



Legislation Text

File #: 22-0243, Version: 1

Department of Transportation recommending the Board take the following actions related to the Mount Murphy Road at South Fork American River - Bridge Replacement Project, Capital Improvement Program project number 77129/36105029:

- 1) Certify the Final Environmental Impact Report pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act, consisting of the Draft Environmental Impact Report dated January 2022 and the Final Environmental Impact Report dated May 2022;
- 2) Adopt the Findings of Fact and Statement of Overriding Considerations that includes the Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Plan;
- 3) Approve the Project as described in the Final Environmental Impact Report; and
- 4) 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.

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

DISCUSSION / BACKGROUND

The Department of Transportation (Transportation) received federal funds from the Federal Highway Association Highway Bridge Program (HBP) to replace the existing Mount Murphy Road at South Fork American River Bridge (Project) located in Coloma. The existing bridge is located approximately 250 feet north of the intersection of State Route 49 (SR 49) and Mt. Murphy Road. The existing bridge carries Mount Murphy Road over the South Fork American River (SFAR) and connects Coloma/ SR 49 with Marshall Road approximately 3 air miles north of the Project site. The purpose of the Project is to replace a fracture critical bridge to improve safety and movement for vehicles, pedestrians, and bicyclists across the SFAR in the town of Coloma. The primary Project objectives include:

- Correct Structural and Functional Deficiencies
- Direct Access Across the SFAR in Coloma
- Correct Operational Deficiencies and Improve Safety for Vehicles, Bicycles, and Pedestrians

The Project would construct a post-tensioned cast-in-place concrete box girder bridge built in two stages. The proposed new bridge and lane configuration will provide two 11-foot lanes, two 2-foot shoulders, an 8-foot sidewalk, and Type 85 barriers. The proposed sidewalk would be on the upstream side of the bridge and tie into Mount Murphy Road on either side of the new bridge.

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

- 1) The Final Environmental Impact Report (EIR), which incorporates the 2022 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 Capital Improvement Program (CIP).
- 5) The Final EIR and Draft EIR are on file with the Clerk of the Board and are also available at the Transportation office located at 2850 Fairlane Court, Placerville, California, and on the Transportation website, <https://www.edcgov.us/government/dot/pages/CEQA.aspx>.

As presented to the Board and public on February 4, 2014, Legistar 13-0217, Item 24, and the Public Scoping Meeting on January 28, 2015, Transportation narrowed the alternatives down to three: Corridor 1, Existing Alignment; Corridor 2, Immediately downstream of existing alignment; or Corridor 3, Downstream of North Beach. The Board agreed with the concept that Corridor 1, Existing Alignment, would best meet the goals and objectives of the Project.

The proposed Project reflects the culmination of extensive study and coordination in an effort to minimize impacts on neighboring resources and appreciate the history of the area. As a result, the proposed bridge consists of approximately 445 feet and is composed of two spans of approximately 130 feet and one main span of approximately 185 feet. The new bridge would be built on alignment to avoid impacts to neighboring resources with the widening of the bridge (as required to meet design standards and use) that would occur downstream. The new bridge is also anticipated to include many aesthetic elements reminiscent of the earlier bridge crossings, including timber texturing along the sidewalk and cable-stay systems or portals at each pier. In an effort to minimize public impacts, construction of the new bridge would occur in two stages to allow traffic to maintain on the bridge alignment during construction. The proposed Project is also being coordinated to accommodate the State Park's Interpretive Program and is estimated to include pedestrian features and a vista point along the upstream side of the bridge.

Changes and Errata to the Draft EIR are provided in Chapter 3 of the Final EIR. Based on the review of the analysis for Vehicle Miles Traveled in the "Environmental Setting" (Section 3.17.1.2, of the Transportation Section 3.17) described in the Draft EIR, summarized in Chapter 3, it was determined that replacement of an existing bridge facility to current safety and design standards would not increase vehicle capacity. Therefore, no changes to the analysis or conclusions in the Draft EIR are necessary.

The Final EIR, which incorporates the attached Draft EIR, includes project clarifications and comment responses 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 January 21 to February 20, 2015. A Public Scoping Meeting was held on January 28, 2015, at the Gold Trail Grange Hall in Coloma, CA. Scoping comments received were considered during the 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 January 10 and ran through February 25, 2020. The Draft EIR document was circulated to state agencies through the State Clearinghouse. Notices of Availability were mailed to over 500 area residents and other governmental agencies. The Notice of Availability ran in the Mountain Democrat on January

10, 2022. The Draft EIR was available for review at the Placerville Library at 345 Fair Lane and on Transportation's website.

Eighteen comment letters, including electronic mail messages and State Clearinghouse transmittal letters, were received during the Draft EIR circulation period. 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 18 individual letters received, most of the comments raised similar issues about the Project and its impacts from neighboring activities, road improvements, and bridge design features. The County prepared master responses to address the most frequently raised issues regarding the existing conditions of the adjacent roadways to the Mount Murphy bridge and the requests to improve these roadways; the impacts to and associated with neighboring activities (i.e. Coloma Resort, Grange Hall, etc.) located northeast and adjacent to the bridge; and, recommendations for changes to the bridge design features and pedestrian sidewalk located on the 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, and copies of the comment letters as submitted (Attachment B).

ALTERNATIVES

- 1) The Board could choose not to 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.

PRIOR BOARD ACTION

See Discussion / Background section.

OTHER DEPARTMENT / AGENCY INVOLVEMENT

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

CAO RECOMMENDATION / COMMENTS

Approve as recommended.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

There is currently no change to net County costs associated with this item. Funding for the Project is included in Transportation's 2021 CIP, which was approved by the Board on June 28, 2021, Legistar 21-0624, Item 54.

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

Rafael Martinez, Director
Department of Transportation