

MEMORANDUM

TO: Mayor and Council

THROUGH: Steven Methvin, Deputy City Manager (480-350-8811)
Marilyn DeRosa, Engineering & Transportation Director (480-350-8896)

FROM: Shelly Seyler, Deputy Engineering & Transportation Director (480-350-8854)
Robert Yabes, Principal Planner (480-350-2734)

DATE: September 19, 2019

SUBJECT: North/South Railroad Spur Multi-use Path Project



PURPOSE:

The purpose of this memo is to provide the Council with an update on Phase I of the North/South Railroad Spur Multi-use Path Project and to receive Council direction on how to proceed with this project.

RECOMMENDATION OR DIRECTION REQUESTED:

Staff recommends the alternative routing for the project and seeks Council direction.

CITY COUNCIL STRATEGIC PRIORITY:

- Quality of Life – 3.26: Achieve a multimodal transportation system (20-minute city) where residents can walk, bicycle, or use public transit to meet all basic daily, non-work needs.
- Sustainable Growth & Development – 4.7: Achieve or exceed Council adopted standards for improved access and usability as documented in the “Above and Beyond ADA” plan.
- Safe & Secure Communities – 1.08: Achieve a reduction in the number of fatal and serious injury crashes to zero.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

The proposed North/South Rail Spur Multi-Use Path project is a joint City of Tempe/Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality (CMAQ) project. This Phase I project would be located along and adjacent to the existing Union Pacific Railroad (UPRR) corridor between Baseline Road and University Drive. The pathway would share the paved roadway along Kyrene Road and Farmer Avenue and be located in currently undeveloped portions of UPRR’s spur line corridor between Southern Avenue and 13th Street. This proposed project is approximately 16,300 linear feet in total length which equates to approximately 3.1-miles. A future Phase II would extend the path south to Knox Road. The combined Phase I and II efforts would eventually provide a 7-mile connection.

Project History: In 2012 the City of Tempe received a Design Assistance Grant from the Maricopa Association of Governments to study the full corridor extents (University Drive to Knox Road). That process concluded with a Narrative Report entailing a preliminary design recommendation in January 2015. The Transportation Commission was updated in May 2014 and December 2014 on that preliminary design effort.

Following completion of the preliminary design, the City then applied for CMAQ funds to complete design and construction of the project. A design team was hired in 2017 to develop and design construction documents for a buildable project that strives to provide a safe and low-stress north/south bicycle facility that spans the city limits.

The 2015 Transportation Master Plan supports the implementation of this project including identifying the pathway in the Recommended Bicycle Pedestrian Improvements 2040 map and project list.

Design Goals: The goals for this non-motorized facility design identified by project staff, design team, and stakeholders include:

- Providing safe mobility for all
- Utilize City right-of-way when available
- Coordinate with Union Pacific Railroad where needed
- Provide safe/signalized crossings across busy roadways

- Include sidewalks and curb, return ramp upgrades, potential installation of railing/fencing when adjacent to the UPRR spur line, lighting, landscaping, three (3) node areas, roadway striping, existing traffic signal modifications, new pedestrian signals, potential UPRR gate installation, and wayfinding signage

Community Outreach & Public Feedback: Two public meetings were held on October 3 and 13, 2018 to introduce the project, present the 30% design drawings, and collect public feedback on the project direction. This feedback was used to inform revisions and priorities for improvements on the corridor. Those unable to attend the meetings were encouraged to visit the project website: tempe.gov/NorthSouthRailroadPath for more detailed information and to provide input online between October 3 and 27, 2018.

CURRENT STATUS:

Environmental Scope: Following public meetings in October 2018, a post-30% design was created to initiate discussions with ADOT regarding environmental processes and the possible environmental scope of work. Results of those discussions indicated that cultural resource testing and monitoring would likely be required. The estimate for the cultural resource testing and monitoring is approximately \$1,500,000. If items are recovered in the testing period, additional environmental scope may be required, and additional funds may be needed for recovery and mitigation. The scope of the cultural resource testing can only be determined after 60% designs are approved by UPRR. UPRR will only review designs once the City has entered into design review agreements (PE agreements) which are discussed below.

Railroad Scope: The post-30% design was also used in discussions with Union Pacific Railroad (UPRR) regarding engineering design requirements, review procedures, and acquisition processes. In these discussions a concern was raised regarding a constrained segment of the UPRR right-of-way that occurs for approximately 550' north of Southern Avenue. In this area the path improvements (including fencing, landscaping and the path surface) would be located less than 25' from the rail bed. UPRR staff stated that typically no easements are allowed inside the 25' area from a rail bed and that they encourage the City explore an alternative route.

In addition to the constrained right-of-way, several new items affecting the project costs were presented that were not included in the preliminary design study completed in 2015. These items include:

- UPRR's requirement for separate design review agreements (PE agreements) for the full corridor as well as for each crossing along the corridor (6 agreements totaling \$225,000);
- Estimate of UPRR's charges for crossing design (\$550,000) and construction (\$1,100,000); and
- New annual crossing maintenance cost for each crossing (totaling \$50,000).

