Reyes, Council District 1
Michael LoGrande, Director of Planning, City Planning Department
Olga Garay, Executive Director, Cultural Affairs
Deborah Weintraub, Chief Deputy City Engineer
Jim Treadaway, Program Manager, Bridge Improvement Program