



# City Council Report

**City Council Meeting: August 10, 2010**

**Agenda Item: 8-C**

To: Mayor and City Council  
From: Susan Cline, Acting Director of Public Works  
Subject: Pier Bridge Project

## **Recommended Action**

Staff recommends that City Council direct staff to proceed with the initiation of a project to replace the Pier Bridge and prepare and submit an application for federal transportation funding.

## **Executive Summary**

The Pier Bridge is an existing concrete structure connecting Ocean Avenue to the Municipal Pier. Constructed in 1939, the bridge is structurally and functionally deficient.

The Pier Bridge Widening Project (Project) was initiated in 1995 to address the deficiencies utilizing federal transportation funds and local matching funds. The Project scope of work included widening and rehabilitation to bring the existing structure to current standards. Due to concerns over traffic circulation and Pier parking access, bridge design alternatives were investigated connecting the Pier Bridge to the 1550 Pacific Coast Highway parking lot. A draft Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment (EIR/EA) was prepared and circulated for public comment in 2006. Prior to preparation of the final EIR, Caltrans indicated that the proposed project was not eligible for federal funding.

This report recommends the initiation of a federally-funded project to replace the Pier Bridge with a wider structure to improve pedestrian, bicycle, and vehicular access to the Pier. The proposed bridge replacement project is eligible for federal Highway Bridge Program funding in the amount of approximately \$7 million. The total project cost is estimated to be \$8 million, resulting in a net cost to the City of \$1 million.

## **Background**

On behalf of Caltrans, the County of Los Angeles Department of Public Works performs biennial bridge inspections for City bridges that are part of the National Bridge Inventory and a report with maintenance recommendations is provided to the City. In the early 1990's, inspection reports indicated that the Pier Bridge was structurally and functionally deficient. In 1995, staff initiated the Pier Bridge Widening Project to address structural deficiencies, including lack of seismic reinforcement, and functional deficiencies, including narrow sidewalks, travel lanes, and roadway shoulders. Federal funding was anticipated from the Highway Bridge Program administered by Caltrans. On [June 13, 1995](#), Council approved Contract Nos. 7147 and 7148 (CCS) with Wallace, Roberts & Todd (WRT) for the design of the Beach Improvement Group Project that included the Pier Bridge Widening Project.

In 1997, the Preliminary Engineering phase was authorized by Caltrans. This phase included the preparation of conceptual designs and environmental clearance. During the community outreach process, circulation of pedestrian, bicycle, and vehicle traffic from downtown to the Pier and the 1550 Parking Lot was

a major concern. The scope of the project was modified to investigate a connection from the Pier Bridge to the 1550 Pacific Coast Highway (PCH) parking lot and the Project was renamed to the Santa Monica Pier Access Improvements Project. On [November 28, 2000](#), Council approved a First Modification to Contract No. 7148 (CCS) with WRT for the design of California Incline Replacement and Pier Bridge Widening.

On [October 23, 2001](#), Council approved Agreement No. 8022 (CCS) with Rincon Consultants, Inc. for the preparation of an EIR/EA for the Santa Monica Pier Access Improvements Project. Several design alternatives were developed to address parking access and circulation issues. In 2006, a draft EIR/EA ([Volume 1](#) and [Volume 2](#)) analyzing five alternatives was publically circulated. All alternatives included rehabilitation of the existing structure. A replacement alternative was not studied. Prior to preparation of the final EIR/EA, Caltrans informed staff that rehabilitation of the existing structure was not cost effective and the proposed project was not eligible for federal funding. Staff placed further environmental work on hold. Caltrans indicated that the City must re-apply for federal funding for replacement of the Pier Bridge and prepare new environmental documents as the scope of the project has changed.

In February 2010, the Pier Restoration Corporation (PRC) Operations Committee requested staff to provide an update on the Santa Monica Pier Access Improvements Project. Following the discussion, the Operations Committee recommended that the PRC Board consider rescinding their previous position requesting that the project include a connection to the 1550 PCH parking lot and support an application for federal funding to replace the existing structure. The PRC Board considered and approved this recommendation at the March 2010 Board meeting.

## **Discussion**

The Pier Bridge is structurally deficient and functionally obsolete. Recent bridge inspection reports indicate that the sufficiency rating of the structure is 30.6 out of 100. Bridges with a sufficiency rating less than 50 are eligible for federal funding for a portion of the replacement cost through the Highway Bridge Program (HBP). The HBP is a safety program that provides federal aid to local agencies to replace and rehabilitate deficient locally-owned public highway bridges when the State and the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) determine that a bridge is significantly important and is unsafe because of structural deficiencies, physical deterioration, or functional obsolescence. The current federal reimbursement rate is 88.53% of the eligible participating project costs. Unusual architectural treatments are generally not participating costs. The HBP may participate in funding bridge widening to accommodate bicycle facilities.

Staff identified two options for addressing the deficiencies of the Pier Bridge. The options are either a complete replacement or rehabilitation of the existing bridge. Both options would involve a widened structure. A replacement structure would have an estimated useful life of at least 75 years, while a retrofitted structure would have an estimated useful life of 40 to 50 years. The estimated construction cost of replacement is \$8 million and the project delivery timeframe is estimated to be 42 months from initiation, due to the Caltrans and FHWA review and approval process and federal environmental clearance. The replacement project is eligible for approximately \$7 million in federal funding, resulting in a projected \$1 million cost to the City. Additionally, initiating the federally-funded project at this time would allow for

completion of the bridge at the same time as the completion of the Palisades Garden Walk and Town Square, the Expo Light Rail project, and the planned improvements to Colorado Avenue adjacent to the Pier Bridge. The estimated construction cost of rehabilitation and widening is \$7 million, which has to be fully funded by the City, and the project delivery timeframe is estimated to be 29 months from initiation.

Staff recommends replacing the bridge with a wider structure as this option provides a longer useful life of at least 75 years versus the 40 to 50 years with a rehabilitated bridge while the likely cost to the City is significantly less. If staff is directed to proceed with the replacement option for the Pier Bridge project, the next step is to prepare and submit an application to Caltrans to initiate HBP participation. Staff will also begin preparation of a new set of environmental documents to meet regulatory requirements and work with various regulatory agencies and stakeholders to maximize pedestrian and bicycle access.

### **Financial Impacts & Budget Actions**

There is no immediate budget/financial impact to the recommended action. However, proceeding with the replacement option for the Pier Bridge project will require a one-time project cost of approximately \$8 million, of which \$7 million would be provided by the federal funded Highway Bridge Program based on project readiness and other Caltrans district priorities. The City will have to provide the funding for the remaining \$1 million, of which \$700,000 is available at account numbers C010655.589000 and C300655.589000 from existing appropriations. Additional appropriation by Council for the balance of \$300,000 is needed prior to construction, estimated to be during the FY2012-13 budget cycle at the earliest.

In the highly unlikely event that federal funding is denied, the City must use another funding source to fund the project and Council will have to establish funding priority with other competing projects.

**Prepared by:** Eric Bailey, P.E, Civil Engineer

**Approved:**

**Forwarded to Council:**

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Rod Gould  
City Manager