



Legislation Text

File #: 14-0823, **Version:** 1

Community Development Agency, Transportation Division, recommending the Board take the following actions related to the Blair Road at EID Canal - Bridge Replacement (No. 25C0077) Project, CIP No. 77119:

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

FUNDING: This Project is included in the Adopted 2013 Capital Improvement Program and is funded through the Federal Highway Administration Local Assistance Highway Bridge Program, authorized under the 100 percent Funded Program (Federal Funds).

Fiscal Impact/Change to Net County Cost

Adoption of this Mitigated Negative Declaration (MND) and approval of the Blair Road at EID Canal - Bridge Replacement (No. 25C0077) 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 Community Development Agency, Transportation Division website, <http://www.edcgov.us/DOT/index.html>, 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 Community Development Agency, Transportation Division (Transportation) is proposing to replace the functionally obsolete Blair Road Bridge over the El Dorado Irrigation District (EID) Canal with a culvert that meets current design standards. The project is 100% funded under the FHWA Highway Bridge Program (HBP). The Project is located just north of U.S. Highway 50, approximately 0.7 miles north of Pony Express Trail in the community of Pollock Pines. Just south of the Blair Road Bridge, Blair Road intersects with Pony Express Trail approximately 4 miles east of the intersection of Pony Express Trail and Carson Road (see Attachment D for location maps).

The Blair Road Bridge was built in 1935, is 15 feet wide and has two substandard width lanes. A Bridge Inspection Report conducted by Caltrans in 2011 indicates that the bridge has a sufficiency rating (SR) of 56.7/100, and has exhibited evidence of undermining at abutment. The Bridge Inspection Report also indicates that the bridge deck is in sag at mid span, bridge deck soffit exhibits spall in multiple locations and exposed reinforcement. Transportation has evaluated both rehabilitation and replacement options for the existing bridge and has determined that replacement of the bridge is the most cost-effective approach for correcting the functionally obsolete status of the bridge.

Transportation 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. This is a federally funded project; therefore, FHWA 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.

Project Description: The Project involves replacing the existing 36-foot-long, 15-foot-wide, one-lane two-way, reinforced concrete slab bridge with a double-barrel culvert (two 42-inch or equivalent size circular culverts) that meets current design standards. The proposed culvert crossing with the 28-foot-wide roadway provides two 11-foot traffic lanes and 3-foot shoulders on each side of the roadway and would conform to the existing roadway at each approach. The proposed culvert would be located at the existing bridge location.

The section of the EID Canal in the study area is continuously used for water transport. This section of the canal transports water from Forebay Dam to the EID water treatment facility. The canal is wet year-round, except for maintenance from October through December each year.

A detailed Project description can be found in the MND document (Attachment B), or on the Transportation website at <http://www.edcgov.us/Government/DOT/CEQA.aspx>. A hard copy can be obtained at the Transportation offices at 2850 Fairlane Court, Placerville.

Construction: The Project is anticipated to be constructed within a single construction season in summer/fall. Blair Road would be closed within the limits of the project area for up to three months during construction, although this is a conservative estimate. Construction will likely take one to two months for this type of bridge. During this period, traffic would be detoured to Forebay Road, an adjacent County road, for an approximate three-mile detour.

Transportation is working closely with EID regarding the timing of construction. EID is planning to implement the El Dorado Forebay Dam Modification Project (Forebay Project) beginning in summer of 2015 and ending in winter 2017. Construction of the Forebay Project will require the use of Blair Road for equipment vehicle access and will be utilized as an alternative route for residents in the event of heavy construction traffic on Forebay Road during particular phases of the Forebay Project. Since the Project will require the closure of Blair Road, EID has requested Transportation to refrain from constructing the Project during the time that EID will be constructing the Forebay Project. EID has stated that concurrent construction of both projects will impair EID's ability to complete the Forebay Project within its planned timeline, which will delay addressing the public health and safety concerns associated with dam instability.

Transportation will communicate and coordinate closely with EID throughout the process to ensure no conflicts will occur during construction of these projects. Ideally, Transportation would begin construction in 2015 and finish on an accelerated schedule within a one to two month time line from the start of actual construction. The alternative would be to delay construction until 2017 or later in case EID is delayed. Such a delay could put the County at risk of receiving a red flag from Caltrans Local Assistance (CLA) due to inactivity of the project. The County will also coordinate the Project schedule with CLA to show activity and minimize this grant risk.

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 Document.

