

**City Manager's Report
February 8, 2011 City Council Meeting**



Prepared by: Randy Pesses, Director of Public Works

Item #: 12.1

Subject: Adopt Resolution No. _____, a Resolution of the City Council

1. Approving the Clay Street/Cedar Ravine Realignment and Clay Street Bridge at Hangtown Creek Replacement Project (CIP #40617).
2. Make a finding that the proposed project is in conformance with the City of Placerville's General Plan.
3. Certify the "Initial Study/Mitigated Negative Declaration" for said project.
4. Adopt the project mitigation measures and "Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Plan", and identify the preferred off-street parking mitigation location.

Background:

At a hearing held on November 9, 2010 this project was brought to the City Council for consideration with the same recommendation as outlined in this report. A copy of the November 9, 2010 Staff Report is included as "Attachment 1". At that time, a full presentation of the project was made to the City Council, and a lengthy public hearing was conducted, through which the City Council received a substantial amount of public comment/concern with respect to the various aspects of the project. At the conclusion of the public hearing the City Council voted to continue the item. The City Council also directed Staff to meet with all of the business owners adjacent to, and within the immediate area of the proposed roundabout location at Cedar Ravine and Main Street, in an effort to answer their specific questions concerning the project, and, if possible, to incorporate modifications into the project that would address those concerns and objections.

Discussion:

Since receiving City Council direction, Staff has been able to arrange meetings with most of the business owners, with the exception of those that were unable to meet due to schedule conflicts, family issues, or failure to return our calls requesting an opportunity to meet. A list of these meetings is included as "Attachment 2". In general, those issues of concern can be summarized as follows:

1. All of the businesses on upper Main Street felt as though they suffered a loss of business as a result of the "Upper Main Street Rehabilitation Project", constructed in 2006. They also feel that they suffered a loss of business as a result of the three years of construction on the "Highway 50 Operational Improvements Project". Most are extremely fearful that the construction of this project will result in yet another loss of business that could result in business failure given the already strained circumstances under our current economic recession.
2. A number of people expressed concern about the loss of parking at the Ivy House parking lot, and the fact that the proposed replacement parking lot on Locust

Street was one full block away from the Ivy House lot. They were concerned that customers would be unwilling to walk an additional 800 feet to patronize their various businesses.

3. There was general concern about the potential for loss of the Saturday Farmers Market.
4. One participant expressed concern about the overall safety of a roundabout at that location, and despite numerous case studies, and analysis by the Federal Highway Administration, he is convinced it will be an overall safety problem for motorists and pedestrians.
5. Several business owners stated that they had not experienced unusual congestion at these intersections, and questioned the need for the project at all. Several people indicated the biggest problem was at the intersection of Pacific Street and Cedar Ravine and wanted to know what the City was planning to do about that intersection.
6. One participant stated that the project was a waste of taxpayers' money, and that the City should abandon the project, and return the funds to the Federal Government.
7. At the meeting held with the tenants of 589 Main Street, the participants indicated that the project is definitely needed, and that they have had problems pulling out of Clay Street onto Main Street. They also felt that the Farmers Market did not belong in the Ivy House parking lot, but that it should be set up alongside the El Dorado Trail adjacent Hangtown Creek. Their primary concern was construction noise, and the disruption of Main Street during business hours.

Responses to Comments and Concerns:

1. The concern about loss of business is very real, and it is an unfortunate consequence of any public works construction project located within a commercial downtown area. While CEQA does not consider economic impact as an environmental impact to be mitigated in an environmental document, and California law does not allow compensation to abutting business owners when business losses occur as a result of the public works project, the City should be able to minimize those impacts through the timing, and staging of construction. Staff would propose that the project be constructed in the following order:
 - a. The first order of work would be the construction of the replacement parking lot to mitigate the loss of parking experienced at the Ivy House lot. The subsequent stages of construction would not occur until the new parking lot is completely functional.
 - b. Once the new parking lot is completed, the Clay Street Bridge would be reconstructed. Staff would recommend the use of a precast concrete structure to shorten the overall time required for bridge construction. In addition, the City Council should consider the complete closure of Clay Street during bridge construction to further shorten the time necessary for bridge construction. If Clay

Street cannot be closed, the bridge would have to be constructed one half width at a time, which substantially extends overall construction duration.

