



Agenda Report

April 23, 2018

TO: Honorable Mayor and City Council

THROUGH: Public Safety Committee (April 18, 2018)

FROM: Departments of Public Works

**SUBJECT: APPROVAL OF COLORADO BRIDGE TASK FORCE
RECOMMENDATION TO DETER SUICIDE ATTEMPTS ON THE
COLORADO STREET BRIDGE**

RECOMMENDATION:

It is recommended that the City Council:

1. Direct staff to further study the recommendations of the Colorado Street Bridge Task Force, and return to Council with a recommended project and appropriate environmental review; and
2. Approve the suicide prevention measures recommended by the Colorado Bridge Task Force to deter suicide attempts on the Colorado Street Bridge.

BACKGROUND:

In response to recent suicides and suicide attempts from the Colorado Street Bridge, the City installed metal mesh fencing in July 2017 as a partial temporary deterrent measure until a more permanent solution is identified and implemented. Ten-foot tall fencing was installed along both sides of the bridge at all 20 benched alcoves to prevent entry to locations that provide the easiest access over the existing vertical barrier. Wrought iron fencing was also added at all four corners of the bridge to deter easy access to the outside ledge of the bridge.

On July 19, 2017, City Staff provided the City's Public Safety Committee a presentation regarding the Colorado Bridge; its history relative to suicides, statistics and literature on the subject, how other communities have dealt with similar issues, and several sample treatments or deterrents.

Subsequently, in August 2017, the City's Public Works Director assembled a Colorado Bridge Task Force composed of community members and prominent experts in the fields of historic preservation, suicide prevention, architecture, engineering, public

fields of historic preservation, suicide prevention, architecture, engineering, public health and first responders from Pasadena Police and Pasadena Fire in hopes of developing a responsibly designed permanent solution that is amenable to all stakeholders and the community at large. The Mission of the Task Force is to engage the community in developing solutions that will deter people from attempting suicide at the bridge while also preserving the structure's national historic status and architectural significance. And, the Task Force Vision is to allow the community to experience and enjoy the Colorado Street Bridge and the Arroyo as a safe and beautiful environment now and in the future.

The Colorado Bridge Task Force held two community meetings. The first community meeting was on November 29, 2017 and gathered ideas from the public to evaluate viable mitigation measures that will help deter suicide attempts at the bridge. Over 90 community members were in attendance, including families of suicide victims and mental health professionals. Below is a categorized summary of ideas and mitigation measures presented by the public and evaluated by the Task Force:

1. **Physical Measures:** Vertical barrier improvements; end treatments; ledge modifications.
2. **Self-Help Measures:** Signs; phone lines; text lines.
3. **Active Measures:** Speakers/Intercom; volunteer patrols; cameras; motions sensors.
4. **Post-Attempt Measures:** Horizontal barriers (netting); planting trees.
5. **Changes to Environmental Conditions:** Lighting; planting hedges.

The second community meeting was held on February 20, 2018 to present evaluation of the ideas offered by the public and solicit community's feedback. Over 80 community members were in attendance. Pros and cons of each mitigation measure were presented and vetted with the public based on the following key factors:

- Physically Prevent Attempt
- Expected Effectiveness
- Aesthetics
- Environmental Impact
- Effect on Emergency Services
- Full Implementation Timeframe

Based on the evaluation of all measures, and the feedback received from the community outreach process, the Task Force reached the following conclusions:

- Vertical barriers and end treatments are the only measure to physically prevent attempts from even occurring.
- Literature from various studies suggest vertical barriers to be most effective in suicide reduction, showing the highest prevention rates, between 80% and 100% depending on design variables.
- Vertical barriers would significantly reduce strain on first responders.

- As a passive measure, vertical barriers not require human oversight or intervention to mitigate an attempt.
- Vertical barriers would require primarily a single, up-front installation cost and minimal on-going costs.

As such, the Colorado Bridge Task Force recommends the following primary measures to City Council as suicide mitigation treatment for the Colorado Street Bridge:

1. Design and installation of vertical barriers on both sides of the bridge for its entire length, including the existing weak points along the benched alcoves. Vertical barriers shall have a minimum height of 7'-6" above highest toe-hold in order to deter attempts effectively.
2. Design and installation of end treatments on both ends of the bridge to deter a person's ability to easily access and walk along the outside ledge of the bridge.
3. Additional complimentary measures may be considered that will work in concert with the primary measures noted above. A measure currently under implementation is to update the "There is Hope" suicide deterrent signs on each end of the bridge, to incorporate a more widely used helpline number and add a new crisis text line.

The Task Force is seeking a responsibly designed solution that can be an effective deterrent while also being respectful of the bridge's historic status; hence, upon Council approval of the above recommendations, the Task Force will help form a "Design Advisory Group" composed of community stakeholders to help guide the process and develop a barrier design that is in line with the Task Force Mission.

Upon Council approval of the Task Force recommendations, City staff will prepare a new project sheet and seek funding appropriation for the Design Phase of the project as part of the Council adoption of the Fiscal Year 2019 Capital Improvement Program (CIP).

Design Phase of the project will entail the following key tasks:

- Generation and advertisement of a Request for Proposals (RFP) to solicit design proposals and select a design consulting team;
- Development and engineering of a vertical barrier design;
- Preparation of required environmental studies and acquisition of environmental clearances;
- Public outreach at critical milestones to ensure close collaboration with the community and key stakeholders of the bridge.

Staff anticipates beginning the Design Phase of the project in July 2018, immediately following adoption of the Fiscal Year 2019 CIP Budget.

COUNCIL POLICY CONSIDERATION:

This project is consistent with the City Council's goals to improve, maintain and enhance public facilities and infrastructure, support and promote the quality of life and local economy, and ensure public safety.

ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS:

The proposed action to approve herein is exempt from California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) review pursuant to State CEQA Guidelines section 15061(b)(3). The contract is covered by the general rule that CEQA applies only to projects which have the potential for causing a significant effect on the environment. Where it can be seen with certainty that there is no possibility that the activity in question may have a significant effect on the environment, the activity is not subject to the provisions of CEQA.

FISCAL IMPACT:

This action has no fiscal impact. A capital project will be created and its design phase funding appropriated as part of Council's adoption of Fiscal Year 2019 Capital Improvement Program (CIP) budget.

Respectfully submitted,



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