The acquisition of an easement to construct and maintain the path was discussed. Due to Federal grant requirements staff could not discuss the specific dollar value of the easement but were informed this would likely be an annual easement and not a one-time purchase.

In total, there are at least \$3,350,000 of unanticipated costs beyond those identified in the 2015 preliminary design study. When combined with the anticipated budget for design and construction, the 3.1-mile path corridor would cost approximately \$6,385,899 (one-time cost), plus \$60,500 in maintenance (annual cost), as well as the yet to be negotiated easement purchase or lease. A summary of the various cost factors is provided in the table below.

| Cost Factors | Original One Time Cost Est. | Original Annual Cost Est. | Additional One Time Cost Est. | Additional Annual Cost Est. |
|--|-----------------------------|---------------------------|-------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| UPRR Design Review - PE Agreements | \$ 25,000 | | \$ 200,000 | |
| UPRR Crossing Design and Construction | \$ 185,876 | | \$ 1,650,000 | |
| UPRR Easement - <i>unknown</i> | ?? | ?? | ?? | ?? |
| UPRR Annual Crossing Maintenance | | | | \$ 50,000 |
| Non-UPRR Corridor Costs | \$ 2,795,023 | | | |
| Environmental - testing and monitoring | \$ 30,000 | | \$ 1,500,000 | |
| Annual Corridor Maintenance | | \$ 10,500 | | |
| Design and Construction Costs identified in CIP | \$ 3,035,899 | \$ 10,500 | | |
| SUBTOTAL FOR ENVIRONMENTAL AND UPRR | | | \$ 3,350,000 | \$ 50,000 |
| TOTAL | | | \$ 6,385,899 | \$ 60,500 |

Alternative Route: Following discussions with ADOT and UPRR, City staff began investigating an alternative north-south route that would avoid UPRR properties and rail crossings. The proposed alternative route would utilize the unspent construction funds. Included in the PowerPoint is an alternative route that encompasses the corridor limits (University Drive to Baseline Road). The alternative route includes the following considerations:

- **University Drive to 13th Street**
 - The UPRR right-of-way is too narrow in this area. The route utilizes Farmer Avenue and includes the addition of on-street shared lane markings (sharrows).
- **13th Street to Broadway Road**
 - This segment of the route avoids UPRR right-of-way by utilizing the existing bike lanes on 13th Street and would create a low-stress / traffic calming design on Roosevelt Street. The new design of Roosevelt in this area could be accommodated by repurposing the underutilized center turn lane. Neighborhood / public input would inform the applicable traffic calming solutions.
- **Broadway Road to Southern Avenue**
 - This segment of the route avoids UPRR right-of-way by utilizing Roosevelt Street. The new Roosevelt Street design would include new sidewalk in areas where there is no sidewalk present, as well as widening the bike lane where feasible.
 - The Alameda Drive railroad crossing would be handled as a maintenance project, separate from the North/South path project.
 - This route segment avoids creating an unsafe environment with two-way bicycle traffic on Southern Avenue. To do this, the route would utilize a physically abandoned rail spur, creating a low-stress connection from Roosevelt Street to the existing Southern Avenue / Kyrene Road traffic signal. A bicycle and pedestrian node could be created in this area. This area would require property / easement acquisition.
- **Southern Avenue to Baseline Road**
 - This segment of the route would utilize the curb to curb distance on Kyrene Road. Two options would be explored, including: 1) Creating a protected cycletrack on one side of the road with driveway/roadway intersection treatments, or 2) Widen the existing bicycle lanes and add a physical barrier for protection.
 - At Baseline Road, bicycles and pedestrians would travel along the north sidewalk and cross Baseline Road at a new bicycle/pedestrian signalized crossing at approximately 130' to 200' east of the UPRR tracks, providing a connection to the Western Canal Path and Kiwanis Park.
 - The design would explore extending the median from the UPRR tracks to the west to restrict turning movements at Kyrene Road providing needed safety enhancements. The design would also explore extending the median to the east of the UPRR tracks to provide additional protection at the bicycle/pedestrian crossing.

Council Direction: Staff is seeking Council direction on how to proceed with this project. Two options are available:

1. **Existing Alignment (Not recommended)**
 - City staff does not recommend proceeding with the existing rail corridor route due to the right-of-way constraints at Southern Avenue and the additional project costs. Should the Council recommend proceeding with the existing rail corridor route, approximately \$3,375,000 worth of other CIP projects would need to be delayed or removed from the 5-year CIP to deliver this project.
2. **Proceed with alternative route.**
 - Staff estimates that design of the new route would begin in 2019 and could be bid in 2022/2023.
3. **Proceed with a no-build option.**
 - Staff would close the project and return Federal funds to Maricopa Association of Governments.

FISCAL IMPACT or IMPACT TO CURRENT RESOURCES:

Programmed funding for Phase 1 design includes \$507,000 from the City transit fund. Programmed funding for Phase 1 construction includes \$2.3 million in federal Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality funds and \$220,000 in City transit funds.

Following direction from Council, funding for the project would likely be deferred from FY 2019-2020 to FY2022-2023.

ATTACHMENTS:

1. PowerPoint