- c. Construction of the realignment of Clay Street up to the new intersection at Cedar Ravine would take place prior to construction of the roundabout itself. In addition, improvements to the West side of Clay Street parking could be completed at this time, again prior to the roundabout.
- d. Any construction on the roundabout itself that disrupts traffic on Main Street would be performed at night. All of the immediately surrounding businesses, with the exception of the Cozmic Café, have normal daytime business hours. The Cozmic Café is open during nighttime hours on weekends, but those are periods when typically the construction would be shut down for the weekend.

By staging the construction in this fashion the City should be able to minimize the impacts to all the businesses along this area of Main Street, and most especially the businesses immediately adjacent to the roundabout location.

- 2. There are currently 72 parking spaces in the Ivy House parking lot, 37 of which are restricted as leased spaces with 27 currently occupied, leaving a total of 35 spaces for public parking. With the realignment of Clay Street it is anticipated that approximately 34 spaces would be lost, leaving 38 spaces with 10 designated for leased parking, for a total of 28 spaces available for public parking.

The reconstruction of the Clay Street Bridge will allow for improved access to the rear yards of 585 and 589 Main Street providing for 3 additional parking spaces at those locations.

The Mooney parking lot has 35 parking spaces, 16 of which are leased spaces with 10 currently occupied, leaving a total of 19 spaces for public parking.

The new Locust Street parking lot would have approximately 45 spaces restricting 11 as leased spaces, leaving a total of 34 spaces for public parking.

The end result would be 40 spaces for business owners and employees, which exceeds the current demand for parking. This would leave 28 spaces available for public parking in the Ivy House lot while currently there are 35 spaces available this only decreases public parking in this lot by 7 spaces.

- 3. On January 25, 2011, a meeting was held with Jim and Lois Coalwell, the organizers of the Placerville Farmers Market, to present the specifics of the roundabout project, and to discuss impacts and opportunities for maintaining the Farmers Market at the central Placerville location. The Coalwells were generally supportive of the roundabout project, and expressed a willingness to work with the City to identify temporary relocation options during project construction, and permanent relocation options once the project is complete. They expressed a high degree of interest in utilizing the new Locust Street parking lot, plus the area alongside the El Dorado Trail between Locust Street and Clay Street to position vendors for the Farmers Market. Should it be warranted by the size of the market, the area alongside the Trail between Clay Street and Town hall could also be used to position vendors. This configuration would allow Market patrons to utilize the El

Dorado Trail to access the Market, and utilize the newly reconfigured Ivy House parking lot for public parking on Saturday mornings.

These are tentative ideas with respect to the Farmers Market, but City Staff and the Coalwell's are reasonably confident that an acceptable configuration can be achieved that will keep the Farmers Market in the downtown vicinity.

4. The safety of roundabouts in comparison with a conventional four-legged intersection has been studied extensively in both Europe and the United States. Statistical data is reasonably conclusive that the numbers of accidents and the severity of those accidents that do occur are substantially less with a roundabout as opposed to the conventional intersection. In addition, because roundabouts typically locate crosswalks in the area where splitter islands are located at the entrance of the roundabout, pedestrians experience greater safety because they effectively only have to cross one Lane of travel at a time and the splitter island provides a safety zone for the pedestrian while they are crossing the street. Several publications have been put out by the Federal Highway Administration concerning the operational and safety benefits of roundabouts and can be accessed on the Internet at www.fhwa.dot.gov.
5. The Traffic Study for this project, prepared in 2009 by the traffic engineering firm Fehr and Peers, indicates that the only intersection that does not currently operate in an acceptable fashion is Clay Street at the PM peak hour. This intersection leg currently operates at LOS F, which for intersections means that the average intersection delay at this location exceeds 50 seconds. In the future however, at the design horizon of year 2025 (this horizon is 14 years from now, which is not that far away) traffic projections indicate that both the intersection of Main Street at Cedar Ravine, and Main Street at Clay Street will operate at LOS F in the PM peak hour, and the Clay Street intersection will operate at LOS F in the AM peak hour. Pages 4-44 and 4-45 of the Fehr & Peers Traffic Study are included as "Attachment 3". It is recognized that these intersections will become increasingly problematic as traffic increases in the future, and this project is moving forward at this time due to the fact that the City was successful in obtaining grant funding to construct the roundabout, realign Clay Street, replace the Clay Street bridge, and extend the El Dorado Trail from Clay Street to the pedestrian over crossing at Bedford Street.
6. This statement was assumed to be rhetorical, and is obviously a policy question for City Council consideration. The development of a roundabout at the subject intersection, with the realignment of Clay Street to create a single four-legged intersection, is formally adopted City policy by virtue of the City Council approval and adoption of the Downtown Streetscape Development Plan which identified the specific improvements. City staff has been working towards implementing this formally adopted policy decision by securing grant funding and moving forward with project development.
7. The issues raised in this comment have been effectively responded to in Response to Comments No.1 and No.3.

