

TO: TOWN COUNCIL
FROM: TOWN MANAGER 
RE: CONSENT ITEM
CAL TRANS BRIDGE RAISING ENVIRONMENTAL REPORT

ISSUE

The Town will be commenting on the Cal Trans Draft Initial Study / Negative Declaration for the bridge raising project using comments obtained from past workshops and a recent workshop focused on this matter.

RECOMMENDATION

Receive and file information. If Council Members who were unable to attend the 8/2/11 workshop have other comments please submit those to staff for inclusion in the comment letter being prepared by the Town Attorney.

MONEY

Cost to the Town at this point is staff review, legal analysis and materials to respond to the request for comments. There could be additional costs later depending on how Cal Trans deals with the comments.

CEQA

Cal Trans is the lead agency in this case and the Town is responding to their requests for comments on their environmental determination.

DISCUSSION

Council is aware that Cal Trans is planning a project to raise bridges along I-80 from Loomis to Colfax. The environmental document for the project has been published (copies previously circulated to the Council and Planning Commission) and Cal Trans seeks comments. Following are comments that have been compiled so far. The Town Attorney is organizing the comments in order to submit a letter to Cal Trans. The Town will also seek to get a meeting with Cal Trans to negotiate the issues noted.

STAFF COMMENTS SUBMITTED TO 8/2/11 COUNCIL AND PLANNING COMMISSION WORKSHOP

- Pg 8 bottom of page, Brace overcrossing should be noted as being wholly within the Town of Loomis.
- Pg 12 bottom of page, it is noted that ADA issues must be addressed and yet there is no mitigation to provide a separated path of suitable width along the bridges (3 in Loomis and not one is being considered for a separated path) to accommodate bicycles, pedestrians, wheel chairs or NEV vehicles).

- Pg 19 list of bridges does not include any bridges in Loomis so does this suggest that no vegetation (specifically trees) will be removed from the vicinity of the Loomis bridges? This would conflict however with the first bullet point at the bottom of page that describes trees being removed by the Brace Road interchange. It is unclear what the removed trees will be replaced with.
- Pg 20 Bridge Railings indicates "...railings and fences shall be compatible with some of the existing structures already in place to create unity throughout the I-80 corridor." Who decides? Does the agency in which the bridge (3 in Loomis) are located have a say?
- Pg 21 In the bullet points explaining mitigations as to how vegetation will be planted there is no establishment period. How long will that be? For shrubs? For trees?
- Pg 30 First paragraph at top of page, is it the Loomis "oak preservation ordinance" that is being referred to? Did not find any mention in the document as to how tree replacement was going to be done in Loomis and how it met Loomis requirements.
- Pg 60 third paragraph indicates that Cal Trans will mitigate visual impacts at a later date by talking to local entities about gateway monuments and additional landscaping. That really isn't mitigation. Mitigation should be included in the work. Why not talk to the local agencies now, get agreements done and put the detail into the project? What if the local agency is willing to add dollars to the pot to get some work done through this Cal Trans project? Has Cal Trans explored that?
- Pg 62 lists the preparers of the Draft Initial Study / Negative Declaration. Please identify who of those listed visiting the three bridges in Loomis. Also indicate who attended the public meetings in Loomis.

APPENDIX A CEQA CHECKLIST

- Pg 68 X b) should be checked "potentially significant" because the finished bridge will not address ADA needs, bicycle and pedestrian needs or NEV vehicle needs. This is against the Town General Plan, State regulations and policies and Federal policies, especially for the ADA needs. In the test of the environmental report it is interesting to note that Cal Trans says: "The Department is committed to carrying out the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) by building transportation facilities that provide equal access for all persons. The same degree of convenience, accessibility, and safety available to the general public will be provided to peoples with disabilities." Pg 12 & 13

Pg 69 XIV The Fire impacts should be checked “less than significant with mitigation” because mitigation is being proposed (see Pg 15 bottom bullet of the text).

General comment: Neither the text or the checklist describes economic impacts and this was a important comment made by Loomis people at the several meetings held in Loomis. Of concern is the impact on businesses along Horseshoe Bar Rd especially Raleys.

8/2/11 PUBLIC WORKS DIRECTOR COMMENTS

Pg 3 Paragraph 2 – “This project will not increase lane size or widen the bridge.” Need to check if ADA requirements dictate differently. Road width for traffic and bike lanes needs to be checked.

Pg 5 Bottom of page bullet #3 & Pg 6 paragraph #2 Refer to ADA compliance.

Pg 11 Need to add the turtle Island property.

Pg 18 Paragraph 1 Need to address truck parking on Horseshoe Bar Rd off ramp. Landscape plan and restricting access needs to be incorporated in a mitigation.

Pg 19 Last paragraph Need to add a bullet: Plant trees at NE quadrant of Horseshoe Bar interchange for buffer, visual affect and to restrict truck parking.

Pg 60 Need to address and make part of paragraph #2 mitigation for aesthetic improvements. Gateway monument, landscape planting, bridge railing upgrade.

8/2/11 COUNCIL / PLANNING COMMISSION WORKSHOP COMMENTS

- Need to see if cloverleaf on West side of Horseshoe Bar can be landscaped as part of project. Town has water there and money in tree fund. Good place to plant live oak trees.
- Put conduit in bridge for water line and other things the Town may one day wish to get across the bridge.
- Consider funding from “art in public places” to put a decorative feature on the HSB bridge.

- Decorative bridge feature maybe be some oak trees, horses etc. Capture the community character. Ask local iron working artists for ideas.
- Unclear how many trees are being removed in Loomis that will need mitigation.
- Will mitigation trees be planted on site or elsewhere?
- Planting 800 seedlings will result in many dying , what is the establishment plan and time. Will dead trees be replaced?
- Consider a mid January to March construction time to minimize impact on Raleys.
- Using a wildflower mix for hydro-seeding would be preferred and make a beautiful entryway to Loomis. Example is a place along the freeway in Sacramento.
- Where is the conservation area noted on Pg 42?
- Is Brace bridge partly in Rocklin and what comments might Rocklin have.
- Landscape maintenance is needed to establish plantings. Who pays? How long is the establishment period.
- The truck and vehicle parking on the south side may not be a problem on the other hand a willy nilly truck stop is not desired.
- It is dangerous to keep the same width as carpool section. Better safety design is needed for carpool section on south side.