



STAFF REPORT – CITY COUNCIL MEETING

TO: Honorable Mayor and City Council Members

FROM: Netra Khatri, City Engineer

PREPARER: Laura Kadlecik, Project Manager

DATE: September 8, 2025

TITLE: **Award a Contract Amendment in the Amount of \$327,870 to GHD, Inc., for Additional Engineering and Design Services for the US 101 and Sunset Avenue Interchange Improvements Project; and Authorize the City Manager to Execute All Applicable Documents.**

RECOMMENDATION:

It is recommended that the Council:

- 1) Award a contract amendment in the amount of \$327,870 to GHD, Inc., for additional engineering and design services for the US 101 and Sunset Avenue Interchange Improvements Project; and
- 2) Authorize the City Manager to execute all applicable documents.

INTRODUCTION:

The US 101 and Sunset Avenue Interchange Improvements Project (also known as the Sunset Avenue & L K Wood Boulevard Improvements Project) will consolidate three existing stop-controlled intersections into two new roundabouts, simplifying vehicle movements and providing safer bicycle and pedestrian facilities throughout the interchange. The Project, which has been identified in long-range plans for more than a decade, is a high priority for the Arcata community to increase safety for all modes of transportation, improve traffic operations at a significant bottleneck in the local and regional transportation network, and provide affordable transportation options to students and residents accessing Cal Poly Humboldt.

The Project Approval & Environmental Document (PA&ED) phase of the Project is complete. The necessary environmental documents for the Project – California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) documents – are also complete.

BACKGROUND:

The City of Arcata is bisected by US 101, which separates portions of Arcata and Cal Poly Humboldt from the majority of the City. The existing intersection controls, roadway geometry, and high volume of local and regional traffic on Sunset Avenue and L K Wood Blvd. result in poor traffic operations at and near the interchange.

Improvements to the Sunset Avenue & US 101 interchange have been a priority project for many years, and the City has made few improvements to the intersections over the years. In 2017, the City completed the Central Arcata Areawide Traffic Study, which included these intersections. The traffic study identified roundabouts as a potential solution for the Sunset Avenue & L K Wood Blvd. intersections, as they have the additional benefits of improving safety for all users (motorized and non-motorized), incorporating complete streets concepts, and creating an entry between Arcata and Cal Poly Humboldt.

The overarching goal of the project is to transform the interchange into one that supports all modes of travel, including pedestrians and cyclists, while also minimizing impacts to the adjacent properties, existing structures, and sensitive environmental areas.

In March 2022, the City issued a Request for Proposals (RFP) from qualified consulting firms to provide engineering and environmental services necessary to complete the project. Although only the Project Approval and Environmental Documentation (PA&ED) phase of the Project was to be awarded at the time, respondents proposed on all project phases such that the City would have the option to enter subsequent professional services agreements with the selected firm for the remaining phases of the Project. Anticipated project phases included the Plans, Specifications and Estimates (PS&E) phase, Right-of-Way (ROW) engineering services phase, and the construction engineering and construction bid document preparation (CON) phase. In May 2022, following the proposal evaluation process, the Council awarded GHD, Inc. a contract for the PA&ED phase, and on June 5, 2024, the Council awarded GHD a contract for the PS&E phase; the scope included limited ROW engineering and utility location tasks because the extent of the scope of work was unknown.

DISCUSSION:

Since the award of the PS&E contract in June 2024, the full scope of the ROW engineering work has been identified; GHD has provided technical assistance for the City's grant application for funding to support construction of the project; and landscaping design of the eastern roundabout at L K Wood Blvd. was added to scope of services. Additionally, two new bus stop locations on L K Wood Blvd. were added to the project scope, which extended the project boundary limits north to Plaza Ave. The southbound slip lane and associated retaining wall were eliminated from the scope of services.

These ROW engineering tasks, grant funding support, and the design changes described above are critical to the successful implementation of the interchange improvements; therefore, staff recommends approval of a contract amendment with GHD to ratify these scope modifications. GHD's detailed scope of work and cost estimate are included as Attachment A. Cal Poly Humboldt is a project partner and has agreed to contribute up to \$2 million for this project, including \$500,000 for this PS&E phase.

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW (CEQA):

The Project qualifies for a combination of Class 1, Class 2, and Class 3 Categorical Exemptions from CEQA under Sections 15301(c), 15302(c), and 15303(d) of the CEQA Guidelines. The environmental review and documentation reports prepared for the Project did not identify any significant effects that will result from the Project, and the exceptions listed in Section 15300.2 of the CEQA Guidelines were found not to apply to the Project.

A CEQA Notice of Exemption (NOE) was filed with the Humboldt County Recorder's Office on February 22, 2024.

BUDGET/FISCAL IMPACT:

The proposed contract amendment amount for the additional tasks exceeds the current FY 2025–26 budget allocation. However, with Cal Poly Humboldt’s anticipated contribution of \$500,000 toward this phase of the project, no additional City funds are requested at this time. The project is budgeted as outlined below for this FY, and a budget adjustment will be brought forward in the coming weeks to reflect the amended contract amount.

Sunset & US 101 Interchange Project (CIP # 45-10): \$800,000; 210-70-45-51770.

RECOMMENDED COUNCIL ACTION:

Award a contract amendment in the amount of \$327,870 to GHD, Inc. for additional engineering and design services for the US 101 and Sunset Avenue Interchange Improvements Project; and authorize the City Manager to execute all applicable documents. Consent Calendar Vote.

ATTACHMENTS:

- A. Proposed Contract Amendment – GHD’s Scope of Work and Estimate (PDF)