

TO: James L. App, City Manager
FROM: Ed Gallagher, Community Development Director
SUBJECT: Paso Robles Street at US 101 Exit Ramp
DATE: November 20, 2012

Needs: For the City Council to discuss improvement options at the junction of the south terminus of Paso Robles Street and the north bound exit from State Route 101 freeway.

- Facts:**
1. Paul Viborg has submitted a letter dated August 14, 2012, requesting the City Council to “decide the fate” of South Paso Robles Street.
 2. The configuration of the access to properties south of the terminus of Paso Robles Street is essentially unchanged since the construction of the freeway in 1956. At that time, the land was considered river bottom and need for access was limited if any.
 3. Given today’s economics, and by the modern measure of the flood plain, there is land south of the ramp that has development potential and value, so long as it is developed in accordance with the City’s Flood Plain ordinance.
 4. In order for the general public to access development of the land south of the Paso Robles Street off-ramp, modern improvements are needed that must satisfy both City and Caltrans standards for safety; and any special requirements for vehicles associated with the proposed land development, such as larger trucks.

**Analysis
and
Conclusion**

The intersection of the northbound freeway off-ramp with the southern terminus of Paso Robles Street presents design challenges left from a freeway designed in a mid-50s rural context. In the current configuration, the demarcation between the City property and Caltrans freeway right-of-way runs perpendicular through the northerly portion of the off-ramp. No such configuration would be considered by either the City or Caltrans today.

In addition to the concern of accessing properties to the south is the need to accommodate turnaround movements from south bound Paso Robles Street. Currently, the stop sign at the ramp provides the only protection for ramp traffic from vehicles either turning back to the north or attempting to access properties to the south.

The City received correspondence from Caltrans in regard to the Reed development application and in response to Viborg’s application for Tentative Tract 2922. Significant concerns raised by Caltrans include modification of an isolated off-ramp, access control within proximity of Caltrans right-of-way, and a general disfavor of “hook” ramps (ramps ending in sharp turns). Caltrans suggestions for improvements include the development of a 90-degree intersection with Paso Robles Street (includes reconstruction of the exiting off-ramp) or a roundabout.

We believe the roundabout has the potential to be the least land invasive and most cost effective solution. Our very preliminary estimate of cost is \$4.8 million. The next step would be a more robust analysis.

Options to fund the improvements include formation of a benefit assessment district to surrounding properties. The traffic analysis needed to support the project may include allocations of shares to benefitting parties. At their workshop in February, 2012, the City Council recommended the inclusion of the roundabout on the Needs List for the transportation section of the AB 1600 development impact fee program. The question of the City's share of the project versus benefitting land owner's still needs to be determined.

The freeway ramp "intersection" with Paso Robles Street lies upon land relinquished by Caltrans to the City. The City is currently responsible for maintenance of this land. Designation of improvements as a "public street" follows a process of design and construction resulting in a safe alignment; accommodating development opportunities of surrounding properties, turnarounds for south bound Paso Robles Street traffic and freeway ramp volumes projected in the Circulation Element of the General Plan.

Policy

Reference: Streets and Highways Code; Circulation Element of the General Plan

Fiscal

Impact: None

- Options:**
- a. Receive and file the report from the City Engineer outlining improvement options at the Paso Robles Street freeway off-ramp.
 - b. Amend, modify or reject the above option.

Attachments (4)

- (1) Viborg Letter
- (2) Map
- (3) Caltrans Letter 1-4-11
- (4) Conceptual Plan of Roundabout

AUG 15 2012

Engineering Division



Date: August 14, 2012

To: City of Paso Robles

Dear Sirs,

I would formally like to go in front of the City Council to decide the fate of Paso Robles Street. As per the letter attached from the City Attorney along with the City Staff, contend that the portion of Paso Robles Street in question is City owned but not City Maintained.

It is my belief that the street is a dedicated City Street and that it should be maintained by the City of Paso Robles.

As it is, 4,000 plus cars per day travel down the Street in question. See the attached documents from Cal-Trans dating back to the 1950's. Please schedule a meeting so that the City Council can take formal action.

