



Historic Resources Review Board

Legistar File Number: 23-001

January 05, 2023

Introduced: 12/22/2022

Current Status: Agenda Ready

Version: 1

Matter Type: General Agenda Item

PLN220090 - CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION (GARRAPATA CREEK BRIDGE)

Public hearing to consider a recommendation to the Monterey County Planning Commission on a Combined Development Permit to allow replacement of the bridge rails on the Garrapata Creek Bridge.

Project Location: Garrapata Creek Bridge near post mile 63.0 on HWY 1, 35681 HWY 1, Carmel, CA 93923 (Assessor's Parcel Number 000-000-000-000 and 243-301-029-000), Big Sur Coast Land Use Plan.

RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends that the Monterey County Historic Resources Review Board (HRRB) adopt a resolution recommending approval of the project to the Planning Commission, with 2 recommended conditions. Should the Board not concur with staff's recommendation, an alternative resolution recommending denial of the project to the Planning Commission has been attached for consideration.

SUMMARY:

The California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) proposes to replace the bridge rails on the Garrapata Creek Bridge. This item was previously considered at the HRRB's December 1, 2022 meeting and the hearing was continued to a date certain of January 5, 2023 with the direction that staff and the applicant return with answers to questions outlined in staff's report and brought up during the hearing. Caltrans responses, which include the original staff report for that meeting, are attached as **Exhibit E**.

The bridge is individually eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP), the California Register of Historic Resources (CRHR), and is a contributing resource to the Carmel San Simeon Historic District (CSSHD). The bridge is one of the seven concrete arch bridges in the CSSHD. Cal Trans intends to replace the bridge rails on six of these bridges. The historical report prepared for the project (LIB220303, Exhibit F) is a "Tier 2" report, focusing on the Garrapta Bridge rail replacement. A "Tier 1" programmatic analysis evaluating the replacement of the rails on all six bridges is included as an attachment to that report, as well as the Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR) 523 forms for the CSSHD, and "Finding of Adverse Effect" (FAE). The EIR prepared for the project (**Exhibit G**) also utilizes this Tier 1 / 2 approach, with the Tier 1 EIR being a programmatic analysis of replacing the bridge rails on all six bridges, and the Tier 2 analysis being specifically focused on the Garrapata Creek bridge rail replacement.

The rails are in a state of physical deterioration, with concrete spawling and visible damage, and Cal Trans is proposing to replace them with new rails compliant with current safety standards to address this. Comments on the EIR, the County's previous Section 106 Consolation comments, and feedback from the LUAC (**Exhibit H**) focus on the project justification and whether other alternatives to address public safety would be more appropriate given the historic context of the bridge, such as: repair of the existing rails, replacement of the rails with those of the same design, a reduction of the speed limit near the bridge, or a combination of these alternatives.

The information requested at the previous hearing and responses received are summarized below:

1. Historic Impact Assessment - Clarify the impact assessment of the historic structure.

Caltrans responded by providing an updated version of the historical report (**Exhibit F**) which included the "Finding of Adverse Effect" (FAE) on December 1. The FAE included more detailed analysis of the historical impact of the project. The project will have an effect on the historic resource but, as designed, the project will not significantly impact the historic integrity of the bridge and the bridge will continue to qualify as an historic resource.

2. Justification - Provide more robust information on project justification, particularly regarding whether the speed could be reduced and a replacement rail which more closely aligns with the historic character of the existing rails be used.

Caltrans responded in writing on December 6. Caltrans staff maintain that there is no feasible option for installation of a non-compliant bridge rail. County staff has interpreted the information and put most simply, County staff believes that Caltrans is not willing to sacrifice safety and liability to preserve visual access and avoid historic effects by installing a bridge rail that does not meet minimum safety standards. Caltrans is willing to design a bridge rail that minimizes impacts on the historic bridge and preserves visual access while also meeting minimum safety standards.

3. Cumulative effects - Assessment of cumulative effects to the Carmel San Simeon Historic District (CSSHD) resulting from approval of this project, particularly whether approval of this project would influence future decisions on historic bridges in Big Sur.

The "Finding of Adverse Effect" (FAE) in the updated historical report submitted on December 1 also includes analysis of cumulative effects of the Garrapata Bridge rail replacement on the CSSHD. While a "programmatic" or "Tier 1" EIR was prepared regarding the bridge rail replacements on six of the historic Big Sur bridges, the individual impact analysis is deferred to the specific environmental documents associated with each individual bridge. Caltrans has indicated that speed limits and other relevant factors will be considered at the time each bridge rail is evaluated. This could result in slight variations on bridge rail designs.

4. Other Questions - Provide responses to the other questions raised by board members and members of the public, including whether the bike rail is proposed and what other legislative options could be considered to save the rails.

Caltrans has clarified that the bike rails are not proposed, and provided updated plans, and indicated they are not pursuing other legislative alternatives to consider saving the rails. Staff have included discussion of some options in our discussion Exhibit A.

Having reviewed the materials staff are recommending that the HRRB recommend approval of the project subject to the following recommended conditions:

1. The color and finish of the new rails shall match the existing rails as much as possible. Prior to commencement of construction, the owner/applicant shall submit a color and material mockup of the final color selections, intended to match both the hue and texture of the existing rail to HCD-Planning for review and approval.
2. A full traffic assessment, including a speed study and evaluation of the potential of ways of minimizing speed, shall be prepared for each of the other five historical Big Sur bridges which are discussed as being considered for rail replacement in the “Tier 1” EIR as a submittal requirement for the Coastal Development Permits for any of those projects.

A more detailed analysis is in Discussion **Exhibit A**.

Prepared by: Phil Angelo, Associate Planner

Reviewed by: Craig Spencer, Chief of Planning

The following attachments are on file with Housing and Community Development:

- Exhibit A - Discussion
- Exhibit B - Project Plans
- Exhibit C - Draft Resolution of Approval
- Exhibit D - Draft Resolution of Denial
- Exhibit E - Caltrans Letter dated December 6 with Previous Staff Report
- Exhibit F - Historic Property Survey Report with Finding of Adverse Effect (LIB220303)
- Exhibit G - Tier I & II EIR
- Exhibit H - DRAFT Big Sur Land Use Advisory Committee (LUAC) Meeting Minutes
- Exhibit I - Supplemental Package with Attached Speed Study

cc: Mitch Dallas (Applicant); Michelle Wilson (Applicant); Craig Spencer, HCD Chief of Planning;
Project File PLN220090

This page intentionally left blank