



## Legislation Text

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**File #:** 17-0725, **Version:** 1

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Community Development Services, Department of Transportation, recommending the Board take the following actions related to the Mosquito Road Bridge at South Fork American River Project, Capital Improvement Program Project 77126:

- 1) Certify the Final Environmental Impact Report pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act, consisting of the Draft Environmental Impact Report dated October 2016 and the Final Environmental Impact Report dated June 2017;
- 2) Adopt the Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Plan;
- 3) Adopt the Findings of Fact;
- 4) Approve the Project as described in the Final Environmental Impact Report; and
- 5) Authorize Department of Transportation staff to proceed with filing the Notice of Determination, final design, rights-of-way acquisition, permitting, and other activities for Project construction. (Est. Time: 1 Hr.)

**FUNDING:** Highway Bridge Program Funds. (100% - Federal)

### **DEPARTMENT RECOMMENDATION**

Community Development Services (CDS), Department of Transportation (Transportation), recommending the Board take the following actions related to the Mosquito Road Bridge at South Fork American River Project (Project), Capital Improvement Program (CIP) Project 77126:

- 1) Certify the Final Environmental Impact Report (Final EIR), pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), consisting of the Draft Environmental Impact Report (Draft EIR) dated October 2016 and the Final EIR dated June 2017;
- 2) Adopt the Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Plan (MMRP);
- 3) Adopt the Findings of Fact;
- 4) Approve the Project as described in the FEIR; and
- 5) Authorize Transportation staff to proceed with filing of the Notice of Determination, final design, rights-of-way acquisition, permitting, and other activities for Project construction.

The recommended Board actions are based on the attached CEQA Findings of Fact (Attachment G) and findings by Transportation, acting on behalf of the County as the CEQA lead agency for this Project, including the following:

- 1) The Final EIR, which incorporates the 2016 Draft EIR, was prepared pursuant to Public Resources Code § 21000 et seq., and CEQA Guidelines.
- 2) There is substantial evidence that the Project, as mitigated through mitigation measures identified in the Final EIR and the MMRP, will not have a significant effect on the environment.
- 3) The Final EIR reflects the lead agency's independent judgment and analysis.
- 4) The Project is consistent with the El Dorado County General Plan and County CIP.
- 5) The Final EIR and Draft EIR are on file with the Clerk of the Board and are also available at the CDS Transportation office located at 2850 Fairlane Court, Placerville, California, and on the Transportation website, <https://www.edcgov.us/government/dot/pages/CEQA.aspx>.

### **DISCUSSION / BACKGROUND**

Transportation received federal funds from the Federal Highway Association Highway Bridge Program (HBP) to replace the existing Mosquito Road Bridge (Bridge) located in a steep canyon of the South Fork of the American River, six miles north of U.S. Highway 50, and 2.3 miles south of the communities of Mosquito and Swansboro. The purpose of the Project is to replace the existing Bridge with a functional bridge that meets current design and safety standards. California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) and the HBP have rated the Bridge structurally deficient and functionally obsolete with a sufficiency rating of 12.5 out of a possible 100. Roadway approaches to the Bridge are also substandard due to a narrow, steep roadway, with five tight hairpin turns. Due to the approach conditions and the narrow width of the Bridge, emergency and larger commercial vehicles and trucks are unable to cross the Bridge.

As presented to the Board and public on April 28, 2015 (Item 45), and the Public Scoping Meeting on July 15, 2015, Transportation narrowed the alternatives down to three: Lower, Mid, and Upper. The Board agreed with the concept that the Upper Level Alternative would best meet the goals and objectives of the Project, not only because it would be the alternative with the least environmental impacts, but it would also eliminate the switchbacks on both sides of the Bridge. This Alternative is also overwhelmingly supported by the residents of the Mosquito/Swansboro community, especially given the safety issues of the existing Bridge location that were put to test during the King Fire in 2014. As such, the Upper Level Alternative was studied and determined in the EIR to be the preferred alternative.

The proposed Project would raise the Bridge profile to approximately 400 feet over the river, on the most direct alignment across the river. The new main bridge over the South Fork American River would be a multi-span, likely cast-in-place prestressed concrete box-girder, concrete arch, or network - arch-type bridge with a maximum span of approximately 650 feet. Depending on the final engineered profile, a minor bridge may be constructed over a small ravine leading to the main bridge over the river. This minor bridge would be approximately 120 feet long and would likely be a single-span, cast-in-place prestressed concrete box-girder, or precast I-girder-type bridge. A large arch culvert with concrete headwalls may be constructed instead of the minor bridge. The clear-span design of either the minor bridge or the large arch culvert would be above the ordinary high-water mark of the small ravine.

At the time the Draft EIR was written and distributed to the public, the outcome of the existing Bridge was undetermined as the existing Bridge was not a part of the Project and, due to the HBP funding, could not be maintained by Transportation after Project completion. Section 2.4.3.5 of the Draft EIR states that “unless future outside funding is obtained to keep and maintain the existing Bridge as a pedestrian facility, the existing Bridge would likely be removed at some point after traffic is shifted onto the new bridge.” As discussed in Master Response 1 in Chapter 2 of this Final EIR, subsequent to the release of the Draft EIR for public comment and independent of the proposed Project, Transportation researched feasible options available for retaining the existing Bridge after the proposed new bridge is completed. At the Board meeting on February 14, 2017 (Item 23), following the presentation and after hearing from the public, the Board voted unanimously to direct Transportation staff to retain and maintain the existing Bridge for pedestrian and bicycle use. The future use of the existing Bridge is not part of the Project addressed in the EIR and no changes to the Draft EIR are included in this Errata Chapter to address the future use of the Bridge.

