

FINAL ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT

NACIMIENTO LAKE DRIVE AT SAN ANTONIO RIVER BRIDGE REPLACEMENT

**MONTEREY COUNTY BRIDGE NUMBER 449
STATE CLEARINGHOUSE NUMBER 2011101021**



MONTEREY COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS

FEBRUARY 2014

PREFACE

This document, together with the Draft Environmental Impact Report (Draft EIR), constitutes the Final Environmental Impact Report (FEIR) for the Nacimiento Lake Drive at San Antonio River Bridge Replacement Project. The Draft EIR was circulated to affected public agencies and interested parties for a 70-day review period from November 8, 2013 to January 17, 2014. The period for review of the Draft EIR was extended beyond the mandated 45-day review period to allow interested parties additional time to prepare comments. This volume consists of comments received by the Lead Agency on the Draft EIR during the public review period and responses to those comments.

In conformance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and the CEQA Guidelines, the FEIR provides objective information regarding the environmental consequences of the proposed project. The FEIR also examines mitigation measures and alternatives to the project intended to reduce or eliminate significant environmental impacts. The FEIR is intended to be used by the County and any Responsible Agencies in making decisions regarding the project. The CEQA Guidelines advise that, while the information in the FEIR does not control the agency's ultimate discretion on the project, the agency must respond to each significant effect identified in the Draft EIR by making written findings for each of those significant effects.

According to the State Public Resources Code (Section 21081), no public agency shall approve or carry out a project for which an environmental impact report has been certified which identifies one or more significant effects on the environment that would occur if the project is approved or carried out unless both of the following occur:

- (a) The public agency makes one or more of the following findings with respect to each significant effect:
 - (1) Changes or alterations have been required in, or incorporated into, the project which will mitigate or avoid the significant effect on the environment.
 - (2) Those changes or alterations are within the responsibility and jurisdiction of another public agency and have been, or can and should be, adopted by that other agency.
 - (3) Specific economic, legal, social, technological, or other considerations, including considerations for the provision of employment opportunities of highly trained workers, make infeasible the mitigation measures or alternatives identified in the environmental impact report.
- (b) With respect to significant effects which were subject to a finding under paragraph (3) of subdivision (a), the public agency finds that specific overriding economic, legal, social, technological, or other benefits of the project outweigh the significant effects on the environment.

ORGANIZATION OF THE FINAL EIR

This document, which includes responses to comments and text revisions, has been prepared in accordance with Section 15088 of the CEQA Guidelines. The Final EIR included the following sections:

Section 1.0 List of Agencies and Organizations Who Received the Draft EIR

The agencies, organizations, and individuals who received copies of the Draft EIR are listed in this section.

Section 2.0 List of Comment Letters Received on the Draft EIR

This section contains a list of all parties who submitted written comments on the Draft EIR.

Section 3.0 Responses to Comments Received on the Draft EIR

This section contains written comments received on the Draft EIR and the responses to those comments.

Section 4.0 Copies of Comment Letters Received on the Draft EIR

This section contains copies of the full comments letters received.

A FEIR typically includes a section that shows changes to the text of the DEIR. In this case, however, that section is omitted as there were no changes to the text of the DEIR.

In accordance with CEQA and the CEQA Guidelines, the FEIR will be made available to the public prior to consideration of the Environmental Impact Report. All documents referenced in this FEIR are available for public review at the Monterey County Public Works Department, 168 West Alisal Street, Salinas, on weekdays during normal business hours.

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SECTION 1.0 LIST OF AGENCIES, ORGANIZATIONS, AND INDIVIDUALS WHO RECEIVED THE DRAFT EIR

Copies of the Draft EIR and/or Notice of Availability for the Draft EIR were sent to the following agencies, organizations and individuals:

- **California State Clearinghouse**
 - Department of Fish and Wildlife
 - Department of Parks and Recreation
 - Department of Water Resources
 - Air Resources Board
 - Regional Water Quality Control Board
 - Native American Heritage Commission
- **Monterey County Water Resources Agency**
- **Monterey County Historical Resources Review Board**

Notices of Availability of the Draft EIR were also posted on the project site and published in the Monterey County Weekly.

