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**Public Works
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Staff Report

SS Item 3

To: Lemoore City Council
From: Lauren Apone, Administrative Analyst
Date: August 16, 2012
Subject: Daphne Lane Railroad Crossing and Associated Improvements

Discussion:

The 2030 General Plan shows a future railroad crossing at Daphne Lane, east of Lemoore Avenue. Over the past few years, staff has initiated the process with the Public Utilities Commission (PUC) and San Joaquin Valley Railroad, operator of the rail line, to obtain this crossing. In July 2011, the SJVR responded to our request in a letter (attached) stating the only way they would support our application for a new crossing at Daphne Lane is if we close another crossing in Lemoore. Since there are no feasible crossings to close, staff searched for other options.

In March 2012, we enlisted the help of Senator Rubio to help lobby the PUC to support our project. We proposed making safety improvements to existing railroad crossings in the City in lieu of closing a crossing. In May 2012, we had a conference call with the PUC and received an e-mail (attached) from the PUC stating this solution would "likely be agreeable to all parties." The PUC set up a field meeting in late May with representatives from the PUC, the City, and SJVR. At that meeting, staff went over the safety improvements the City was proposing to make to the other crossings in Lemoore. The SJVR put together cost estimates for the railroad portion of the improvements as well as the new Daphne Lane Crossing and staff compiled proposed costs to City infrastructure that would need to accompany the improvements. The costs are as follows:

Crossing	Railroad Improvements	City Improvements	Total
Daphne Lane	\$405,461.68	\$360,000	\$765,461.58
Lemoore Avenue	\$75,214.04	\$9,500	\$ 84,714.04
Fox Street	\$316,632.84	\$14,000	\$330,632.84
Follett Street	\$358,749.81	\$24,000	<u>\$382,749.81</u>
			\$1,563,558.27

Along with the proposed costs, SJVR also sent an e-mail (attached) stating they "will not consider a new crossing here unless an existing crossing in town is closed." They referred back to the July 2011 letter.

The Council is now left with a few options of how to continue. The first is to move forward with the application to the PUC without the support of SJVR. The application process would likely take over a year. Staff can offer the above mentioned safety improvements in exchange for the new crossing at Daphne Lane, but the SJVR will likely protest our application. This option may require legal fees as we go before an administrative law judge for a final decision on our application.

Council may also wish to postpone the application until more funding is available. However, the Sugar Plum subdivision developing shortly will be the final development in the area north of the railroad tracks. The area south of the railroad tracks has some potential for future development. If Council wishes to move forward with the Daphne Lane crossing, the timing now would be ideal.

The final option is to abandon the future Daphne Lane crossing and amend the General Plan to reflect that. Staff would recommend that if Council has any future wishes to construct the Daphne Lane crossing, that they do not move forward with any other rail crossing safety improvements on our own because those may be our only way we are able to get a crossing at Daphne Lane approved. Any future crossings in Lemoore will be very challenging to get approved without closing an existing crossing, although staff feels somewhat encouraged by the PUC staff's support of our current proposal.

Budget Impact:

The projected cost for the Daphne Lane crossing and the associated safety improvements to the other crossings is \$1,563,558.27. The projected balance in the CIP Budget for the "Streets Capital- East" fund on June 30, 2013 is \$1,547,114, but increased revenues bring the figure to about \$1,950,000 with an additional \$150,000 per year thereafter.

Recommendation:

For discussion only.