In addition to the comments and concerns raised at the individual meetings with the business owners, there were at least two comments raised at the November public hearing that warrant being addressed in the staff report. The first was a comment made by a member the public stating that the City of Truckee had experienced problems with its roundabouts and that it was in

the process of removing the roundabouts that had already been constructed. An inquiry was made to the City of Truckee, and it was determined that the statement was completely incorrect. In fact, the Town of Truckee has provisions in its General Plan that encourage the use of roundabouts to replace existing signalized intersections, a copy of which is included as "Attachment 4".

The second comment was from Mr. David Price inquiring as to why he did not get a response to the comment letter he submitted for the project in November of 2010. While individual responses to comments are not required with a Mitigated Negative Declaration, the City's Environmental Consultant did complete detailed responses to all written comments received, a copy of which is included as "Attachment 5".

Budget Impact:

The following revenue sources have been programmed for the design and construction of the Clay Street/Cedar Ravine Realignment and Clay Street Bridge at Hangtown Creek Replacement Project (CIP #40617) by the Metropolitan Transportation Improvement Program (MTIP) and the City's Traffic Impact Mitigation (TIM) Fund:

HBRR	\$1,402,293
CMAQ	800,000
RSTP Exchange	400,000
TIM Fund	65,817
Total	<u><u>\$2,668,110</u></u>

It is important to note that the above mentioned revenue sources are restricted to the Clay Street Roundabout/Bridge Replacement Project, and cannot be used for general operating expenses or other projects such as the replacement of water and sewer lines.

At its regularly scheduled meeting held June 26, 2007, the City Council appropriated \$800,000 for the design phase of the project. To date, the following agreements have been encumbered by the project:

Quincy Engineering, Inc. (Original Agreement)	\$ 254,400
Quincy Engineering, Inc. (Amendment No. 1)	47,500
Susanna Aaltonen	2,880
Mountain Democrat	327
City Engineering Staff	27,517
Total encumbrances	<u><u>\$ 332,624</u></u>

As you can see, the project has a remaining budget balance of \$467,376 (\$800,000 - \$332,624) at this time. Tonight's recommended action does not have any direct fiscal impact to the project. Recommendations for the remaining phases of the project will be brought forward in the future for Council consideration.

Recommendation:

Adopt Resolution No. _____, a Resolution of the City Council:

1. Approving the above referenced Capital Improvement Project (CIP) which overall consists of three individual projects:
 - Realign Clay Street to intersect Main Street at a four-legged intersection with Cedar Ravine, and to construct a roundabout at the intersection of Main Street/Clay Street/Cedar Ravine.
 - Replace the functionally obsolete existing bridge on Clay Street crossing over Hangtown Creek.
 - Extend the El Dorado Trail from its existing terminus point at Clay Street to the newly constructed Bedford Avenue pedestrian over-crossing at US Highway 50.
2. Make a finding that the proposed project is in conformance with the City of Placerville's General Plan.
3. Certify the "Initial Study/Mitigated Negative Declaration" for said project.
4. Adopt the project mitigation measures and "Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Plan", and identify the preferred off-street parking mitigation location.
5. Instruct Staff to include the recommendations for construction timing in the bid specifications.

M. Cleve Morris, City Manager

Randy Pesses, Director of Public Works

Attachments:

1. November 9, 2010 Staff Report
2. List of Meetings w/ Individual Business and Property Owners
3. Fehr & Peers- Peak Hour Analysis Results
4. Town of Truckee 2005 General Plan (Pages 4-44 & 4-45)
5. Response to Public Comment
6. Initial Study/ Mitigated Negative Declaration