



NEWS RELEASE

City of Chico

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July 29, 2011

1st and 2nd Streets Couplet Project

Engineered construction documents for the entire Downtown Couplet project went out to bid in early July. Only two contractors submitted bids and both were significantly higher than the engineer's estimate. As a result, the bids had to be rejected. Given the diminishing number of work days available in this construction season, a current bid environment of busy contractors with low response rates, and the large scale of work to be completed, engineering staff has identified stand-alone components of the project and is in the process of soliciting bids in a phased approach to complete the overall project. Contractor bids for Phase I of the 1st and 2nd Streets Couplet Project are planned to be received on August 11, 2011.

Phase I generally includes:

- Re-striping of 2nd Street between Walnut and Broadway and addition of colorized bike lanes;
- Conversion of 1st Street to one-way, west-bound traffic between Broadway and Salem, along with the construction of the adjoining multi-use bicycle pedestrian path;
- Construction of a CSUC drop-off circle at the intersection of 1st and Salem with sidewalk enhancements to facilitate future café seating opportunities for neighboring businesses;
- Bulbing of the sidewalks at various downtown intersections between Salem and Walnut (State Route 32); and
- Installation of necessary utilities, including foundations for parking kiosks (smart meters).

Although the specific timing of construction will be dependent upon weather and securing a contractor, expeditious project completion is the goal. As a result, work could begin as soon as early September. To accommodate daily traffic, Downtown businesses, and CSUC, every effort

will be made to ease construction impacts and minimize inconvenience. Street closures will be limited to single blocks at any given time, where feasible, construction activities will be scheduled for off-peak hours and / or extended hours, as appropriate, and construction will be reduced during the holiday season. In addition to the Couplet's Downtown enhancements, steady forward progression of the project will compliment forthcoming CSUC projects, such as the construction of the 2nd Street parking garage and replacement of Taylor Hall.

Phase II of the Couplet project includes the construction of the round-a-bout at the 1st / 2nd / Flume intersection and associated conversion of two-way to one-way traffic on 1st and 2nd Streets, installation of the balance of the colorized bike lanes, and parking modifications to the Downtown Core. Bid and construction of Phase II would likely be completed in the 2012 construction season. Upon receipt of bids, additional information will be made available at the City's website:

http://www.chico.ca.us/capital_project_services/FirstStreetSecondStreetCouplet.asp. Please contact Senior Civil Engineer Bob Greenlaw (bgreenla@ci.chico.ca.us) or Senior Planner Tracy Bettencourt (tbettenc@ci.chico.ca.us) if you have any additional questions.

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