City of Long Beach

Office of Vice Mayor Robert Garcia
Councilmember, First District

Date: June 4, 2013

To: Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council

From: Vice Mayor Robert Garcia, First District

Subject: Adaptive Reuse Plan for Shoemaker Bridge

Background:

As part of the I-710 expansion project, the Shoemaker Bridge is scheduled to be demolished and replaced with a new bridge that will improve traffic flow and expand park space. The bridge plan, which will be included as an early action project, builds a new bridge over the Los Angeles River and realigns the on and off ramps between Broadway and 7th street.

The project will also double the size of Cesar Chavez Park, by reconnecting a portion of the park that is currently split by the 710 freeway. Federal funds have been committed to replace the Shoemaker Bridge.

Building the new bridge creates unique opportunities for adaptively reusing the current bridge instead of tearing it down.

Long Beach could create a new iconic public space by transforming the current bridge, or portions of the bridge, into an elevated public park. The new park, would connect to Drake Park, would take pedestrians over the LA River and create a pathway for passive recreation. High Line Park in New York is a great example of adaptive reuse of a former elevated rail line in Manhattan. High Line Park in New York is operated by the city but also supported by a non-profit conservatory.

While construction of the new Shoemaker Bridge is still a couple years away, planning and construction considerations must be made now in order to adaptively reuse the current bridge.

Not only would Long Beach be creating a new nationally recognized park, but it would also be creating new green space in a community with a great need for it.

Recommendation: Direct the City Manager to return to the City Council in 90 days with a feasibility plan and considerations to adaptively reuse the Shoemaker Bridge and turn it into a public park.

Fiscal Impact: There is no fiscal impact to this measure.