



City of Arts & Innovation

City Council Memorandum

TO: HONORABLE MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL **DATE: JUNE 20, 2023**

FROM: PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT **WARD: 4**

SUBJECT: VAN BUREN BOULEVARD WIDENING BETWEEN WOOD ROAD AND WASHINGTON STREET – UPDATE

ISSUE:

Receive and file an update on the Van Buren Boulevard Widening Project between Wood Road and Washington Street.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

That the City Council:

1. Receive and file an update on the Van Buren Boulevard Widening Project between Wood Road and Washington Street; and
2. Approve the Public Works Department's recommendation to temporarily waive requirements under RMC Section 13.16.060 - *Obligations of contractor for curbs, gutters and sidewalks and trails when constructing buildings* to construct on-street improvements for proposed developments on Van Buren Boulevard between Wood Road and Gamble Avenue having existing curb, gutter, lighting, and other street improvements.

BACKGROUND:

On October 3, 2017, the City Council approved an agreement between the City and the County of Riverside for project development activities to widen Van Buren Boulevard to ultimate width between Wood Road and Washington Street (Project). A large portion of the proposed street widening is within the County of Riverside and thus the County assumed the lead role in the development and engineering work to support the Project. As part of the agreement, the City contributed \$400,000 toward the cost of preliminary and final engineering as some street widening is within the City limits.

DISCUSSION:

The Van Buren Boulevard corridor is classified as a 120-foot 6-lane arterial roadway and is a major thoroughfare which connects the SR-91 and I-215 freeways traversing through City and County of Riverside jurisdictions. Van Buren Boulevard between Wood Road and Washington

Street carries approximately 45,000 motorists daily and widening Van Buren Boulevard from four to six lanes will improve traffic flow and reduce delays. The Project will also complement the City's sewer installation project between Wood Road and Washington Street which is anticipated to encourage and facilitate development creating increased traffic demand on Van Buren Boulevard.

The County of Riverside is taking the lead to design and construct the \$23 million Project (2021 estimate) which includes design, right-of-way acquisition, construction engineering, construction, and contingencies. Riverside County engaged the Riverside County Transportation Commission (RCTC) and Western Riverside Council of Governments (WRCOG) to fund the right-of-way and construction phases of the Project. Due to escalating costs and limited funds from RCTC and WRCOG for right-of-way acquisition and the construction phase, the County has temporarily halted work efforts on this project. The County informed the City that it plans to pursue federal, State, and other large grant funding sources to support the Project. The City's sewer line installation will move forward as a stand-alone project and construction is anticipated to commence in late 2023 and be completed in 2025.

Per Riverside Municipal Code (RMC) Section 13.16.060 – *Obligations of contractor for curbs, gutters and sidewalks and trails when construction buildings*, construction projects exceeding 650 square feet within a 12-month period are required to construct street improvements to include curb, gutters, streetlights, sidewalk, or paving within the same block frontage in conformance with the City's circulation element. The Public Works Department is requesting a temporary waiver for street improvement requirements under RMC Section 13.16.060 for development projects on Van Buren Boulevard between Wood Road and Gamble Avenue (City limits) to facilitate and encourage development, if the respective frontage has existing curb, gutter, lighting, and other street improvements. The waiver is intended to minimize financial impacts on properties that have already invested in permanent-type street improvements and adhered to older street standards.

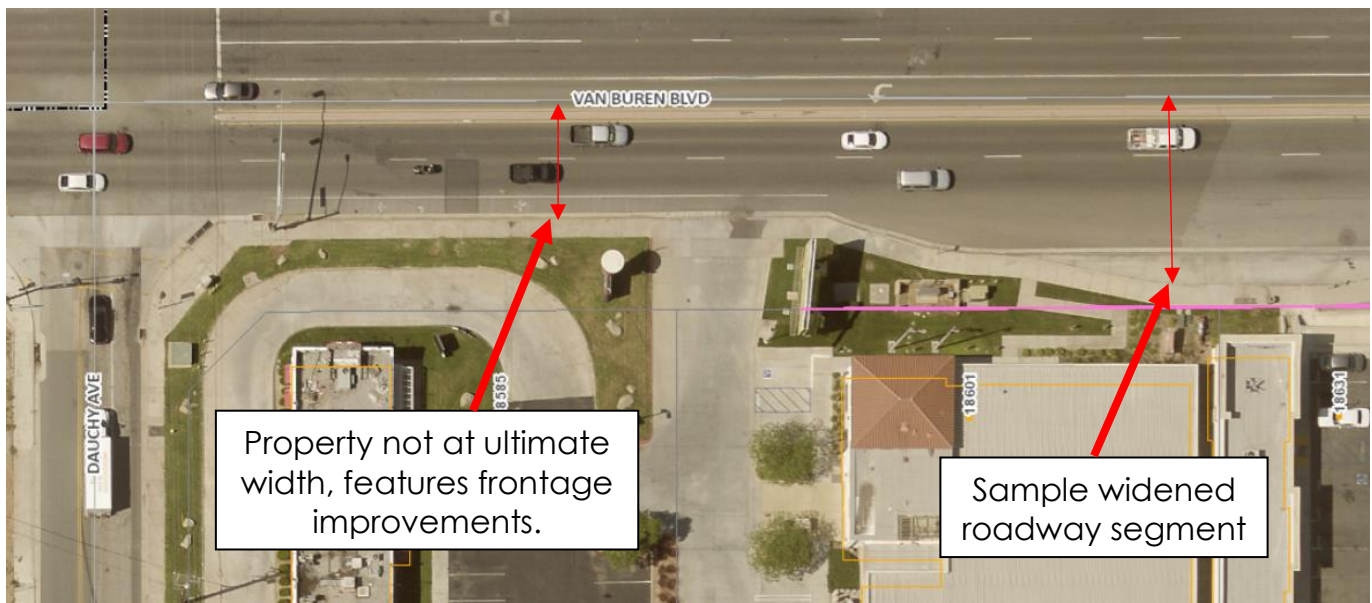


Figure 1: Sample property not at ultimate width, but featuring frontage improvements

