

Agenda Report

May 2, 2022

TO: Honorable Mayor and City Council

FROM: Department of Transportation

SUBJECT: APPROVAL OF RELINQUISHMENT AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA AND THE CITY OF PASADENA FOR THE RELINQUISHMENT OF THE STATE ROUTE 710 NORTHERN STUB BETWEEN UNION STREET AND COLUMBIA STREET

RECOMMENDATION:

It is recommended that the City Council:

1. Find that Caltrans, as the lead agency, has prepared and circulated for public review environmental review documents concluding that the following proposed action is exempt from review pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines Section 15061 (b)(3) and the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) Section 771.117; and in its role as a responsible agency under CEQA/cooperating agency under NEPA, the City has reviewed and approves of the Categorical Exemption pursuant to Section 15061 (b)(3), and the Categorical Exclusion pursuant to Section 771.117.
2. Contingent upon Caltrans' adoption of the exemptions above, authorize the City Manager to execute a Relinquishment Agreement between the State of California and the City of Pasadena for the Relinquishment of the State Route 710 between Union Street and Columbia Street, inclusive of any subsequent agreements relating to the transfer of this property from Caltrans to the City of Pasadena.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

The California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) proposes to relinquish State Route (SR) 710 between Union Street and Columbia Street to the City of Pasadena, including nine traffic signals and four overcrossing structures (bridges). Once this roadway is relinquished to the City, the City will assume full ownership, responsibility, liability, maintenance, and control of the 710 relinquished area.

The value of the relinquished area was mutually negotiated between the City and Caltrans, based on the cost of bringing the subject portion of the SR710 to a state of good repair. Using the deferred maintenance cost estimate as a guide and in lieu of

Caltrans administering a contract for repairs, the City requested that Caltrans deposit with the City a lump sum cash payment, in exchange for the City's acceptance of ownership as is.

In order for the City to assume control of the SR710 from Union Street to Columbia Street, a Relinquishment Agreement must be executed between the State of California Department of Transportation and the City of Pasadena. The Relinquishment Agreement provides that \$5.0 M would be deposited with the City upon execution of the agreement, subject to approval by the California Transportation Commission (CTC).

In addition to the Relinquishment Agreement, the City has requested that Caltrans continue to provide maintenance for the relinquished area between Union Street and California Boulevard. Caltrans is preparing a "Work for Others" Agreement to allow Caltrans to maintain the SR710 relinquished area on behalf of the City of Pasadena. This maintenance agreement will be presented to City Council for consideration, as a separate agenda item, prior to the CTC meeting for consideration of the Relinquishment Agreement.

Following the proposed relinquishment of the 710N stub area, a Citywide planning effort to re-envision the area, determine the transportation network, land use, and utility infrastructure will be initiated. This multi-year planning effort will include significant public outreach and input.

BACKGROUND:

Over the past two years, the City has been coordinating with Caltrans on proposed relinquishment of the SR 710 Northern Stub, between Union Street and Columbia Street. The City completed a Technical Feasibility Analysis to determine the technical feasibility of converting the existing SR-710/SR-134/I-210 freeway-to-freeway interchange into a local street network with connections to I-210 and SR-134. Following the Technical Feasibility Assessment, the City completed a Supplemental Traffic Analysis which focused on the potential queue lengths weaving operations for freeway off-ramps and connector roads. Caltrans concurred with the City that any potential future on-ramp or off-ramp closures as studied in the analyses would not create any safety or operations concerns for the SR 134 or Interstate 210 freeways. This concurrence allowed for the initiation of the formal relinquishment process (described further below) resulting in a Relinquishment Approval Report that will be presented to the California Transportation Commission (CTC) requesting the authority for Caltrans to execute a Relinquishment Agreement with the City of Pasadena.

HISTORY

In the November 26, 2018 State Route 710 North Project Final Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Impact Statement (Final EIR/EIS), Caltrans identified the Transportation System Management/Transportation Demand Management (TSM/TDM) as the locally preferred alternative for this corridor. Since then, the Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority (Metro) has coordinated the advancement of TSM/TDM efforts to be implemented in lieu of a 710 North connection. Identifying the

TSM/TDM as the locally preferred alternative has facilitated local, multi-modal capacity enhancement projects to advance and be implemented, however, Pasadena's goal has long been to not only have the 710 North freeway corridor delisted from the State highway system, but to have the streets within the SR 710 City boundaries (stub) to be relinquished to the City thereby regaining local control.

As a result of legislation introduced by State Senator Portantino (SB 7) and Assemblymember Holden (AB 29), the California Street and Highways Code, Section 622.3 indicates that the CTC may make a determination to relinquish the portion of SR 710 that is contained within the City of Pasadena to the City if Caltrans and the City enter into an agreement providing for that relinquishment. The ongoing coordination with Caltrans and feasibility study has served towards the City's efforts to securing an agreement from Caltrans.

