

Summary

The Cities of Sacramento and West Sacramento (Cities) are proposing to widen the sidewalks on Tower Bridge to accommodate increased pedestrian and bicycle use. The California Department of Transportation (Caltrans), as the owner-operator of the bridge, is the state lead agency under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). Because the Tower Bridge Pedestrian/Bicycle Improvements Project (project) is receiving Federal funding, the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) is the Federal lead agency under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). Caltrans is working with the Cities, FHWA, and the Sacramento Area Council of Governments (SACOG) in the design and environmental review of the project.

Tower Bridge (Bridge No. 22-0021) is a Streamlined Moderne-style lift bridge that consists of a steel-through truss with a vertical lift span, and steel plate girder approach spans. The bridge has a concrete deck and is supported on reinforced concrete piers and abutments. The bridge's eight spans total 224.8 meters (m) (738 feet [ft]) in length, 15.8 m (52 ft) in roadway width, and 21.0 m (69 ft) in overall width; and carry four traffic lanes between steel channel railings and two 1.2-m (4-ft) sidewalks cantilevered outside the trusses. The bridge provides vehicular bicycle and pedestrian access between the Cities of Sacramento and West Sacramento. The bridge crosses the Sacramento River with no skew. Tower Bridge was listed in the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) on June 24, 1982.

The proposed project would make changes to the bridge to increase pedestrian and bicycle capacity and connectivity between the Sacramento and West Sacramento riverfronts and the activities occurring in both locations.

The need for this project is summarized in these pedestrian and bicycle issues: access, capacity, and system linkage.

The existing sidewalks were not designed for mixed pedestrian and bicycle use. As currently configured, the sidewalks and their railings meet Caltrans design standards for pedestrian use only, and bicyclists use the roadway deck. Bicyclists who choose to use the sidewalks must dismount and walk when they encounter a pedestrian.

In 1994, both the City of Sacramento and the City of West Sacramento adopted their own individual Riverfront Master Plans. The goal of the West Sacramento Riverfront Master Plan (Sasaki Associates 1994) is to “[p]rovide pedestrian and bicycle linkages...between the riverfront area and adjacent areas, including West Sacramento and downtown Sacramento,” adding that “the presence of pedestrians is essential to animating the riverfront area; their needs should be given extremely high priority.”

Approximately 10 years later, the Cities decided to create one Master Plan document that comprehensively addresses both sides of the river. A single plan was produced, which sets forth a strong vision for the riverfront. The Master Plan, which was approved in concept by both Cities in 2004, proposes a “River Loop” to connect the riverfronts for pedestrian and bicycle travel. This Master Plan proposes a widening of Tower Bridge to accommodate sidewalks of

appropriate widths. A goal of the Sacramento Riverfront Master Plan (WRT, Solomon, et al. 2003) is to “[p]rovide for a balance of alternative modes of circulation to and within the riverfront, including West Sacramento and downtown Sacramento, emphasizing non-automobile circulation.”

At the beginning of the design process, Caltrans established a multidisciplinary project development team (PDT) with representatives from FHWA, Caltrans, the Cities, SACOG, the engineering firm designing the project, and the environmental consultant team. The PDT evaluated the ability of the following alternatives to meet the project purpose and need:

- Alternative 1: Sidewalk Widening – Proposed Project
- Alternative 2: No Project
- Alternative 3: Improve Pedestrian/Bicycle Crossing on Nearby Structure
- Alternative 4: Provide Traffic Control during Events – Use Police Officer
- Alternative 5: Provide Traffic Control during Events – Use Signal Equipment
- Alternative 6/7: Reduce to One Vehicular Lane Each Direction
- Alternative 8: Reduce to One Lane Each Direction; Introduce Reversible Lane down Center
- Alternative 9: Reduce Lane Widths and Stripe Bike Lanes on the Pavement
- Alternative 10: Separate Bicycle and Pedestrian Traffic–Bikes Use One Sidewalk and Pedestrians Use the Other
- Alternative 11: Enhance Shuttle Service between Sacramento and West Sacramento
- Alternative 12: Enhance Water Taxi Service Between Sacramento and West Sacramento
- Alternative 13: New Pedestrian Bridge over Sacramento River

The only alternative that the PDT determined meets the project purpose and need is Alternative 1: Sidewalk Widening – Proposed Project.

