



**CITY OF LOS ALTOS
CITY COUNCIL MEETING
April 14, 2015**

DISCUSSION ITEM

Agenda Item # 10

SUBJECT: Appropriate \$440,000 of Traffic Impact Fees as a matching contribution for Foothill Expressway Improvements between El Monte Avenue and San Antonio Road

BACKGROUND

In 2001, Santa Clara County identified a need to develop a comprehensive plan to manage traffic growth to accommodate all modes of transportation on its expressways. The County, with assistance from local agencies, developed the County Expressway Implementation Plan in 2003. The document evolved into a long-term plan for the improvements and maintenance of the County Expressway System. The plan focused on:

- Capital Improvement Program
- Maintenance and Operations
- Funding Strategy

In 2003, three projects were recommended for Foothill Expressway:

1. Signal operations improvements between Edith and El Monte, including Grant/St. Joseph—this project is complete
2. Extend existing westbound deceleration lane at San Antonio by 250 feet—this project was deleted
3. Replace Loyola Bridge—construction will begin in April 2015

In 2008, the recommended projects list was revised to include:

1. Widen Foothill Expressway shoulder under Loyola Bridge—this project is complete
2. Loyola Bridge widening, including bicycle, pedestrian and channelization improvements—construction will begin in April 2015

The County Expressway Plan was last updated in 2008.

The current County Expressway Plan effort began in the Fall of 2013; it will look at existing conditions of all the expressways, update identified expressway improvement projects outlined in 2008 and make new or revised recommendations for improvements per expressway. For any recommended infrastructure improvements, it is intended that the mobility needs of all users of the expressways and cross streets are met (i.e., implement complete streets where appropriate).

County staff completed its second round of community outreach efforts in February 2015. The meetings were designed to solicit feedback on concept improvements and bicycle and pedestrian improvements and routing. Based on the feedback received, the County developed a proposed project list for each expressway.

EXISTING POLICY

Los Altos Municipal Code Chapter 3.48 – Traffic Impact Fee

PREVIOUS COUNCIL CONSIDERATION

None

DISCUSSION

The Technical Working Group (TWG), consisting of staff from various cities was given an assignment to rank the proposed projects with the prioritization criteria developed by the County. On March 11, 2015, the TWG convened to compare each member’s ranking with the County’s evaluation. The aim of this exercise was to ensure that the rankings were comparable and reflect the needs of each jurisdiction.

Foothill Expressway

The improvement project on Foothill Expressway between El Monte and San Antonio meets seven of the nine prioritization criteria. Project improvements include: widen Foothill Expressway from four to six lanes by extending right turn lanes and make intersection improvements at El Monte Avenue and San Antonio Road. Improvements would also include widening El Monte Avenue to include two south-bound, through lanes between Covington Road and Foothill Expressway.

If the City commits to providing 20% in matching funds, it will gain one additional point and place the project at the top of the priority list. The estimated cost of this project is approximately \$2.2 million.

Given community and Council interest in these improvements, an appropriation of Traffic Impact Fees to provide the 20% matching fund for this project is recommended. Funds will be used for the design and environmental review of the project, which will make the project ‘shovel-ready.’ When competing for construction grant funds, a ‘shovel-ready’ project is in the best position to compete for funding. It should be noted that, depending on the grant source, it is possible that the City may be responsible for additional local match for construction portion of the project. Staff will work closely with the County to minimize that requirement to the extent possible.

PUBLIC CONTACT

Posting of the meeting agenda serves as notice to the general public.

FISCAL/RESOURCE IMPACT

There is an unknown impact on staff time and effort. Staff roles will be defined during the project planning process.

Based on the estimated project cost, the funding recommendation is noted below:

Funding Source	20% Matching Fund	Estimated Construction Cost
Traffic Impact Fee	\$440,000	\$2,200,000

There are sufficient funds in the City’s Traffic Impact Fee Fund for this purpose. Funding for the future construction of the project may be obtained through competitive Federal or State grant funds. The County is also interested in pursuing a transportation ballot measure in 2016 which may address expressway-related projects.

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

Categorically Exempt pursuant to CEQA Section 15273 (a)

RECOMMENDATION

Appropriate \$440,000 of Traffic Impact Fees as a matching contribution for Foothill Expressway Improvements between El Monte Avenue and San Antonio Road

ALTERNATIVES

Do not appropriate matching funds for Foothill Expressway Improvements

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ATTACHMENTS:

None