



Legislation Text

File #: 11-1392, **Version:** 1

Department of Transportation recommending the Board take the following actions related to the SMUD Trail Project, CIP No. 97005:

- 1) Adopt the California Environmental Quality Act Mitigated Negative Declaration; and
- 2) Approve the Project as described in the California Environmental Quality Act Mitigated Negative Declaration.

FUNDING: The Project is included in the Adopted 2010 Capital Improvement Program and is funded through a combination of State Transportation Improvement Program - Transportation Enhancement Funds (45%), Local Funds (14%) and a contribution from the El Dorado Hills Community Services District (16%) based on the preliminary cost estimate. An additional 25% is anticipated from State Transportation Improvement Program - Transportation Enhancement Funds.

Fiscal Impact/Change to Net County Cost:

Adoption of this Mitigated Negative Declaration (MND) and approval of the SMUD Trail Project (Project) will not result in any fiscal impact.

The recommended Board actions are based on the following findings:

A) The California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) document on file with the Clerk of the Board and on the Department of Transportation's (Department) website at

<http://www.edcgov.us/Government/DOT/CEQA.aspx> was prepared pursuant to Public Resources Code §21000 et seq. and the State CEQA Guidelines.

B) There is no substantial evidence that the Project, as mitigated, will have a significant effect on the environment.

C) The MND for the Project reflects the lead agency's independent judgment and analysis.

Background:

The Department is proposing to install a multi-use trail within a 300-foot-wide power line corridor maintained by the Sacramento Municipal Utility District (SMUD) and Pacific Gas & Electric (PG&E), located between Silva Valley Parkway on the east and Tam O'Shanter Drive on the west (Attachment D). The El Dorado Hills Community Services District (CSD) is the underlying property owner and will take over operation and maintenance of the Project after construction.

Project Name Change: The title of the Project is being changed in response to concerns by SMUD officials who do not wish to be perceived as affiliated with or responsible for the trail. The title "SMUD Trail Project" is the title used in the County's 2010 Capital Improvement Program (CIP) and in the grant application awarded to the County in 2009 under the State Transportation Improvement Program - Transportation Enhancement. The 2010 El Dorado County Bicycle Transportation Plan (BTP) also refers to the Project as the "SMUD Trail Project". The new name, "New York Creek Trail - East" was suggested by officials at the CSD and the Department will proceed with the name change. The issue of the title was raised after the MND was completed, which is why the MND bears the original title.

Project Description: The Project proposes to construct an 8-foot-wide paved, multi-use trail with 4-foot-wide gravel shoulders that is approximately 1,800 feet long. Pending final design, the trail may alternatively have a 6-foot-wide gravel shoulder on one side to accommodate equestrians, but the total trail width would remain 16 feet.

The trail would begin at Silva Valley Parkway and generally parallel an existing dirt path westward between the power lines to a proposed new, prefabricated bridge crossing at New York Creek and terminate at Tam O'Shanter Drive.

Signs and a crosswalk to Stephen Harris Park would be installed on Tam O'Shanter Drive at the western terminus of the trail. The current grade of the alignment between Tam O'Shanter Drive and New York Creek would need to be cut and filled in order to meet grade requirements that provide access for all users in compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act.

A prefabricated bridge made of steel and wood, approximately 80 feet long, would be installed across the creek to completely span the 100-year floodplain. Abutments would be constructed on both sides of the creek outside of the 100-year floodplain to support the bridge. Placement of the abutments would require excavation depth of up to 5 feet.

As explained earlier in this Background section, the Trail is being built in a 300-foot-wide utility corridor. The northern 100 feet of the corridor is maintained by PG&E and the adjacent southern 200 feet is maintained by SMUD. Coordination between the Department, SMUD, PG&E and the CSD has been ongoing since inception of the Project and will continue through construction.

A detailed Project description can be found in the MND available on the Department's website at <http://www.edcgov.us/Government/DOT/CEQA.aspx>, or as Attachment B of this Legistar item. A hard copy can be obtained at the Department's office at 2850 Fairlane Court, Placerville.

