

**MOORPARK CITY COUNCIL
AGENDA REPORT**

TO: Honorable City Council

FROM: David Klotzle, City Engineer/Public Works Director 

DATE: July 9, 2012 (CC Meeting of 07/18/12)

SUBJECT: Consider Conceptual Design for Moorpark Avenue Railroad Crossing Improvements

BACKGROUND

The Southern California Regional Rail Authority (SCRRA) also known as Metrolink, has secured eight million dollars in State of California grant funding administered through the Ventura County Transportation Commission (VCTC) for the Ventura County Sealed Corridor project. The project funding is for the design and construction of railroad grade crossing safety improvements at four crossings, one in Moorpark on Moorpark Avenue and three in Simi Valley. The City has been coordinating with Metrolink and Caltrans to include the widening of Moorpark Avenue (State Route 23) in the vicinity of the rail crossing as well as intersection improvements at High Street.

DISCUSSION

The Ventura County Sealed Corridor project at Moorpark Avenue includes safety improvements such as a raised median with new crossing arm signals, and pedestrian safety gates. Upon being contacted by Metrolink regarding the Sealed Corridor project, staff has been working to incorporate elements of the City's capital improvement projects planned for Moorpark Avenue into the Metrolink project.

The City's Capital Improvement Program (CIP) includes projects to widen Moorpark Avenue (Project 8040) and improve the intersection of Moorpark Avenue and High Street (Project 8087). Project 8040 includes adding a second southbound through lane to Moorpark Avenue from Casey Road to Third Street. Project 8087 includes widening the east side of Moorpark Avenue south of High Street to accommodate a dedicated

northbound left-turn lane in addition to the northbound through and right-turn lanes. Since Moorpark Avenue is State Route 23, all of these improvements must meet Caltrans standards for approval and permitting.

A critical design constraint of the widening of Moorpark Avenue is the existing railroad turnout switch just west of the existing crossing which connects to Metrolink's rail layover facility. Relocation of this switch to the west, and the resulting required relocation of multiple other switches and track in the layover facility, is too costly to be included in Metrolink's current project.

At the City's request to include as many of the City's ultimate CIP widening and intersection project improvements in their design, Metrolink has prepared interim and ultimate design concepts (Attachment 1 and 2, respectively). These concepts are based on meeting Caltrans design standards with the exception of the raised median width of nine feet (the Caltrans standard is twelve feet) which is expected to be approved by Caltrans through a design standard exception process. It is expected that the interim design concept will be completed and approved by Caltrans before Metrolink's grant funding deadline for design completion of the end of December 2012.

The interim design concept relocates the west curb of Moorpark Avenue as far west as possible (approximately six feet) without affecting the turnout switch or existing power poles. The east curb is relocated approximately eight feet to the east to accommodate the nine-foot raised median and standard Caltrans lane and shoulder widths. This relocates the east curb to its ultimate location. Dedication of City property to Caltrans would be required on both sides of Moorpark Avenue north of the rail crossing to accommodate the interim improvements. Dedication of Metrolink property on both sides of Moorpark Avenue south of the rail crossing may also be required.

The constraints of meeting Caltrans standards, the turnout switch and maintaining the northbound through lane aligned with the same lane north of High Street render it infeasible to include a dedicated northbound left-turn lane in the interim design concept. A more complicated and time consuming process could be initiated to obtain exceptions from Caltrans for meeting the lane-width requirements, but there is no guarantee of approval of the exceptions and the process would not be completed before the grant funding deadline. Staff will coordinate with Caltrans to include a change to the High Street signal timing as a part of the interim design concept to provide a protected (green arrow) northbound left-turn movement for as much time as possible without excessive delays to the southbound traffic.

The ultimate design concept maintains the interim east curb location, the east pedestrian crossing gates and Caltrans standard lane and shoulder widths, but requires the relocation of the raised median, crossing arm signals, west curb and pedestrian crossing gates, turnout switch, and associated layover facility switches and track to the west. The ultimate design concept provides a second southbound through lane from

High Street to Poindexter Avenue and a dedicated northbound left-turn lane in addition to the northbound through and right-turn lanes at High Street. Additional dedication of City, Metrolink and private property to Caltrans would be required to accommodate the ultimate improvements.

Both the interim and ultimate design concepts require the relocation of traffic signal poles and equipment at High Street. Both concepts also provide sufficient width for the Caltrans design standard for large trucks, such as those used by the Post Office for mail transport, to turn right onto southbound Moorpark Avenue.

FISCAL IMPACT

Metrolink has requested that the City contribute funds towards the cost of designing and constructing the interim improvements that are a part of the City's planned capital improvement projects. There is currently \$370,755.00 budgeted for the design of Project 8040, Moorpark Avenue Widening, and \$200,000.00 budgeted for the design, construction and inspection of Project 8087, Moorpark Avenue Left Turn Lane, in the adopted FY 2012/13 Capital Improvement Budget.

Since Metrolink's interim design concept does not include the ultimate widening improvements identified in Project 8040, staff recommends that City Council only approve a contribution to Metrolink of the \$200,000.00 budgeted for Project 8078 which includes left-turn signal modifications and the widening of the east side of Moorpark Avenue.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

1. Approve Metrolink's Interim Design Concept for Moorpark Avenue Railroad Crossing Improvements.
2. Approve a contribution of \$200,000.00 from Project 8078 to Metrolink for the design, construction and inspection of Metrolink's Interim Design Concept for Moorpark Avenue Railroad Crossing Improvements.
3. Authorize the City Manager to execute any agreements necessary to effectuate this project subject to final language approval by the City Manager and the City Attorney.

Attachments:

1. Interim Design Concept for Moorpark Avenue Railroad Crossing Improvements
2. Ultimate Design Concept for Moorpark Avenue Railroad Crossing Improvements

