



Legislation Text

File #: 15-0611, **Version:** 1

Community Development Agency, Transportation Division, recommending the Board consider the following pertaining to the Bassi Road at Granite Creek - Bridge Replacement (25C0071) Project, CIP No. 77128:

- 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: Federal Highway Administration Local Assistance Highway Bridge Program, authorized under the 100 percent Funded Program. (Federal Funds)

DEPARTMENT RECOMMENDATION

Community Development Agency, Transportation Division (Transportation), recommends the Board adopt the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Mitigated Negative Declaration (MND) and approve the Bassi Road at Granite Creek - Bridge Replacement (25C0071) Project (Project) as described in the CEQA MND.

The recommended Board actions are based on the following findings:

- A) The 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.

DISCUSSION / BACKGROUND

Transportation is proposing to replace the existing single lane, 66 year old bridge structure to improve roadway safety and comply with American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials guidelines and El Dorado County standards. The Project is 100 percent funded under the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) Highway Bridge Program (HBP).

The Project is located on Bassi Road approximately 0.16 mile west of Lotus Road in the community of Lotus, unincorporated El Dorado County. The Bassi Road Bridge spans Granite Creek. The Project occurs on the Coloma United States Geological Survey topographic quad (Lot 4 Section 18, T11N, R10E).

The purpose of the Project is to replace the Bassi Road Bridge over Granite Creek with a functional bridge that meets current design standards. The Project is needed since the existing bridge, built in 1949, is structurally deficient. It has a sufficiency rating of 32.2 and has exhibited evidence of scour degradation at the piers and abutments within recent years. Since Bassi Road is a primary access for the Lotus community, it is very important that the bridge remain in service.

The County 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 structural deficiency of the bridge. County staff presented both options and the recommendation for replacement at a public community meeting held on August 1, 2012 at the Gold Trail Grange Hall in Coloma.

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 California Department of Transportation (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 52-foot-long, 15-foot-wide, one-lane reinforced concrete slab bridge with a new concrete bridge that meets current design standards. The proposed bridge would have a longer span that is approximately 96-feet long and 28-feet wide providing two traffic lanes and 3-foot shoulders on each side. The proposed bridge would be located just upstream of the existing bridge.

Construction of the proposed bridge and falsework may require diversion and/or dewatering of Granite Creek. The existing bridge would be removed after the completion of the proposed bridge. Demolition of the existing bridge would be in accordance with the Caltrans Standard Specifications, modified to meet environmental permit requirements. All concrete and debris resulting from the bridge demolition would be removed from the Project site and disposed of by the contractor at an approved site.

Rock slope protection would be used to stabilize the creek banks and protect the bridge abutments from scour. The rock slope protection would extend from the bed of the creek, below the ordinary high water mark, to the top of the bank above the ordinary high water mark.

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 Division offices at 2850 Fairlane Court, Placerville.

Construction: The Project is anticipated to be constructed within a single construction season in the spring and fall of 2017. With the exception of occasional short-term closures, the existing bridge would remain open during construction. During closures, one-way reversing traffic would be controlled by flaggers. Access for emergency vehicles through the Project area would be maintained at all times.

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 Mitigated Negative Declaration 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 sent to those

directly affected in the Project area and to relevant agencies. The public review period began on October 8, 2014 and ended on November 7, 2014.

Public Comments: Standard comment letters were received from local, state, and federal resource agencies. These comments primarily focused on concerns with potential biological and water quality impacts. As noted in each response, all potential impacts are addressed and mitigated to a level of less than significant.

Several comment letters were received from the local community with questions regarding a variety of concerns, including traffic speeds, road closures, aesthetics, cultural impacts, tree removal, and noise. Several of the questions shared by multiple individuals are provided with the following responses:

1) Concerns about the effects of traffic and safety on Bassi Road during summer construction during peak recreation and fire season.

Response to Comment: The County intends to keep Bassi Road open to traffic during construction of the new bridge. There will be short periods when construction requires the road to be limited to one-way reversing traffic that is controlled by flaggers. These periods will be infrequent and intermittent in order to construct portions of the new improvements. Furthermore, emergency vehicle access along Bassi Road will be maintained at all times throughout the construction phase.

2) Concerns that widening and straightening the road actually makes the road less safe, especially for pedestrians, because speeds will increase. Many locals consider the existing bridge to act as a traffic calming device, thereby limiting speeds on that segment of Bassi Road.

Response to Comment: The proposed bridge replacement will meet standards for roadway design in rural areas. This includes widened lanes, shoulders, approach railing and proper striping, all of which is currently deficient. The County has considered the concerns of traffic calming at this location and is proposing 11-foot lanes (as opposed to the standard width of 12 feet), as well as a 25 mph design speed for roadway geometrics.

3) Concerns about the number of trees proposed for removal in order to construct the project and whether these are the “minimum necessary” impacts.

Response to Comment: The County will prepare an oak mitigation plan in coordination with the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) in order to mitigate the loss of oak trees. The County will avoid and minimize potential disturbance of live oak woodland and white alder riparian forest communities by trimming vegetation rather than removing entire trees to the extent possible. The project design currently incorporated all means to limit tree removal while remaining within the necessary safety standards. Many trees were spared by reducing the proposed shoulder widths from the maximum standard of 8 feet to 3 feet. Additionally, implementation of the Streambed Alteration Agreement from CDFW would require compensation for the loss of riparian trees, which would include planting at a minimum ratio of 2:1.

Complete responses to each of these comments can be found in Appendix C of the IS-MND (Attachment B). No additional impacts were identified that were not discussed in the IS-MND and no additional mitigation measures were required.

Standard comment letters were received from local, state, and federal resource agencies.

ALTERNATIVES

Transportation completed a feasibility study for Caltrans and FHWA approval that contemplated the most efficient solutions to either replace or rehabilitate the existing substandard Bassi Road Bridge. The current design for replacement was approved under the Highway Bridge Program. No other alternatives are recommended for approval.

OTHER DEPARTMENT / AGENCY INVOLVEMENT

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

- A) U.S. Army Corps of Engineers - Section 404 Clean Water Act Nationwide Permit
- B) Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board - Section 401 Water Quality Certification
- C) California Department of Fish and Wildlife - Streambed Alteration Agreement
- D) El Dorado County Air Quality Management District - Fugitive Dust Plan Approval

County Counsel has reviewed and approved the MND.

CAO RECOMMENDATION

CAO recommending the Board move staff's recommendations as this is an approved CIP project and the requested actions are consistent with standard practices.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

This Project is included in the Adopted 2014 Capital Improvement Program and is funded through the FHWA Local Assistance HBP, authorized under the 100 percent Funded Program. There is no financial impact to the County as a result of this project.

CLERK OF THE BOARD FOLLOW UP ACTIONS

N/A

TRANSPORTATION FOLLOW UP ACTIONS

Transportation Division Staff will:

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

STRATEGIC PLAN COMPONENT

Public Infrastructure

CONTACT

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