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Low construction bid could kick-start two Highway 4 projects

By Paul Bugarino
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Cost savings from one road project in East Contra Costa may help fund another.

Thanks to a low bid for a segment of the Highway 4 widening in Antioch, a highly anticipated project in Brentwood could receive money to start construction.

Rancho Cordova-based CC Myers, Inc. is expected to get the contract for building the next segment of widening -- from just west of Contra Loma Boulevard to near G Street -- after a bid of about \$48.8 million, local transportation officials announced last week.

The bid represents a savings of more than \$9 million from the anticipated cost, said Ross Chittenden, deputy executive director of projects for the Contra Costa Transportation Authority.

If the bid is awarded, the savings likely will fill the funding gap for a Highway 4 bypass interchange at Sand Creek Road.

Caltrans will award the bid in the next month or two.

"It's very promising," Chittenden said.

The Sand Creek project would add onramps and offramps at Sand Creek and widen the bypass to four lanes from Laurel Road in Oakley to the interchange. The project, expected to cost \$33 million, received \$25 million in state bond funds in June.

At that time, local officials also received assurances from the California Transportation Commission that any cost savings for the Highway 4 widening would go toward other regional projects.

The new interchange will allow commuters to continue uninterrupted instead of having to

stop at the signal light at Sand Creek. Southbound traffic often backs up during peak evening hours because of the red lights beyond Lone Tree Way.

"We're going to see some smiling people in the next couple of years when that road is completed," said Contra Costa Supervisor Federal Glover, of Pittsburg.

If the Highway 4 widening bid is approved, the next step would be to make sure money is in place to start construction. The county transportation authority either would wait for the state to sell transportation bonds in the spring or look at using local funds to cover expenses until the sale, Chittenden said.

Construction on Sand Creek could start as early as May or June, he said.

The widening project includes a full interchange at Contra Loma. The configuration now has only a westbound onramp and eastbound offramp.

G Street no longer will have an onramp or offramp once the widening is complete.

Widening work is in progress from Loveridge Road in Pittsburg to Contra Loma Boulevard.

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