



# City of Sunnyvale

## Agenda Item-No Attachments (PDF)

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### REPORT TO COUNCIL

#### SUBJECT

Lawrence Expressway Grade Separations Study - Consideration of Conceptual Alternative

#### BACKGROUND

The cities of Sunnyvale and Santa Clara have participated in a conceptual design study by the County of Santa Clara Roads and Airports Department for improvements at three intersections (Reed/Monroe Avenue, Kifer Road, and Arques Avenue) on Lawrence Expressway that are planned for grade separation. The concept study analyzed the feasibility of alternatives by preparing engineering drawings, conducting utility and other investigations, and performing traffic modeling. A public outreach effort was also conducted. The intended outcome is the development of a specific project concept to address existing and projected traffic congestion on Lawrence Expressway, which can then be included in the County's long-range expressway plan. This will support future efforts to fund improvements both on the part of the County of Santa Clara and the two cities.

This report was considered by the Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Commission on August 21, 2014 and by the Planning Commission on August 25, 2014.

#### EXISTING POLICY

General Plan *Land Use and Transportation Chapter*, Policy LT -1.2 Support coordinated regional transportation system planning and improvements.

#### ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

This action is exempt from CEQA per CEQA Guidelines section 15262, preparation of feasibility and planning studies for future action.

#### DISCUSSION

Lawrence Expressway is a County-owned roadway that borders Sunnyvale and Santa Clara. Maintaining efficient traffic flow is important to the transportation and land use plans of all three agencies. The three locations in question are elements of the City's Transportation Strategic Program (TSP) and are considered vital for supporting north-south traffic and access to and from the Moffett Industrial Park area. The TSP is intended to fund a number of improvements including Lawrence Expressway grade separations. Sunnyvale has planned on funding a fair share of improvements to Lawrence Expressway intersections in Sunnyvale, splitting costs with the County and Santa Clara, based on the amount of Sunnyvale traffic utilizing the roadway since adoption of the TSP. Initial cost estimates developed in 2003 by the County are based on preliminary sketch level concepts and estimates. The Lawrence Expressway Grade Separation Study provides a more detailed analysis and development of project alternatives necessary to progress with Lawrence Expressway improvements. This study will also support maintaining an updated Traffic Impact Fee. The City's financial contribution is eligible to be funded from Transportation Impact Fees.

The study initially evaluated a broad range of alternatives to assess feasibility, effectiveness, and cost. An initial coarse assessment narrowed the potential alternatives to three. These were subject to detailed concept design, traffic analysis, multi-modal circulation assessment, assessment of community impacts, right of way requirements, constructability, and cost benefit. After staff, decision maker, and community evaluation, a fourth alternative was developed that incorporated beneficial aspects of the three initial alternatives. The County of Santa Clara is asking that the City endorse the Recommended Final Concept, presented as Attachment 1, for inclusion in the County Expressway Plan. In summary, the Recommended Final Concept features lowering the expressway below the current grade and constructing elevated intersection connections to side streets.

Endorsement of the Recommended Final Concept does not constitute project approval, and future design and environmental work will continue to assess and refine alternative design concepts. Inclusion of the Concept on the County Expressway Plan provides a better definition of the scope and scale of a future project, which enables the County and the cities to refine planning and funding efforts.

Public outreach and communication with decision making bodies was an important aspect of the project. The County held three public workshops, two in Sunnyvale and one in Santa Clara. The workshops introduced the project (workshop 1), presented alternatives for study and initial study findings (workshop 2), and explained the Recommended Final Concept (workshop 3). All were well attended. Staff participated in a Technical Working Group, and Vice-Mayor Davis sat on a Policy Advisory Board. The City Council, Planning Commission, and Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Commission reviewed study findings in respective study sessions.

#### Board and Commission Review

The Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Commission considered this item on August 25, 2014 (RTC 14-0096). Commissioners voted 6-0 to recommend Alternative 1: Recommend that the City Council endorse the Recommended Final Concept for Lawrence Expressway Grade Separations for inclusion in the County Expressway Plan.

The Planning Commission considered this item on August 25, 2014 (RTC 14-0768). Commissioners voted 4-0 (three Commissioners absent) to recommend Alternative 1: Recommend that the City Council endorse the Recommended Final Concept for Lawrence Expressway Grade Separations for inclusion in the County Expressway Plan.

#### **FISCAL IMPACT**

There is no fiscal impact from endorsement of the Recommended Final Concept for inclusion in the County Expressway Plan.

#### **PUBLIC CONTACT**

Public contact was made by posting the Council agenda on the City's official-notice bulletin board outside City Hall, at the Sunnyvale Senior Center, Community Center and Department of Public Safety; and by making the agenda and report available at the Sunnyvale Public Library, the Office of the City Clerk and on the City's website.

This report was considered by the Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Commission on August 21, 2014

and by the Planning Commission on August 25, 2014.

### **ALTERNATIVES**

1. Endorse the Recommended Final Concept for Lawrence Expressway Grade Separations for inclusion in the County Expressway Plan.
2. Endorse another design concept for inclusion in the County Expressway Plan.
3. Do not endorse a design concept for inclusion in the County Expressway Plan and provide direction to staff on next steps.

### **STAFF RECOMMENDATION**

Alternative 1: Endorse the Recommended Final Concept for Lawrence Expressway Grade Separations for inclusion in the County Expressway Plan.

### **BOARD/COMMISSION RECOMMENDATION**

The Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Commission and the Planning Commission voted unanimously to recommend Alternative 1: Recommend that the City Council endorse the Recommended Final Concept for Lawrence Expressway Grade Separations for inclusion in the County Expressway Plan.

Prepared by: Manuel Pineda, Assistant Director of Public Works

Reviewed by: Kent Steffens, Director of Public Works

Reviewed by: Robert A. Walker, Assistant City Manager

Approved by: Deanna J. Santana, City Manager

### **ATTACHMENTS**

1. Recommended Final Lawrence Expressway Grade Separations Concept
2. Excerpt of the August 21, 2014 draft meeting minutes of the Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Commission.
3. Excerpt of the August 25, 2014 approved meeting minutes of the Planning Commission.