The “No Build” Alternative would not construct any of the improvements included in the project.

Summary Description of Proposed Project

One build alternative with one design variation is described in detail below. The build alternative would widen the existing narrow pedestrian walkway on each side of the bridge from the current 0.9- to 1.2-m (3- to 4-ft) width to a useable width of 3 m (10 ft). This would improve pedestrian and bicycle access and capacity, and the width meets Caltrans standards for shared pedestrian and bicycle space.

In summary, the build alternative includes a minimum 3-m- (10-ft-) wide (useable width) sidewalk and the following features:

1. *Replace* the existing sidewalk on the lift span with a wider sidewalk constructed of aluminum.
2. *Preserve* the existing sidewalk on the fixed truss spans from the pylons to the lift span and *widen* it from its existing *outboard* edge with a new concrete sidewalk.
3. *Preserve* the sidewalk on the approach spans from the pylons to the riverbanks and widen it from the existing location with a new concrete sidewalk.
4. *Reuse* the existing steel railing and *relocate* it to the outside of the new sidewalk, and attach cables with cable guides. The railing would be placed on top of a new 150-millimeter (-mm) (6-inch) concrete curb at the outside of the new sidewalk.
5. *Preserve* the existing barriers in place and widen the sidewalks to the outside, placing new steel railings at the outside edge of each sidewalk. *Preserve* the existing concrete barrier walls and construct a new sidewalk on the outside of the walls.
6. *Preserve, repair, and relocate* the existing historic Streamlined Moderne-style lighting fixtures. The existing light fixtures would be *preserved* and *relocated* to the outside of the new sidewalk, with the exception of the fixtures on top of the barrier on the west approach span, which would be *preserved in place*.
7. *Preserve* the existing pedestrian gates in place; add four new pedestrian gates to meet the pedestrian safety needs associated with the wider sidewalk.
8. *Preserve* the concrete barriers at the West Sacramento end of the bridge and widen the sidewalks to the outside, placing new steel railings at the outside edge of the sidewalk.
9. *Modify* the hollow concrete pylons by filling them with concrete to facilitate support of the widened sidewalk on the City of Sacramento approach span.
10. *Modify* other aspects of the bridge, including the wooden maintenance walks on the fenders.

11. *Preserve in place but modify* the existing knee-brace supports below the existing sidewalk, and *add new*, larger knee-braces under the widened sidewalk. Anchor *new* support girders to existing hollow concrete columns and fill the columns. Provide *additional* transverse bracing.
12. *Partially remove* the concrete walls on the banks parallel to the river to allow the sidewalk to connect to existing facilities.

It should be noted that the proposed project design as identified in the Initial Study included a 300-mm (1-ft) gap between the existing structure and the new approach span sidewalks, with a design variation identified that would add the new sidewalk directly adjacent to the existing structure. Since publication of Initial Study, Caltrans and the PDT have selected the design variation as the proposed project.

Caltrans prepared and circulated a detailed Initial Study in January and February 2004. The Initial Study determined that impacts in the following areas either were less than significant under the California Environmental Quality Act or could be reduced to a less-than-significant level with the identified avoidance, minimization, and mitigation measures (see Appendix B):

- Land use and planning
- Population and housing
- Geological problems
- Water
- Air quality
- Transportation/circulation
- Biological resources
- Energy and mineral resources
- Hazards
- Noise
- Utilities and service systems
- Aesthetics
- Recreation

Copies of the Initial Study are available for review during normal business hours at Caltrans offices (2389 Gateway Oaks Drive, Sacramento, California), or on the Internet at:

<http://www.dot.ca.gov/dist3/departments/envinternet/sacdocs/towerbr.htm>

The Initial Study identified the following issues to be addressed in detail in the EA/Draft EIR:

- Cultural resources
- Alternatives to the proposed project
- Cumulative impacts to cultural resources
- Section 4(f) resources

The analysis in this EA/Draft EIR concludes that:

- Implementation of the proposed project would result in physical alterations to Tower Bridge that are 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 significance and unavoidable under CEQA.
- There are no prudent or feasible alternatives to the proposed project.

