



City of Woodland

REPORT TO MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL

AGENDA ITEM

TO: THE HONORABLE MAYOR
AND CITY COUNCIL

DATE: July 8, 2008

SUBJECT: Participation in the Davis-Woodland Bikeway Feasibility Study

Report in Brief

The development of a dedicated bikeway connecting Woodland and Davis has been discussed periodically between Woodland, Davis and Yolo County officials over the last several years. More recent discussions have focused on updating a feasibility study completed in 2001 through a jointly funded project. In addition to improving safety for riders and motorists on the county roads connecting the two cities, an updated study could increase potential funding options for a dedicated bikeway through regional and federal transportation funds generated by competitive grant applications or federal appropriations.

Staff recommends that the City Council approve the City's participation in a joint feasibility study for an alternative transportation corridor between Woodland and Davis at a cost not to exceed \$60,000 funded through a borrowing of Measure E funds as described herein, appropriate the funds and authorize the City Manager to execute an agreement between the agencies to complete the study.

Background

Yolo County has a large number of avid cyclists who use bicycles for both recreational and commute purposes. Many of these cyclists commute on a regular basis between Woodland and Davis on county roads that connect the two cities. This fact has generated interest among Woodland, Davis and Yolo County officials to develop a dedicated bikeway or similar alternative that connects the two communities.

In 2001 Yolo County completed the Davis-Woodland Bikeway feasibility study. This study listed ten goals associated with the identification of dedicated bikeway options, including the use of separate right of ways, connection to current or future bikeways within Woodland and Davis and incorporating engineering standards that will facilitate use of a bikeway by commuting cyclists. The completion of the feasibility study generated several actions to improve county roads linking the two cities. Yolo County widened, or is in the process of seeking funding to widen, County Road 99, County Road 29, and County Road 99D to include four-foot bicycle lanes, known together as the

“Davis-Woodland Bikeway.” “Share the Road” signs also were installed along this route to generate safety awareness among cyclists and motorists. If Yolo County receives funding from a CalTrans grant this year, the county will have sufficient funding to complete this project. The 2001 study also recommended pursuing a dedicated bikeway after completion of the Davis-Woodland Bikeway.

In late 2007, interest in a dedicated bikeway project was renewed for several reasons. These reasons included reaction from the cycling community following a tragic fatal accident involving a Woodland cyclist and the potential availability of regional, state and federal funds for alternative transportation. Woodland and Yolo County members of the 2x2 committee (Mayor Flory and Vice Mayor Davies/Board of Supervisor members Rexroad and Chamberlain) discussed the dedicated bikeway on November 28, January 23, April 23 and May 28. These discussions focused on actions that should be considered in order to seek potential transportation funds for development of a dedicated bikeway. In response to the 2x2 discussions, Woodland, Davis and Yolo County staff met on March 31 to review potential funding options and consider actions to prepare funding applications for various grant programs.

The result of these discussions is a recommendation to update the 2001 feasibility study. Staff members representing the collaborating agencies believe the update is appropriate for several reasons. These reasons include:

- An updated study will build on the previous feasibility study completed seven years ago
- Updated information will factor the impact of additional Woodland residents in the southeast area that allow new possibilities for a dedicated route
- Updated information, including cost estimates and evidence of widespread community support that is expected to be generated through extensive public outreach, will be critical to the development of a high quality grant application to secure funding

Discussion between Woodland, Davis and Yolo County staff members has generated a proposed funding strategy for the updated feasibility study. This strategy proposes to allocate the anticipated \$150,000 cost in the following manner: 40% cost share to Davis and Woodland (\$60,000 for each city) and 20% to Yolo County (\$30,000). The proposed arrangement is based on Yolo County’s contention that the county has absorbed the majority of the costs to construct the Davis-Woodland Bikeway, including staff time to apply for multiple grants over six years, the use of county funds for matching requirements and more than an equal share of the cost of the initial feasibility study. In addition, the county proposes to use its contract with Akin Gump, the federal advocacy firm, to push for federal transportation funds for the project. Finally, the County’s FY09 \$18 million budget makes it very difficult to justify additional costs in association with this project. Staff from Davis and Woodland agreed to review this arrangement with their respective City Councils given the importance of the project, the need to update the 2001 study in a timely manner in order to prepare the future grant applications and the fact that the most recent discussion has been in progress for over seven months.