Signed

Paul Viborg

Attachment 2
Map of Land relinquished by State to City



DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

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January 4, 2011

John Falkenstien, City Engineer
 City of El Paso de Robles
 100 Spring Street
 Paso Robles, CA 93446

SLO-101-56.3

Subject: Northbound U.S. 101 off-ramp at Paso Robles Street

Dear Mr. Falkenstien:

This correspondence is a follow up to a continuing dialog between the City and Caltrans with respect to solutions at the subject location. The current context, relative to geometrics and performance, is one which does not suffer from an accident history nor is delay experienced for vehicles exiting U.S. 101. We have discussed a number of times that the off-ramp does not meet current design standards per the Highway Design Manual, Sixth Edition, a vertical crest and overall ramp length being two principal issues, both of which impact driver sight distance. There is advisory speed reduction signage near the diverge point on the freeway.

Presently before us is a development proposal for Tentative Tract 2922, the applicant being Paul Viborg. This project if approved will change the contextual operating characteristics from those described above to one that significantly increases opportunities for conflicts and delays. This will occur because opposing turning movements, severely constrained geometrics for vehicles turning right onto Paso Robles Street from the off-ramp, and new merging movements will be introduced throughout the day, where those moves are now essentially zero.

An additional consideration at this location is right of way ownership. Caltrans' operating right of way terminates prior to the ramp terminus actually entering the "elephant ear" intersection. With the exception of a drainage easement, the intersection area is City right of way. The significance of this situation lies in that any and all improvements will probably occur in a space not controlled by Caltrans (This depends upon the course of action eventually undertaken).

The above discussion sets the conditions for the following comments. There are two potential courses of action that the City may wish to pursue, one of which should be made a condition of approval for Tract 2922.

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1. The preferred improvements would be off-ramp reconstruction to current standards. This would correct all non-standard items. The base of the ramp could then include right turn channelization into the Viborg project and potentially provide opportunities for a controlled intersection on all approaches. The intersection of Paso Robles Street with the off-ramp should be reconfigured to eliminate the acute angle that now exists. Because it presents a very tight 180 degree turn for trucks turning from the ramp onto southbound Paso Robles Street, this undesirable movement would essentially cause any vehicles following behind to come to a virtual stop on the off-ramp. Therefore it is desirable to relocate this particular turning movement to a location where this connection would be at 90 degrees. This may require realigning a segment of Paso Robles Street within the subdivision. Caltrans staff anticipates that California Transportation Commission action may be required to change any operational right of way boundaries that would need modification. If the applicant were to accomplish this improvement, perhaps there may be incentives available within the City in the event the applicant has multiple developments pending.
2. It is worth revisiting the concept of a roundabout. Given that there is now more space available for siting this feature, expanded opportunities may yield a viable design. If this were to be the case, the major issue is that stopping sight distance for the off-ramp would still need to conform to the Highway Design Manual standards. The analysis would have to be taken from potential end-of-queue on the ramp. Other design considerations would include meeting STAA truck turning template requirements.

The roundabout should be placed as far north as possible, to include overlaying the drainage easement if needed. The entire feature would be within City right of way which could result in administrative benefits, such as eliminating the requirements for a roundabout fact sheet, a project approval document, and a cooperative agreement with Caltrans. Caltrans would be in the role of commenting upon the roundabout design with respect to FHWA guidelines.

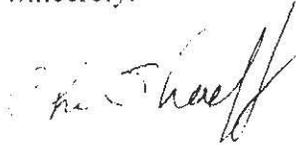
In the event that additional space is required to locate the feature (again, based on design) it is probable that the City could obtain some right of way from Caltrans between the freeway and the "elephant ear". The stipulation for right of way transfer is a statement that it is required for transportation purposes only.

Lastly, Caltrans would require, post-construction, a stipulation that the roundabout exterior circumference and a portion of its connecting road approaches are dedicated as access denial. This will ensure that no additional intersections or driveways will connect to the roundabout at undesirable locations.

John Falkenstien
January 4, 2011
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Please consider these courses of action. Caltrans staff believes that either of these solutions could provide the operational and safety features that both agencies want to provide to our constituencies. If you have any questions about this letter or would like to follow up with staff further, I can be reached at (805) 549-3632.

Sincerely,



Chris Shaeffer
Development Review
Caltrans District 5

cc L. Newland, CT
D. Nash, Paso Robles
P. McClintic, CT
J. Fouche, CT
S. Senet, CT
F. Boyle, CT



S. PASO ROBLES STREET - FLY RAMP