Public Notification: The Notice of Intent to Adopt a MND was advertised in the Mountain Democrat and the entire document was posted on the County website at <http://www.edcgov.us/Government/DOT/CEQA.aspx>. Hard copies are available at the Transportation offices at 2850 Fairlane Court, Placerville. Individual notices were also sent to those directly affected in the Project area and to relevant agencies. The public review period began on March 21, 2014 and ended May 1, 2014.

A public meeting was held on July 29, 2013 at the Pollock Pines/Camino Community Center to receive comments on both the Blair Road Bridge and the Alder Drive Bridge over the EID Canal.

Public Comments: Standard agency comments on the Draft MND were received during the public review period.

- 1) One phone comment was received from an adjacent property owner who was concerned about the potential removal of an historic oak tree.

Response to phone comment: Transportation staff assured this property owner that the tree in question would not be removed because it is located outside the area of disturbance.

- 2) The following comments were received from El Dorado Irrigation District:

- a) Page 2-3, 2.6 Construction Schedule: EID is planning to implement the El Dorado Forebay Dam Modification Project beginning in summer of 2015 and ending in winter 2017. The Forebay Project Environmental Impact Report (EIR) was certified by the EID Board of Directors on March 24, 2014. Construction of the Forebay Project will require the use of Blair Road for equipment vehicle access and will be utilized as an alternative route for residents in the event of heavy construction traffic on Forebay Road during particular phases of the Forebay Project. Because the Project will require the closure of Blair Road, EID respectfully requests that DOT refrain from constructing the Project during the time that EID will be constructing the Forebay Project. Concurrent construction of both projects will significantly impair EID's ability to complete the Forebay Project within its planned timeline, which will delay addressing the public health and safety concerns associated with dam instability. Further, concurrent construction of both projects will impact local traffic circulation routes. Forebay Project construction traffic would be compounded by the required 5 mile detour around Blair Road necessary during the Project.

Response to comment 2a: Transportation will coordinate and communicate with EID for actual construction date for Forebay Dam Modification Project and Blair Road Bridge Replacement Project, and minimize construction related traffic impacts whenever necessary. Transportation could begin construction in 2015 and finish on an accelerated schedule within a one to two month time line from the start of actual construction. This is reflected in the attached Errata.

- b) Page 2-3, 2.7 Related Project: As mentioned in the above comment, EID is planning to implement the Forebay Project in 2015-2017. Please add this project to the Related Project section.

Response to comment 2b: This change is reflected in the attached Errata.

c) Page 2-3, 2.7.1 EID Main Ditch Piping: The purpose of implementing the Main Ditch Piping Project is not only to conserve water by preventing seepage and evaporation losses, but also to: (1) protect public health by protecting the raw water flowing through the open unlined ditch from sediment and impurities, and (2) reduce the resulting chemical treatment costs. Please add these additional objectives to the description of EID's Main Ditch Piping Project.

Response to comment 2c: The change is reflected in the attached Errata.

d) Page 3-14, Biological Resources: The Biological Resources section of the Initial Study states that EID's canal is considered (1) a water of the state, and, (2) a "natural community of concern." Nothing in the IS/MND provides a reference or basis for these determinations. A basis for the conclusion is necessary. The IS/MND also interchanges the terms natural community of concern and natural community of special concern; please clarify.

Response to comment 2d: The EID canal is a water of the state for the purpose of biological analysis. However, the canal does not meet the definition of a river, stream, or lake that is subject to regulation under Section 1600 of the Fish and Game Code. This clarification is reflected in the attached Errata.

e) EID would like to clarify that this three-mile long terminal section of canal conveys drinking water and originates from the El Dorado Forebay which is an off-stream reservoir to the Reservoir 1 Water Treatment Plant. The canal is actively managed by EID operations staff which includes management of vegetation along the banks of and within the canal, and is dewatered during the annual Project 184 El Dorado Canal outage which occurs every year from October through December for the purposes of conducting maintenance and repairs. This section of the canal is part of a man-made water conveyance system and is not subject to Section 1600 of the Fish and Game Code.

Response to comment 2e: This clarification is reflected in the attached Errata.

Errata Sheet:

An Errata to the Initial Study/MND for the Project has been prepared (Attachment C). This Errata sets forth the changes within the IS/MND document in answer to EID's concerns.

Action taken by the Board to certify the Project IS/MND includes the changes set forth in the Errata to the IS/MND. These changes are minor in nature and provide further clarification within the background section of the IS/MND. No changes to the Project description are necessary. Additionally, no additional impacts will occur as a result of these changes; therefore, no changes to the mitigation measures are necessary.

Transportation will take the following actions following Board approval:

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

Contact

Bard R. Lower, Transportation Division Director
Community Development Agency

Concurrences
County Counsel