Discussion

The development of transportation options such as alternative transportation corridors has become a high priority for local governments and regional planning agencies. Issues such as environmental sustainability, the high cost of fuel and looming federal and state planning mandates are encouraging local governments to consider alternatives to adding roads or increasing capacity on existing roads in order to accommodate current or future population. The Sacramento Area Council of Governments (SACOG) Blueprint lists Transportation Choices as one of seven Growth Principles. SACOG's approval of the 2035 Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP) further supports alternative transportation which will be facilitated through the allocation of regional, state and federal funds for such projects. In addition to dedicated bikeways, many alternative transportation advocates also support the use of electric vehicles and incorporating dedicated "e-ways" within alternative transportation corridors. Therefore, staff believes the Davis-Woodland Bikeway is a project that is consistent with current environmental and regional planning issues and should be pursued.

As stated previously herein, the City/County 2x2 has discussed the dedicated bikeway four times since late 2007. Woodland, Davis and Yolo County staff have held two meetings regarding the best way to facilitate the project and the conclusion is that updating the 2001 feasibility study will position the bikeway for regional, state and/or federal transportation funds awarded through competitive grants or the federal appropriations process. Completion of the updated study within the next six months will position the project to compete for grant programs that need to be submitted in the first quarter of 2009. Given the level of City/County discussion and the timing to compete for grant funds, staff believes it is appropriate to move the bikeway project forward.

One of the most important items that the updated feasibility study will address is the evaluation of bikeway routes. Attachment No. 1 is an aerial map showing three alternatives that have been evaluated as the most feasible. As Council reviews the alternatives on the map and described herein, it is important to note that the alignments are approximate. From the northern Davis city limits, Alignment #1 utilizes the west side of SR 113 on County Road 99D and East Street into Woodland. Alignment #2 utilizes the east side of the railroad tracks from the Covell Road railroad overpass to East Street in Woodland. Alignment #3 follows the same route north from Covell Road up to Willow Slough where multiple options will be reviewed to connect with County Road 101 into southeast Woodland. The updated feasibility study will review land use/acquisition options, environmental impacts, development costs, operation/maintenance costs, impact of incorporating a dedicated "e-way" as part of the project and many other issues in order to fully evaluate the routes. The jurisdictions may choose to revise the alternatives in response to comments received during the public outreach process or information that otherwise emerges during the feasibility study.

The allocation of costs between Woodland, Davis and Yolo County was the subject of much discussion among staff members involved with the project. As stated previously, Yolo County staff contends that Yolo County has absorbed the majority of the costs to construct the Davis-Woodland Bikeway, including staff time to apply for multiple grants over six years, the use of county funds for matching requirements, and more than an equal share of the cost of the initial feasibility study. In addition, the county proposes to use its contract with Akin Gump, the federal advocacy firm, to push for federal transportation funds for the project. Davis and Woodland staff pushed for equal shares of

the project costs and were informed by Yolo County staff that the position expressed regarding the cities funding the majority of the costs had been stated by members of the Board of Supervisors. It did not appear that continued discussion of a different cost sharing arrangement at the staff level would have generated any change in Yolo County staff's position. As stated previously, the importance of the project and the timing of the feasibility study suggested that it would be appropriate to move the issue forward.

The study will be completed in a collaborative manner with transportation, engineering and planning staff participating as needed during the project. At this time, Davis staff will be responsible for managing the study pending review of their participation with the Davis City Council.

Staff is proposing to fund Woodland's estimated \$60,000 share of the updated feasibility study cost from Measure E (MSE). Staff believes that the share could be borrowed from MSE and paid back from a future General Fund allocation. In order to keep the Measure E expenditure plan balanced, the \$60,000 would be reduced from the City Hall renovation project. If approved, staff would develop either cost reduction or revenue enhancement strategies to replace the \$60,000 for the City Hall project. While this is not an ideal funding strategy, staff could not identify another viable alternative that would have had no impact on a current capital project.

Fiscal Impact

Woodland's share estimated at \$60,000 would be funded by borrowing MSE funds from the future City Hall renovation project which would be paid back from the General Fund as described above. Therefore, funding this project as proposed will have a future impact on the General Fund that would be addressed through the next update of the 10-year Financial Plan.

Public Contact

Posting of the City Council agenda. A copy of the agenda and report has been provided to Davis and Yolo County staff.

Alternative Courses of Action

1. Approve the City's participation in a joint feasibility study for an alternative transportation corridor between Woodland and Davis at a cost not to exceed \$60,000 funded through a borrowing of Measure E funds as described herein, appropriate the funds and authorize the City Manager to execute the agreement.
2. Cease further consideration of the updated feasibility study until alternative funding sources become available.
3. Cease further consideration of the Davis-Woodland Bikeway Project.

