

METRO/WEST

New bridge may be out until turn of century

By Mary Manning

LAS VEGAS SUN

It could be the turn of the century before federal and state officials build a second bridge spanning the Colorado River.

The question is who will pay for it. Gone are the days of generous federal purses for such projects, and states are equally strapped for money.

The price tag? Slightly less than \$130 million for a project that would have cost less than \$90 million in the early 1980s,

officials said.

The project management team, which includes engineers and consultants from the Bureau of Reclamation, Nevada Department of Transportation and Arizona Department of Transportation, met at McCarran International Airport Thursday to discuss raising funds.

The Bureau of Reclamation abandoned studies and the search for funds on April 27, said Charley Calhoun, the bureau's assistant regional director.

But state and federal agencies have revived environmental studies and a

report should be ready for public review by late summer, Calhoun said.

During the summer, traffic studies will be completed to tally the number of people and dangerous shipments that mix on Hoover Dam's only existing route. Much of the travel over Hoover Dam involves the shipment of hazardous materials.

The worst accident envisioned is a flaming tanker truck creating a fireball that would endanger federal employees and visitors alike at the bottom of the massive dam.

The National Park Service also is

looking into the matter. It is studying three possible bridge sites and how they look from the dam, a national historical landmark, said bureau spokesman Julian Rhinehart.

The three sites have been narrowed from 12 possible locations, Rhinehart said.

Although Arizona offered \$7 million or more in cash and Nevada put in-kind design services on the table equaling \$7 million, that leaves a 50-50 share of state and federal funding far short, Rhinehart said.