



Shelby
Street
Bridge

Brothers
Lane
Bridge

Flood plan deadline

City must decide whether to back project

By BETH MORGAN
The New Mexican Staff

The Santa Fe City Council has until July 20 to decide whether it will support the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' plan to line a portion of the Santa Fe River with concrete.

Councilors were informed of the deadline in a study session with representatives of the Corps of Engineers on Wednesday.

John Cunico, chief of the Corps' Albuquerque District planning branch, said the Corps cannot continue with the project without a commitment for funding from the city administration.

The Corps' 1984 budget includes funds to design and draw up specifications for the flood control plan, but construction funds already earmarked for the project will be "reprogrammed" if the city doesn't make up its mind by July 20, said

Peter Doles, Corps study manager.

Doles and Cunico answered councilors' questions on the flood control project during the session.

The city would be asked to provide a 35 percent match for the federal government's 65 percent funding of the \$6.2 million project. While councilors said the city Capital Improvements Program has provided a budget for a portion of that 35 percent, the Corps has adopted a policy that 35 percent of the funding for the project should come from local sources.

Costs for land acquisition, easements, rights of way and relocations of bridges and utility lines must be shared by the municipal government under a 1936 law, but Cunico said the city would have a better chance of obtaining the federal funds if a com-

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mitment was made to provide 35 percent of the funding.

The "traditional" cost-sharing provisions would mean the city must provide \$1.079 million for the project, Cunico said. But, he said, the city would have to put up a total of \$2.193 million if it followed the 35 percent policy.

However, the "in-kind" matching costs for rights of way, land and relocations would come out of that figure, he said.

Mike Trujillo, representing the Property Control Division of the state Department of Finance and Administration, told councilors the state needs all the information the city has on the flood control project before the state can take a stand. The state owns much of the land along the river that would be required for rights of way, he said.

Councilor Michael Branch said the city had deeded the land along the river to the state in the 1930s to obtain Work Projects Administration funds

to improve a portion of the river channel.

Doles told the councilors \$200,000 to \$300,000 might be pared from the project budget if the Corps is not required to build low walls at the edge of the river park.

He said while the walls provide "freeboard protection ... they are not really necessary."

But lining a one-mile stretch of the river with concrete, which may be designed to be more aesthetically pleasing, will be necessary for the Corps to proceed.

The Corps provided cost breakdowns in preliminary reports for plain concrete and textured liners for the river, the plain concrete being the less expensive. However, he said, "We realized a concrete channel was not going to be accepted by the community."

"... To provide a guaranteed level of protection, we will have to stabilize the channel bed," he said. But facing the new channel with rock could cost \$1 million, and decrease

the level of protection by 20 years, he said.

The Corps can either drop the project or proceed with the planning phase, but the city's cooperation will be required before another move is made, he said.

"It has a five-year limit before it comes up for de-authorization," Doles said.

The councilors were told the Corps became involved in planning for a flood that had a 100-year likelihood of occurring after a 1957 flood and again after flooding in 1968.

Both of these floods, Doles said, were not of that magnitude but of the type that might occur every 12 to 15 years.

In a 100-year flood in which the river would flow at 5,000 cubic feet per second, Doles said, El Centro Mall at Water and Shelby streets would be under 5 feet of water.

Improvement plans include construction of a 4-foot deep, 20- to 25-foot-wide channel within the existing rock walls of the river; replacement

or improvement of six bridges; and the low walls.

Bridges that have been identified as inadequate — either because of the width of the channel or the height of the bridges — include: a private drive bridge, El Castillo Apartment Drive bridge, the footbridge above Old Santa Fe Trail, the Old Santa Fe Trail bridge, the Shelby Street footbridge, and the Defouri Street bridge.

The capacity of these bridges is 2,100 cubic feet per second and under, a Corps report states.

Among spectators at the study session, Santa Fe County hydrologist Jay Lazarus voiced the county's concern that the lining of one-mile of the river with concrete might impair the recharge of the Tesuque formation, the major water-bearing aquifer in this area, and the likelihood of erosion occurring downstream from the channel.

The City Council expects to hold a public hearing on the proposed river channel project before July 20.