The contractor will be responsible for obtaining all permits for the project. The following permits and consultation are anticipated to be required to construct the project:

- U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Corps): Clean Water Act (CWA) Section 404 permit (nationwide);
- Corps: Rivers and Harbors Act Section 10 permit;
- Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board (RWQCB): CWA Section 401 water quality certification;
- California Department of Fish and Game (DFG): a Section 1602 streambed alteration agreement;
- State Reclamation Board: a Reclamation Board permit is required before the start of any work, including excavation and construction activities, where the Reclamation Board exercises their authority; and
- California Public Utilities Commission (PUC): consultation with the PUC for modifications to the sidewalk at the railroad crossing.

The Federal Clean Air Act requires that transportation plans, programs, and projects be approved by a Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) and conform with the State Implementation Program (SIP). The MPO in the Sacramento area is SACOG. Part of the process for demonstrating a project's conformity with the SIP is the inclusion of the project in the Metropolitan Transportation Improvement Program (MTIP) by SACOG. The proposed project is included in the SACOG MTIP (ID# SAC17990).

Based on the following information, the FHWA has determined that the proposed project will not adversely affect any listed species:

- No federally listed wildlife species were detected at the project site during the January and December 2001 field surveys.
- No elderberry shrubs, host plant for the valley elderberry longhorn beetle, were found at or within 30 m (100 ft) of the project site during field surveys.
- No vernal pools or suitable breeding ponds were identified on or within 75 m (250 ft) of the project site.
- No suitable aquatic or upland habitat for giant garter snake is present along the Sacramento River at the project site.
- A containment system will be installed beneath the deck of the bridge to collect all the water, dirt, debris, and paint that will be generated during widening of the sidewalks.

Environmental Justice

The project has been developed in accordance with the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended, and Executive Order 12898, “Federal Actions to Address Environmental Justice in Minority Populations and Low-Income Populations.” The Executive Order requires each Federal agency (or its designee) to take the appropriate and necessary steps to identify and address “disproportionately high and adverse” effects of Federal projects on minority and low-income populations.

The project has been evaluated to determine whether any conflicts with environmental justice, as outlined in Executive Order 12898 and FHWA Directive 6650.23 would occur as a result of the project. Based on this review, the project would not result in any disproportionately high and/or adverse human health or environmental effects on minority or low-income populations. The proposed project would benefit all corridor users, including minority and low-income populations, by increasing capacity for pedestrians and bicyclists and improving safety.

List of Technical Studies (Bound Separately)

The following documents have been prepared in conjunction with preliminary design of the proposed project:

- Draft Project Report, including a number of technical appendices such as the Tower Bridge Advanced Planning Study;
- Natural Environment Study Report;
- Historic Property Survey Report;
- Archaeological Survey Report (public review of this report is restricted due to confidential information);

- Historical Resources Evaluation Report;
- Finding of Adverse Effect; and
- Initial Study.

With the exception of the Archaeological Survey Report, which contains restricted information on the location of known cultural sites, these technical reports and the Initial Study are available for review during normal business hours at the following locations:

California Department of Transportation, District 3
Karen McWilliams, Senior Environmental Planner
Office of Environmental Management, S2
2389 Gateway Oaks, Suite 100 – Mail Stop 15
Sacramento, CA 95833
(916) 274-0631

City of Sacramento Department of Transportation
Mehrdad Nazeri, Project Manager, Senior Engineer
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Sacramento, CA 95814
(916) 808-7460

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