



Legislation Text

File #: 18-1182, **Version:** 1

Department of Transportation recommending the Board take the following actions related to the Newtown Road at South Fork Weber Creek Bridge Replacement Project, CIP 77122/36105030:

- 1) Adopt the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Mitigated Negative Declaration and Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Plan; and
- 2) Approve the Project as described in the CEQA Initial Study / Mitigated Negative Declaration. (Est. Time: 45 Min.)

FUNDING: Highway Bridge Program (87%) and Regional Surface Transportation Program (13%). (Federal Funds)

DISCUSSION / BACKGROUND

Department of Transportation (Transportation), in conjunction with the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans), and the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), proposes to replace the existing Newtown Road Bridge (No. 25C0033) over the South Fork of Weber Creek. The existing bridge was constructed in 1929 and widened with a culvert in 1950. The bridge/culvert system is functionally obsolete per Caltrans and FHWA standards. The proposed Project would improve roadway safety and be consistent with American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO) guidelines.

Transportation recommends the Board adopt the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Mitigated Negative Declaration and Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Plan and approve the Newtown Road at South Fork Weber Creek Bridge Replacement Project (Project) as described in the CEQA Initial Study / Mitigated Negative Declaration (IS/MND).

The recommended Board actions are based on the following findings:

- A) The CEQA IS/MND, on file with the Clerk of the Board and on Transportation's website, <https://www.edcgov.us/Government/dot/Pages/ceqa.aspx>, was prepared pursuant to Public Resources Code §21000 et seq., and State CEQA Guidelines.
- B) There is no substantial evidence that the Project, as mitigated, will have a significant effect on the environment.
- C) The IS/MND for the Project reflects Transportation's independent judgment and analysis, as lead agency for the County.

Project Description: Transportation proposes to remove and replace the existing functionally obsolete single span bridge/culvert system. The simple span bridge was built in 1929. A 10 foot wide by 7 foot tall squashed steel culvert was added to the upstream end of the bridge in 1950 to allow for another lane of traffic to pass over the creek. The Project proposes to replace this outdated, nonstandard, hydraulically insufficient bridge/culvert system with a new precast concrete arch structure. Compared to other alternatives evaluated, the precast concrete arch bridge alternative optimally satisfies the hydraulic performance requirements, has the shortest construction time, does not require falsework, and has a moderate level of environmental impacts.

The proposed structure is similar in style and size to the structure that was recently constructed to carry traffic on Fort Jim Road over South Fork Weber Creek. The new structure will be approximately 32 feet wide and 186 feet long. Travel lanes will be 12 feet wide with 4 foot shoulders and guardrails on each side. The design requires installation of three wing walls and one retaining wall of varying heights and lengths. Wing walls (approximately 35, 46, and 52 feet in length) would extend beyond the southwest, northwest, and northeast edges of the precast arch bridge. A separate retaining wall (approximately 70 feet in length) will be installed along the south side of the east road approach and terminate at the southeast edge of the precast arch bridge.

The extent of the road approach improvements on Newtown Road are shown on Figures 3 and Photos 1 and 2 of the IS/MND (pages 14 - 19). The Newtown Road roadway profile grade will be raised approximately 2 to 4 feet to allow for a larger bridge opening that will provide hydraulic capacity under the bridge that meets modern standards. The roadway will be widened in the vicinity of the new bridge structure to provide adequate space for two 12 foot lanes and 4 foot shoulders. The road improvements would extend approximately 190 feet west and 130 feet east of the proposed bridge. Additional approach improvements include shoulder grading, paving, and conforming the new pavement to the old to provide a smooth transition.

Purpose: The purpose of the Project is to improve traffic safety conditions on a public roadway and comply with current County and AASHTO guidelines by replacing a functionally obsolete, nonstandard hydraulically insufficient bridge/culvert system with a new structure that meets current standards and widening the road geometry approaching the bridge from both west-bound and east-bound directions. Additionally, per AASHTO and FHWA standards, the new bridge will provide enough hydraulic capacity to pass 50 and 100 year floods based on the results of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Hydrologic Engineering Center River Analysis System modeling. The existing bridge/culvert system does not meet these requirements.

County staff presented the Project and the recommendation for replacement at a public community meeting held on March 23, 2015 at Pleasant Valley Middle School.

Location: The Newtown Road Bridge is located approximately two (2) air miles south of the community of Camino in unincorporated El Dorado County. Newtown Road is a local, two lane rural road that has an average daily traffic count of about 1,600 trips at the Project site. The Project is in a rural residential area bound by a residence to the southwest and undeveloped portions of private parcels to the north and southeast. The Project area includes approximately 0.25 mile of Newtown Road east and west of the bridge over South Fork Weber Creek, road shoulders, and portions of adjacent private parcel numbers (APN) 077-431-14, 077-431-15, 077-431-17, 077-431-18, 077-431-57, and 077-431-62. South Fork Weber Creek flows west through the center of the Project area. The Project area includes South Fork Weber Creek, its floodplain, and moderately to steeply sloped hillsides. An additional residence occurs adjacent to the southeast corner of the Project area.