SR710 REPURPOSING TECHNICAL FEASIBILITY ASSESSMENT AND SUPPLEMENTAL TRAFFIC ANALYSIS

Since November 2019, staff has been engaged with Caltrans in ongoing working group and coordination efforts aimed at determining the technical feasibility of converting the existing freeway to freeway interchange into a local street network with connections to I-210 and SR-134.

The technical feasibility assessment that included both a traffic analysis and an initial engineering analysis for this area was completed in January 2021. The feasibility assessment did not assume any land use considerations for the project area, but rather focused on demonstrating that eliminating the freeway-to-freeway interchange ramps would not impact the operations or safety of Interstate 210 and State Route 134.

Based on the completed feasibility assessment developed through this collaborative effort, the City and Caltrans agreed to move forward with the next steps in the relinquishment process. On January 11, 2021, Caltrans District 7 Director, Tony Tavares, provided the City a letter stating that Caltrans was satisfied, based on the analysis conducted to this point, modifying the system from a freeway-to-freeway connection to a local-to-freeway connection would not create a significant effect on state highway and/or federal highway operations or safety. As identified in the technical feasibility assessment, additional technical analysis was requested by Caltrans as part of the immediate next step. On September 13, 2021, staff provided a status update to City Council presenting the concepts identified in the Technical Feasibility Assessment and noting the ongoing supplemental traffic analysis.

Supplemental traffic analysis was conducted and included developing a more defined analysis through a Vissim simulation model, intersection and freeway ramp queuing analysis and a freeway ramp weaving analysis. The supplemental traffic analysis re-affirmed that any potential modifications to the system from a freeway-to-freeway connection to a local-to-freeway connection would not create a significant effect on state highway and/or federal highway operations or safety. Caltrans concurred with the findings of the supplemental traffic analysis, allowing the City to initiate the formal relinquishment process with Caltrans.

RELINQUISHMENT AREA

The relinquishment area is shown in the Relinquishment Area Map, included as Attachment A. The map identifies three areas for relinquishment. The north-most area identified for relinquishment is the Caltrans right-of-way generally bound by Union Street to the north, Pasadena Avenue to the east, California Boulevard to the south and St John Avenue/Havendale Drive to the west. This area proposed to be relinquished includes four overcrossings/bridge structures; Union Street, Colorado Boulevard, Green Street and Del Mar Boulevard. The area does not include the parcels with residential and institutional tenants immediately north of California Boulevard.

The middle section of Caltrans property identified for relinquishment is the wishbone area comprised of the roadway and sidewalk connection of Pasadena Avenue and St John Ave generally between Bellefontaine Street on the north and Wigmore Drive on the south. It includes the existing roadway, sidewalk, landscaping, utility area and unimproved areas of the transportation network.

The south section of Caltrans property identified for relinquishment is the existing sidewalk, driveways, landscaping and utility area extending up to 5-feet west of and 11-feet east of the existing Pasadena Ave right-of-way within the transportation network from Bellefontaine Street to Columbia Street.

These three sections make up the transportation network of the SR 710 northern stub currently owned, operated and maintained by Caltrans. The remaining roadway and sidewalks along St John Avenue and Pasadena Avenue, between Union Street and Columbia Street are currently the jurisdiction of the City of Pasadena, with various sections under the maintenance responsibility of Caltrans. Caltrans also owns, operates and maintains nine traffic signals within the relinquishment area. These nine traffic signals will also be relinquished to the City as part of this relinquishment agreement. The City would assume full ownership, responsibility, liability, maintenance, and control of the nine traffic signals.

RELINQUISHMENT AGREEMENT

In order for the City to assume control of the SR710 from Union Street to Columbia Street, a Relinquishment Agreement must be executed between Caltrans and the City of Pasadena. A Relinquishment Agreement has been developed that defines the terms of the relinquishment and identifies the roles and responsibilities of the City and Caltrans following relinquishment.

The terms of Relinquishment Agreement provide that once this roadway is relinquished to the City, the City will assume full maintenance, ownership, responsibility, control and liability of the 710 relinquished area. This includes the obligation of improving the relinquished SR 710 northern stub area to meet American with Disabilities Act (ADA) standards.

The City would accept the relinquished SR 710 northern stub in its current environmental condition and setting, including, but not limited to, the presence of hazardous materials as described in the Environmental Disclosure Memo (EDM), titled

“Initial Site Assessment for Relinquishment of Northern Stub of CA-710 to City of Pasadena”, dated February 2, 2022. This report is available upon request.

