

Chapter 1 Introduction

This final joint environmental document for the Tower Bridge Pedestrian/Bicycle Improvements Project has been issued by the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) and the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) in accordance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines (14 California Code of Regulations, Section 14000 et seq.), and the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) regulations (23 Code of Federal Regulations Part 771). Caltrans is the CEQA lead agency for this project, and the FHWA is the NEPA lead agency.

Section 15132 of the CEQA Guidelines requires that a final environmental impact report (EIR) include the following:

- draft EIR or revision to the draft EIR;
- comments and recommendations received on the draft EIR, either verbatim or in summary;
- a list of persons, organizations, and public agencies commenting on the draft EIR;
- the responses of the lead agency to significant environmental concerns raised in the review and consultation process; and
- any other information added by the lead agency.

Similarly, Section 771.119 (g) of the U.S. Department of Transportation NEPA regulations states:

If no significant impacts are identified, the applicant shall furnish the administration a copy of the revised environmental assessment (EA), as appropriate;...copies of any comments received and responses thereto; and recommend a finding of no significant impact.

This document contains the Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) for this project.

1.1 ORGANIZATION OF THE REPORT

This joint document comprises the following chapters:

- **Chapter 1** describes the purpose of the report, outlines the organization of the report, and summarizes the selected project description. This chapter also includes information on the public review process, document format, and EIR certification and project approval process.

- **Chapter 2** contains information on the public review process, concerns that relate to the design of the project, and an updated project description. The project design was refined based on comments received during the public review and as a result of the consultation process with the Office of Historic Preservation (OHP), the Federal Advisory Council on Historic Preservation (ACHP), and other resource agencies. Chapter 2 also summarizes the status of the permits and consultations required to construct the proposed project.
- **Chapter 3** contains the comments and responses to comments received primarily during the 45-day public review period from June 18, 2004, to August 9, 2004. The lead agencies have reviewed each comment and prepared a response to each comment related to the adequacy of the draft joint document. CEQA requires that the lead agency respond to all significant environmental issues raised in comments, and that the lead agency's response reflect the level of detail appropriate to the comment (State CEQA Guidelines Section 15088).
- **Chapter 4** contains references cited in this document.
- **Chapter 5** contains a list of preparers.
- **Appendix A** contains a signed copy of the Final Section 4(f) Evaluation.
- **Appendix B** contains a signed copy of the Memorandum of Agreement among the FHWA, the ACHP, Caltrans, and the cities of Sacramento and West Sacramento.
- **Appendix C** contains copies of agency letters from the National Marine Fisheries Service, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and the U.S. Coast Guard. The National Marine Fisheries Service has concurred with the determination that the project is not likely to adversely affect the Sacramento River winter-run Chinook salmon, Central Valley spring-run Chinook salmon, Central Valley steelhead, nor is it anticipated that the proposed project will adversely modify designated critical habitat for Sacramento River winter-run Chinook salmon. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service concurs with the determination that the proposed project will not adversely affect federally-listed species. The U.S. Coast Guard has determined that the project will not appreciably change the appearance of the bridge or the existing vertical or horizontal navigational clearances.
- **Appendix D** contains a copy of the distribution list for this document.

1.2 SELECTED PROJECT ALTERNATIVE

The draft joint environmental document (EA/Draft EIR dated June 2004) identified widening the sidewalk to 10 feet as the proposed project (NEPA proposed action). The draft joint environmental document also discussed several alternatives that were considered and withdrawn, including the No Build Alternative.

As a result of the public review and agency consultation process, the proposed project has been modified as summarized below; a detailed description of the updated project design is provided in Chapter 2. The EA/Draft EIR (June 2004) referred to the proposed project as “Proposed Project—No Gap”. A design variation, referred to in the EA/Draft EIR as “Design Variation No. 1—1-foot Gap”, included a 1-foot gap between the existing structure and the new sidewalks on the approach spans. Design Variation No. 1 has been withdrawn from further consideration. The modifications to the basic features of the proposed project are highlighted as follows:

- The typical sidewalk width on the outboard side of the pylons and walls at the western and eastern approach spans has been reduced from 10 feet (3 meters) to 8 feet (2.44 meters).
- The shape of the sidewalk as it transitions around the pylons at the approach spans has been revised from a curved design to a straight line/angular transition, more in keeping with the Moderne-style of the bridge.
- There will be no new light posts on the approach spans.
- There will be no lights on the outside (i.e., river side) of the new railing posts, however, the new railing on the approach spans will include downward lighting on the sidewalk side that would not detract from the outline of the trusses and towers created by the existing lighting. No discussion of lighting on the approach spans was included in the draft environmental document.
- The existing concrete sidewalk on the lift span will be replaced with a sidewalk constructed of fiber reinforced polymer (FRP) composite material, if feasible; aluminum was the originally proposed material and will be used if FRP composite material is not feasible. The FRP composite material will be treated with a skid-resistant resin surface (similar to a concrete surface). This surface would provide traction for pedestrians and bicyclists, and blend the sidewalk with the concrete deck in the adjacent spans.
- The mounting brackets for the existing spotlights that illuminate the towers will be adjusted to maintain the relationship of existing light patterns and shadow effects.
- As a result of continuing navigational discussions with the United States Coast Guard, new channel delineation lights for navigational purposes will be added at the outermost portions of the bridge.
- To comply with Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) requirements, provisions are proposed to barrier off areas of protruding elements of bridge truss members.
- All new elements or disturbed existing steel elements will be painted using the existing color scheme. Any new color scheme will require approval by the District Principal Architectural Historian.