Changes and Errata to the Draft EIR are provided in Chapters 3 and 4 of the Final EIR. Since preparation of the Draft EIR, the Project design was updated slightly to take into consideration the

latest engineering and construction concepts. This resulted in small changes in the Project boundary and footprint, and a minor change in the locations of certain impacts. Based on the review of the analysis described in the Draft EIR, summarized in Chapter 3, it was determined that no new significant impacts would occur nor would there be a substantial increase in the severity of impacts that cannot be mitigated to less-than-significant levels by implementation of the mitigation measures already included in the EIR. Therefore, no changes to the analysis or conclusions in the Draft EIR are necessary. Changes to the Draft EIR as a result of the Project footprint change are included in the Final EIR, Chapter 3.

The Final EIR, which incorporates the attached Draft EIR, includes updated and additional analysis to provide complete and comprehensive documentation of the Project's environmental impacts and other information required for CEQA compliance. Board certification of the Final EIR will allow Transportation to move forward with Project delivery and construction of the Project.

Public Involvement: A Notice of Preparation requesting comments on the scope of the EIR was filed with the State Clearinghouse and circulated to agencies and the public from June 26 to July 26, 2015. A Public Scoping Meeting was held on July 15, 2015, at the Mosquito Fire Protection District, Station 75. Scoping comments received were considered during preparation of and are included with the Draft EIR.

The Draft EIR was circulated for public and agency review and comment for a forty-five day period (CEQA requires a minimum review period of forty-five days). This review period began on October 17 and ran through December 1, 2016. The Draft EIR document was circulated to state agencies through the State Clearinghouse. Notices of Availability were mailed to over 1,000 area residents and to other governmental agencies. The Notice of Availability ran in the Mountain Democrat on October 17, 2016. The Draft EIR was available for review at Transportation's Placerville Office and on Transportation's website.

A total of 313 comment letters, including electronic mail messages and State Clearinghouse transmittal letters, were received during the Draft EIR circulation period. Eight letters arrived past the comment deadline, which are attached to the Final EIR. Some of the agency comments were standard pursuant to the results of state and federal resource agency requirements, and others, while expressing support for the Project, cited concerns that have been addressed in the Final EIR.

Of the over 300 individual letters received, most of the comments raised similar issues about the Project and its alleged impact to recreational uses of the undeveloped area near the existing Bridge. The County prepared master responses to address the most frequently raised issues, which included public concerns regarding Bridge removal, impacts of Bridge demolition, river access for recreational purposes, and the historic value of the existing Bridge. While recreational uses of the undeveloped area surrounding the existing Bridge are not part of this public safety project or an impact to the environment covered by CEQA, the Board's independent decisions address almost all of the concerns expressed in the comment letters. Specifically, the Board decided at its meeting on February 14, 2017 (Item 23), to maintain the existing Bridge for pedestrian and bicycle use under Parks and Recreation, and subsequently agreed to allow vehicle access on one side of the river from dawn to dusk, and to help facilitate limited informal parking near the existing Bridge.

A brief overview of all comments received on the Draft EIR is included in Chapter 2 of the Final EIR. The County's responses to the individual comments/issues contained within each comment letter are

also provided in this Chapter, as well as copies of the comment letters as submitted (Attachment B).

### **ALTERNATIVES**

- 1) The Board could choose to not certify the Final EIR. Transportation would make changes as directed by the Board and return for Board certification at a later date. This would delay delivery of the Project.
- 2) The Board could cancel the Project. Potentially, HBP funding already expended would have to be paid back by the County.

### **OTHER DEPARTMENT / AGENCY INVOLVEMENT**

County Counsel has reviewed and approved the Draft EIR, Final EIR, Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Plan, and Findings of Fact.

### **CAO RECOMMENDATION**

It is recommended that the Board approve this item.

### **FINANCIAL IMPACT**

There is currently no change to Net County Cost associated with this item. Funding for the Project is included in Transportation's 2017 CIP, which was approved by the Board on June 27, 2017 (Item 25). There is a potential for additional mitigation costs associated with live oak woodlands that may be beyond the HBP grant reimbursement. These mitigation costs will be better known in the next phase of Project development through right of way, permitting, and final design phases. The HBP grant reimbursement constraints will likely arise if mitigation banks cannot be located for the Project, and replanting is required with a seven-year monitoring period. Since the Project's EIR includes a mitigation measure with replanting success criteria of three years with an 80% survival rate and a 2:1 replanting ratio, it is unlikely replanting would be needed in years four through seven to meet an appropriate reestablishment level. As a result, the additional mitigation costs may amount to approximately \$40,000 of monitoring for four years at one day per week, and approximately \$20,000 of replanting in the event that the successful establishment cannot be met to appropriate levels. Alternatively, if a mitigation bank can be located, these additional costs may be zero and entirely grant funded.

### **TRANSPORTATION FOLLOW UP ACTIONS**

Transportation will file a Notice of Determination with the County Recorder/Clerk's office.

### **CLERK OF THE BOARD FOLLOW UP ACTIONS**

N/A

### **STRATEGIC PLAN COMPONENT**

Infrastructure

### **CONTACT**

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