SUBJECT: Participation in the Davis-Woodland Bikeway Feasibility Study

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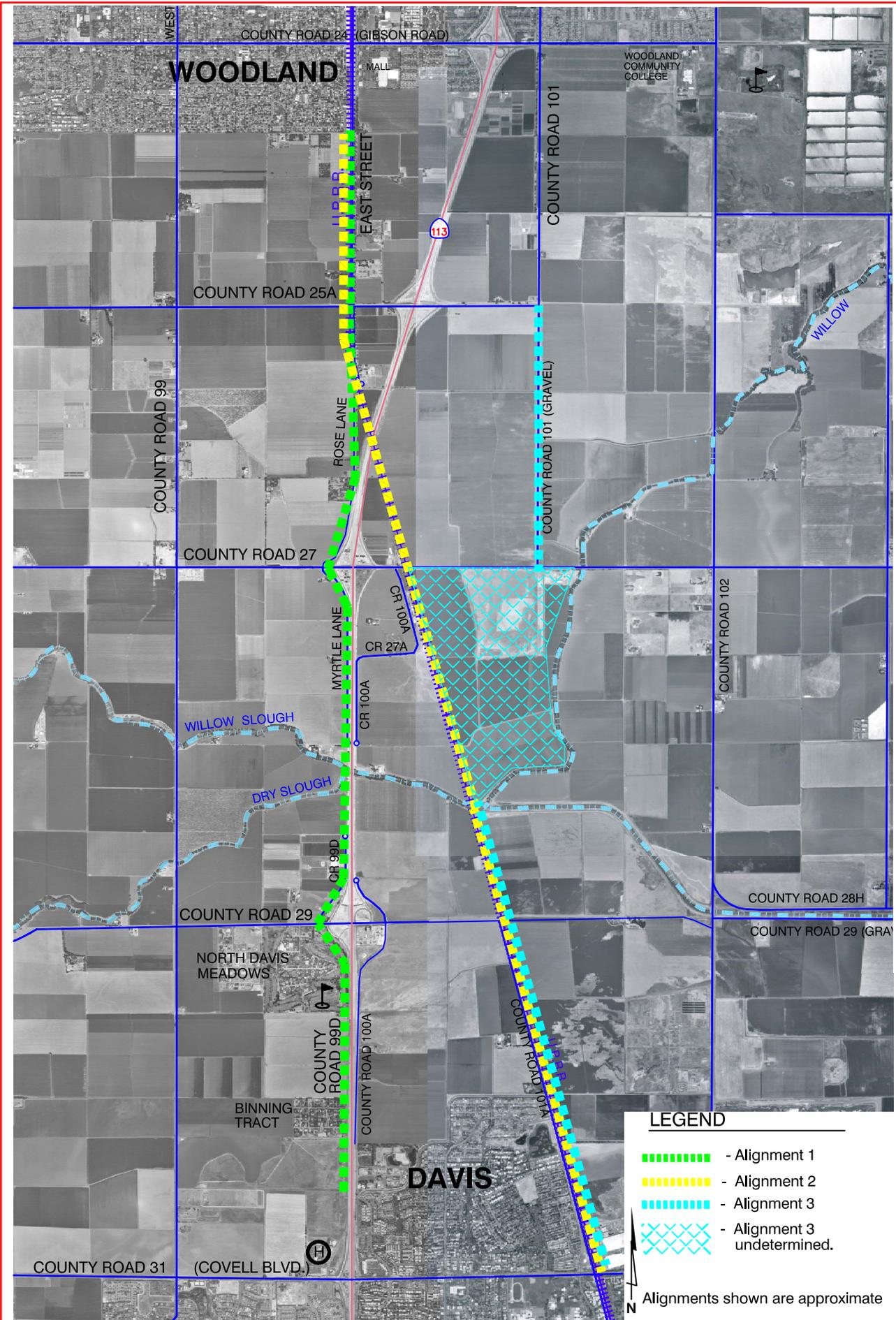
ITEM:

Recommendation for Action

Staff recommends that the City Council approve Alternative No. 1.

Mark G. Deven
City Manager

Attachment No. 1: Aerial Map of Route Alignments



WOODLAND

DAVIS

LEGEND

- - - - - - Alignment 1
- - - - - - Alignment 2
- - - - - - Alignment 3
- X X X X X - Alignment 3 undetermined.

Alignments shown are approximate

NOT TO SCALE