Construction: The Project is anticipated to start in 2020 or later, once all required approvals and funding have been obtained. The construction period for the bridge and roadway improvements would take up to 1.5 years. Work performed in and around Weber Creek would be scheduled during periods of relatively low flow. Utility relocation (e.g., overhead telephone and electrical, underground waterline) may be scheduled within a year prior to bridge construction.

Staging would be available to the contractor in the flat area northeast of the existing bridge.

Newtown Road will be closed at the Project site during construction. Through traffic between the areas of Placerville and Pleasant Valley will be detoured to Fort Jim Road. The Fort Jim Road detour would be approximately 0.5 miles longer than the Newtown Road route and would take approximately 1 minute longer to drive than the Newtown Road route. Access to/from all residences adjacent to the Project area would be maintained during construction.

Emergency Evacuation Routes: The contract plans will include a temporary evacuation route downstream of the Project area. Prior to construction, Transportation will consult and coordinate with the El Dorado County Sheriff's Office of Emergency Services (OES) and El Dorado County Fire Protection District (County Fire) regarding evacuation of residents near the Project site in case of fire or other emergency. If Transportation, OES, and County Fire determine that the timing of construction and other conditions and factors warrant the construction of the temporary evacuation route, the temporary evacuation route will be constructed in conjunction with the full closure of Newtown Road. If Transportation, OES, and County Fire determine that adequate options exists to evacuate and/or shelter in place residents near the Project site in case of a fire or other emergency, and the timing of construction and other conditions and factors do not warrant the construction of the temporary evacuation route, the temporary evacuation route will not be constructed.

Regardless of whether or not the temporary evacuation route is constructed, any evacuation order or shelter in place order from OES will be executed in whatever manner OES deems appropriate for the emergency that necessitates the evacuation. Since each emergency has its own unique set of circumstances, it is not possible to determine the manner (or direction) any specific resident will evacuate or shelter in place during a theoretical emergency. Rather, if an emergency occurs, OES will utilize its best practices to notify the public and direct them to evacuate. Examples of best practices for evacuation include reverse 911 calls and door-to-door notifications by Sheriff's deputies.

CEQA: Transportation is the CEQA lead agency and prepared the IS/MND to consider the significance of potential impacts resulting from the Project in accordance with CEQA Guidelines (14 CA Administrative Code, §14000 et seq.). Adoption of the Mitigated Negative Declaration and Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Plan would complete the CEQA portion of the environmental phase toward ultimate delivery of the Project. Because this is a federally funded project, FHWA has designated Caltrans as the lead agency to administer the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) Categorical Exclusion, utilizing the required studies completed by Transportation as lead agency for the County. At this time, NEPA is not yet approved. Request for approval of NEPA follows CEQA.

Mitigation Measures: Mitigation measures have been added to the Project to reduce potential impacts to a less-than-significant level. The Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Plan is provided as Appendix A of the IS/MND. Implementation of the mitigation measures will reduce potentially significant impacts to a less-than-significant level.

Public Notification: The Notice of Intent to Adopt a Mitigated Negative Declaration was advertised in the Mountain Democrat on June 27, 2018, and the entire IS/MND document was posted on Transportation's website at <https://www.edcgov.us/Government/dot/Pages/ceqa.aspx>. Hard copies were made available at the Transportation office located at 2850 Fairlane Court, Placerville and the El Dorado County Library in Placerville. Over 900 individual notices were sent via US Mail to property owners adjacent the Project and to property owners deemed likely to utilize Newtown Road. Similar notices were also sent to relevant public agencies. The public review period began on June 27, 2018 and ended on August 3, 2018. Due to a glitch with the website link, the original comment

period was extended 7 days.

Public Comments and Responses: Eleven comments were received during the Draft IS/MND comment review period. Appendix B lists the comments received on the IS/MND, provides copies of the individual comments, and responds to each comment related to environmental issues.

ALTERNATIVES

- 1) The Board could choose not to adopt the Mitigated Negative Declaration and the Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Plan. Transportation would make adjustments as directed by the Board and bring this item back to the Board at a later date. This could increase Project cost and delay delivery.
- 2) The Board could cancel the Project. Transportation would be required to return all federal funds spent thus far.

OTHER DEPARTMENT / AGENCY INVOLVEMENT

Prior to construction, resource agency permits and approvals may be required as follows:

- 1) U.S. Army Corps of Engineers - Section 404 Clean Water Act Nationwide Permit
- 2) CVRWQCB - Section 401 Water Quality Certification
- 3) California Department of Fish and Wildlife - Streambed Alteration Agreement
- 4) El Dorado County Air Quality Management District - Fugitive Dust Plan Approval

County Counsel has reviewed and approved the IS/MND.

CAO RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the Board approve this item.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

This item will not result in any change to net County cost. The Project is included in Transportation's adopted 2018 CIP, which was approved by the Board on June 26, 2018 (Item 61).

CLERK OF THE BOARD FOLLOW UP ACTIONS

N/A

TRANSPORTATION FOLLOW UP ACTIONS

- 1) File a Notice of Determination with the office of the County Recorder/Clerk.
- 2) Proceed with the Project through the NEPA clearance process, final design and construction.

STRATEGIC PLAN COMPONENT

Infrastructure

CONTACT

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