The value of the relinquished area was mutually negotiated between the City and Caltrans, based on the cost of bringing the subject portion of the SR710 to a state of good repair. Using the deferred maintenance cost estimate as a guide and in lieu of Caltrans administering a contract for repairs, the City requested that Caltrans deposit with the City a lump sum cash payment, in exchange for the City’s acceptance of ownership as is. The Relinquishment Agreement provides that \$5.0 M would be deposited with the City in exchange for the area being relinquished to the City. The relinquishment agreement serves as the foundational document for CTC’s final determination.

A Relinquishment Approval Report will be submitted by Caltrans to the California Transportation Commission as the basis for the relinquishment request, requesting the authority for Caltrans to relinquish the property to the City of Pasadena as detailed in the Relinquishment Agreement.

NEXT STEPS

Pending City Council authorization, staff would coordinate with Caltrans for submittal of reports to the CTC for relinquishment approval in summer 2022.

Following CTC’s determination to relinquish the SR 710 northern stub area to the City, a multi-disciplinary, community driven visioning process to layout the future transportation network, land use, and utility infrastructure network needed to reconnect Pasadena will be initiated. This multi-year effort is anticipated to begin in 2022.

COUNCIL POLICY CONSIDERATION:

The 710 Northern Stub Repurposing Supplemental Analysis assists in advancing the following objectives of the Mobility Element:

- Policy 1.2 - Promote greater linkages between land uses and transit, as well as non-vehicular modes of transportation to reduce vehicular trip related emissions.
- Policy 1.3 - Recognize the distinctive transportation needs of the community and deliver appropriate transportation services developed through public outreach programs.
- Policy 1.26 - Continue to coordinate with other governmental agencies in the area, including municipalities, Southern California Association of Governments, Metro and the San Gabriel Valley Council of Governments to address issues of mutual concern related to the transportation system.

ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS:

As the lead agency, Caltrans has prepared a Mini-Preliminary Environmental Analysis Report (Mini-PEAR) documenting the potential environmental impacts of the transfer of ownership. The Mini-PEAR, completed on February 22, 2022 is a scoping document which guides the environmental process for the environmental clearance. Staff has had the opportunity to review the document and has no concerns with the findings.

Caltrans has determined that the relinquishment is Categorically Exempt under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines Section 15061(b)(3) Common Sense Exemption (activity will not result in significant impact(s)) and is a Categorical Exclusion under the National Environmental Protection Act (NEPA) Section 771.117(c)1 (activities not directly leading to construction). Caltrans has notified all responsible parties and, following a 30-day review period, a final Categorical Exemption and a final Categorical Exclusion will be issued by May 31, 2022.

Caltrans also conducted Initial Site Assessment (ISA) to identify known or potential sources of contamination or recognized environmental conditions (RECs) that may adversely affect the parcels Caltrans intends to relinquish. This process was conducted by Caltrans through a review of prior environmental reports and historical documentation. This ISA was completed on February 2, 2022. The City has also collected soil samples to determine the level of various hazardous waste materials in the relinquishment area. Based on the findings from the Initial Site Assessment and the subsequent soil samples collected by the City, City staff recommends accepting the terms of the relinquishment agreement.

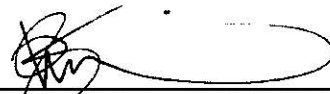
Accordingly, in its role as a responsible agency under CEQA/cooperating agency under NEPA, the City approves of the Categorical Exemption pursuant to Section 15061 (b)(3), and the Categorical Exclusion pursuant to Section 771.117(c) as drafted by Caltrans. It is important to note, however, that the City's approval is contingent because Caltrans will not take action in its role as lead agency until May 31, 2022.

This relinquishment is a property transfer agreement which does not change roadway configuration or operations. It is anticipated that any future projects that modify the transportation infrastructure would undergo environmental review at the time they are funded for design.

FISCAL IMPACT:

Execution of the Relinquishment Agreement and subsequent approval by the CTC will provide State funds in the amount of \$5.0 M for the improvements of the SR710 corridor. The \$5.0M that Caltrans would pay the City are part of State Highway Operation and Protection Plan (SHOPP).

Respectfully submitted,

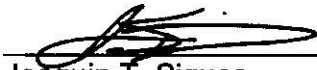


LAURA RUBIO-CORNEJO

Director

Department of Transportation

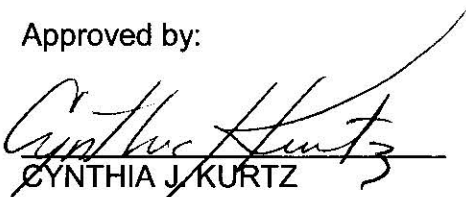
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Approved by:



CYNTHIA J. KURTZ

Interim City Manager

Attachment:

Attachment A – Relinquishment Area Map