The proposed project has been modified from that described in the draft environmental document for the following reasons:

- The purpose of the project is to improve pedestrian and bicycle access along the Capitol Mall corridor where it crosses the Sacramento River. Substantial new development is planned along both waterfronts in a manner that encourages non-motorized travel to enhance the economic and social context of the area. The proposed sidewalk widening on the Tower Bridge is the only feasible opportunity in this corridor to substantially improve conditions for all non-motorized users.
- Although the proposed project will result in an adverse effect to some of the character-defining features of the bridge, the purpose of and need for the project cannot be met by other alternatives. The proposed project incorporates all feasible measures identified to avoid and minimize harm.
- Provisions to minimize and mitigate the adverse effects to the significant characteristics of the Tower Bridge are contained in the Memorandum of Agreement (Appendix B) and may not have specifically been identified in the draft environmental document.

The draft environmental document concluded the following:

- Implementation of the proposed project would result in physical alterations to Tower Bridge considered significant and unavoidable under CEQA.
- There are no alternatives to the project that would achieve the project purpose and need with fewer impacts to cultural resources.
- Cumulative impacts to cultural resources are considered significant and unavoidable under CEQA.
- There are no prudent or feasible alternatives to the proposed project.

The changes to the proposed project do not alter the environmental analysis contained in the draft environmental document.

1.3 PUBLIC REVIEW PROCESS

The EA/Draft EIR for the project was approved for circulation on June 17, 2004. A Notice of Availability of the document for review and the time and location of the public workshop was printed in two newspapers (*The Sacramento Bee* and the *West Sacramento Press*) on June 30 and July 1, 2004. A public workshop was held on July 20, 2004 in the City of West Sacramento.

A copy of the EA/Draft EIR as well as the Notice of Availability with public workshop information was sent to over 95 individuals. In addition, a copy of the EA/Draft EIR on

CD-ROM (CD) was mailed to an additional 42 individuals. A copy of the Notice of Availability of the EA/Draft EIR and public workshop notification was mailed to an additional 171 individuals, groups, and agencies. Copies of the draft joint document were made available for review at the following locations:

- California Department of Transportation office, 2389 Gateway Oaks, Sacramento
- City of Sacramento Department of Transportation office, 927 10th Street, Sacramento
- City of West Sacramento Department of Community Development, 1110 West Capitol Avenue, West Sacramento
- Sacramento Public Library, 828 I Street, Sacramento
- West Sacramento Branch Library, 1212 Merkley Avenue, West Sacramento

A copy of the distribution list for the EA/Draft EIR was included as Appendix D to the EA/Draft EIR. A copy of the distribution list for the Final EIR is included as Appendix D to this document.

The public comment period for the draft environmental document was from June 18, 2004 to August 9, 2004. During this period, a public workshop was held in the City of West Sacramento to inform the public about the project and to provide an opportunity for the public to ask questions and make comments regarding the proposed project. Staff from Caltrans, the City of Sacramento, and the City of West Sacramento as well as staff from the engineering consultant and environmental consultant were present at the public workshop and were available to discuss the project and answer questions from the public.

Approximately 30 citizens attended the public workshop. Exhibits were displayed at several stations providing information on the various aspects of the proposed project such as: project purpose and need, project schedule, project overview and design, some alternatives previously considered, cultural resources mitigation measures, general avoidance mitigation measures, environmental process schedule, and construction schedule. Stations were also set up where the public could submit written comments regarding the proposed project. In addition, staff was present to record comments from the public.

In addition to this public meeting sponsored by Caltrans, the City of Sacramento Design Review and Preservation Board (DRPB) held a public hearing on August 4, 2004 to review and provide comments on the environmental document. Comments received from the Sacramento City DRPB are included in the comments and responses section of this document.

Chapter 3 contains comment letters and written responses to comments on the EA/Draft EIR. CEQA and NEPA require that this document respond to only those comments that are specific to the environmental issues associated with the project. However, every attempt

has been made to respond to comments that address the project in general, in an effort to provide the most complete information possible.

1.4 DOCUMENT FORMAT

As prescribed by CEQA Guidelines Section 15088, the lead agency, which in this case is Caltrans, is required to evaluate comments on environmental issues received from persons who have reviewed the EA/Draft EIR, and to prepare written responses to each significant environmental comment. This document, together with the EA/Draft EIR, constitutes the Final EIR for this project. The EA/Draft EIR is hereby incorporated by this reference, in accordance with CEQA Guidelines Section 15150. Pursuant to the requirements of CEQA, Caltrans must certify the Final EIR as complete and adequate prior to final approval of the project.

This Final EIR contains individual responses to each comment received during the public review period. Responses to comments received during the public workshop are also included in this document. The Final EIR also contains a summary of all changes, corrections, and additions made to the EA/EIR text between the draft and final stages. Deletions are shown in strikethrough, and additions are indicated by double underline. The summary, or errata, is an important reference tool used to identify specific text modifications.

1.5 EIR CERTIFICATION PROCESS AND PROJECT APPROVAL

In accordance with the CEQA requirements and the procedures of Caltrans, Caltrans must certify the EIR as complete and adequate prior to taking action on the project. After the EIR is certified, the FHWA can approve a FONSI. After the EIR is certified and the FONSI is signed, project approval will be considered to advance the project to the design phase of project development.