The BTP identifies the Project as a Tier 1 Priority project in the El Dorado Hills area. The following BTP Policies are satisfied through implementation of this Project.

Policy 3B: Encourage the use of existing natural or manmade corridors such as creeks, powerline corridors, railroad corridors, abandoned ditches and other corridors for future bikeway alignments.

Policy 7D: Encourage the development of short distance connections within the communities of El Dorado County as well as long distance connections between communities throughout the County and region.

Policy 7G: Give priority to bike routes that connect new and existing residential areas to employment, education, commercial, and recreation centers.

The Project utilizes an existing utility corridor to provide both local and regional bicycle and pedestrian access. Residential areas east of New York Creek will be able to access Stephen Harris Park across the proposed new bridge and use Tam O'Shanter Drive to access other recreational facilities in the neighborhood. The Project also connects to a Class 2 bike route on Saint Andrews Drive that leads to the Class I bike path along El Dorado Hills Boulevard. This will provide a southern link to businesses and activity centers in El Dorado Hills and a regional link to Folsom via Green Valley Road.

Construction: Construction is anticipated to take approximately three (3) months and ideally would take place during summer 2013. All staging associated with trail construction and bridge installation would take place in previously disturbed areas where feasible.

The prefabricated bridge would be assembled off-site and brought to the Project area at the proposed trail access point on Tam O'Shanter Drive utilizing the proposed trail alignment. It would be set into place using a crane. No diversions or in-water construction would be needed in New York Creek, but some vegetation removal in the proposed bridge location would be necessary. All necessary rights of entry for construction will be obtained from the appropriate agency, including the CSD, SMUD, PG&E and El Dorado Irrigation District (EID).

Mitigation Measures: Mitigation measures are added to the Project to reduce potential impacts to a level of insignificance. The Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Plan can be found within the MND as Appendix A.

Public Notification: The Notice of Intent to Adopt a Mitigated Negative Declaration was advertised in the Mountain Democrat, the entire document was posted on the Department's website and hard copies were available at the Department's office. Individual notices were also sent to those directly affected in the Project area and to relevant agencies. The review period began on October 3, 2011 and ended November 2, 2011.

Public Comments: One comment was received from a local resident requesting clarification as to when the Project would be completed, the cost and the source of funding. Standard comments from resource agencies were received regarding potential required permits.

Additionally, EID responded with concerns about the existence of EID sewer lines that run north/south along both sides of New York Creek in the Project area.

Errata: As pointed out by EID staff, the MND did not specifically mention the existence of sewer lines that currently run along New York Creek in the Project area, nor did it mention St. Andrews Sewer Lift Station, and EID access road located southwest of the Project. This information was known to the County but was inadvertently left out of the MND. The attached Errata to the MND (Attachment C), provides this additional information and demonstrates that no new, avoidable significant effects requiring mitigation would occur to the sewer lines as a result of the Project. The Department has designed the Project (specifically, the proposed bridge abutments) to completely avoid the sewer lines. St. Andrews Sewer Lift Station is located outside the study area and the Lift Station's access road will not be used or affected. No Project revisions are necessary as a result of this information. The revised text would not require recirculation in accordance with §15073.5(a) of the State CEQA Guidelines.

Reason for Recommendation:

The Department is the CEQA lead agency and prepared the MND to consider the significance of potential Project impacts in accordance with the State CEQA Guidelines (14 CA Administrative Code, §14000 et seq.). Certification of this MND would complete the CEQA portion of the environmental phase toward ultimate delivery of this Project.

Because this is a federally funded Project, the Federal Highway Administration designated Caltrans

as the lead agency to administer the National Environmental Quality Act (NEPA) Categorical Exclusion, utilizing the required studies completed by the County. At this time, NEPA is not yet approved.

Action to be taken by the Department following Board approval:

- 1) The Department will file a Notice of Determination with the office of the County Recorder/Clerk.
- 2) The Department will proceed with the Project through the NEPA clearance process, then to final design and construction.

Contact:

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Concurrences: County Counsel