Additionally, these developments are required to pay into WRCOG's Transportation Uniform Mitigation Fee program (TUMF) to be assessed at the appropriate funding level for their property. The TUMF program funds regional interchange and arterial enhancement projects; the Van Buren Widening Project is identified on the TUMF network as an eligible and planned project. Since the County has an active planned project along this segment of Van Buren Boulevard, select properties have already paid and constructed frontage improvements, and because any new development at the subject properties would be required to pay towards the planned widening via

the TUMF program as appropriate, it is staff's recommendation that their street improvement requirements be temporarily waived.

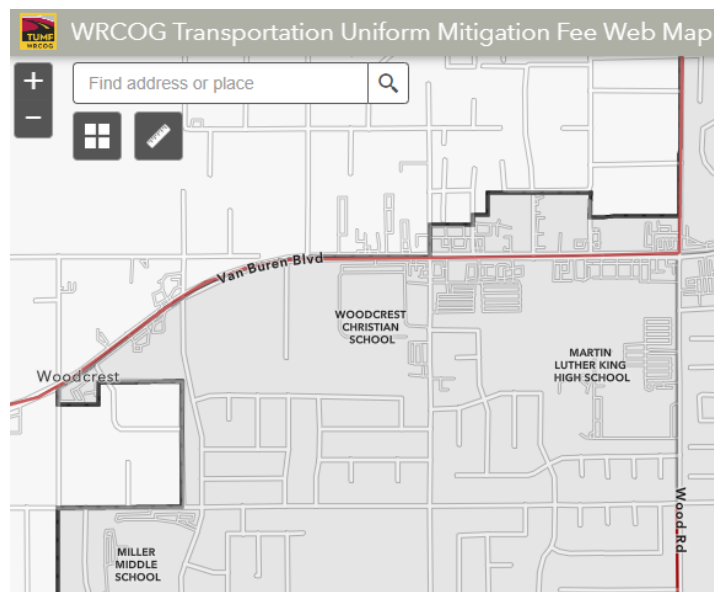


Figure 2: WRCOG TUMF map includes Van Buren Boulevard

Development projects not having existing curb, gutter, streetlights, and other street improvements along its frontage would be required to adhere to RMC Section 13.16.060 and follow standard development procedures and conditions of approval.

The County's Van Buren Boulevard Widening Project between Wood Road and Washington Street will fully fund the street widening which includes the relocation of conflicting underground utilities, relocation of power poles, reconstruction of driveways, the relocation of fence lines, etc. As part of the work, the City and County of Riverside will conduct outreach and coordinate with impacted property owners to construct the project and provide a consistent and uniform street width and street amenities along the corridor.

STRATEGIC PLAN ALIGNMENT:

These items support **Strategic Priority 3 – Economic Opportunity** and **Goal 3.3 – Cultivate a business climate that welcomes innovation, entrepreneurship and investment** and **Strategic Priority 6 – Infrastructure, Mobility & Connectivity** and **Goal 6.1 – Provide, expand and ensure equitable access to sustainable modes of transportation that connect people to opportunities such as employment, education, healthcare, and community amenities.**

These items align with each of the five Cross-Cutting Threads as follows:

1. **Community Trust** – The City and County of Riverside have entered into agreement that allows the County to take the lead on development activities and preliminary engineering to widen Van Buren Boulevard between Wood Road and Washington Street to six lanes in support of the circulation element.
2. **Equity** – The construction of the Van Buren Boulevard widening project will serve all road users traversing this section of road.

3. **Fiscal Responsibility** – Temporarily waiving the street improvements under RMC Section 13.16.060 would facilitate and encourage development on Van Buren Boulevard between Wood Road and Gamble Avenue and would prevent the demolition of curb, gutter, sidewalk, streetlights, and other improvements that would get constructed/relocated with the Van Buren Boulevard Widening Project.
4. **Innovation** – The Public Works Department collaborates with the development community to implement solutions that encourage development and construct and/or preserve street improvements to serve the community.
5. **Sustainability & Resiliency** – Minimizing construction impacts and supporting a larger project that will widen Van Buren Boulevard between Wood Road and Washington Street will minimize traffic congestion and result in less impacts to the community and environment.

FISCAL IMPACT:

There is no fiscal impact with this report.

Prepared by: Gilbert Hernandez, Public Works Director
Certified as to
availability of funds: Edward Enriquez, Interim Assistant City Manager/Chief Financial Officer/City Treasurer
Approved by: Kris Martinez, Assistant City Manager
Approved as to form: Phaedra A. Norton, City Attorney

Attachment: Vicinity Map