SECTION 2.0 LIST OF COMMENT LETTERS RECEIVED ON THE DRAFT EIR

Shown below is a list of comment letters received on the Draft EIR. This list also identifies the date of the letter received. Complete copies of all the letters are included in Section 4.0 of this Final EIR.

- A. Monterey County Historic Resources Review Board, January 17, 2014
- B. California State Clearinghouse, January 2, 1014

SECTION 3.0 RESPONSES TO COMMENTS RECEIVED ON THE DRAFT EIR

The following section includes all the comments on the Draft EIR that were received by January 17, 2014 in letters and emails during the 70-day review period. The comments are organized under headings containing the source of the letter and the date submitted. The specific comments from each of the letters or emails are presented as “Comment” with each response to that specific comment directly following. Each of the letters and emails submitted to the Monterey County Department of Public Works are attached in their entirety (with any enclosed materials) in Section 4.0 of this document.

CEQA Guidelines Section 15086 requires that a local lead agency consult with and request comments on the Draft EIR prepared for a project of this type from responsible agencies (government agencies that must approve or permit some aspect of the project), trustee agencies for resources affected by the project, adjacent cities and counties, and transportation planning agencies. Section 1.0 of this document lists all of the recipients of the Draft EIR.

None of the comment letters received are from public agencies that are Responsible Agencies under CEQA for the proposed project. The CEQA Guidelines require that:

A responsible agency or other public agency shall only make substantive comments regarding those activities involved in the project that are within an area of expertise of the agency or which are required to be carried out or approved by the responsible agency. Those comments shall be supported by specific documentation. [§15086(c)]

Regarding mitigation measures identified by commenting public agencies, the CEQA Guidelines state that:

Prior to the close of the public review period, a responsible agency or trustee agency which has identified what the agency considers to be significant environmental effects shall advise the lead agency of those effects. As to those effects relevant to its decisions, if any, on the project, the responsible or trustee agency shall either submit to the lead agency complete and detailed performance objectives for mitigation measures addressing those effects or refer the lead agency to appropriate, readily available guidelines or reference documents concerning mitigation measures. If the responsible or trustee agency is not aware of mitigation measures that address identified effects, the responsible or trustee agency shall so state. [§15086(d)]

The CEQA Guidelines state that the lead agency shall evaluate comments on the environmental issues received from persons who reviewed the Draft EIR and shall prepare a written response to those comments. The lead agency is also required to provide a written proposed response to a public agency on comments made by that public agency at least 10 days prior to certifying an environmental impact report. This FEIR contains written responses to all comments made on the Draft EIR received during the advertised 70-day review period.

A. COMMENTS FROM THE MONTEREY COUNTY HISTORIC RESOURCES REVIEW BOARD, JANUARY 17, 2014.

Comment A-1:

At our January 6th, 2014 meeting, the Monterey County Historic Resources Review Board (HRRB) discussed the Monterey County Public Works' Draft EIR addressing the Nacimiento Lake Drive Bridge. Recognizing safety is the County's ultimate goal and charge, the HRRB strongly opposes destruction of the existing bridge, the projects' *only* identified significant and unmitigatable impact.

The HRRB recommends adoption of DEIR Alternative 3.3, "Bridge Retrofit Alternative" which the Public Works' own economic analysis determined has *a cost similar to the construction of a new bridge (emphasis added)*. This viable and cost-effective alternative serves to preserve rural Southern Monterey County's historical flavor and assures Monterey County businesses' continued financial benefits from the bridge's significant attraction of local tourism.

Response A-1:

This comment states that Monterey County Historic Resources Review Board (HRRB) considered the Draft EIR for the project. The HRRB opposes the demolition of the bridge as proposed by the project and recommends implementation of an alternative project, the Bridge Retrofit Alternative, as identified in the Draft EIR. This comment does not concern the adequacy of the Draft EIR, therefore no revisions to the Draft EIR are necessary.

Comment A-2:

Nacimiento Lake Bridge is listed on the Monterey County Register of Historic Resources, meeting CEQA's historic resource definition, as well as being one of five bridges constructed between 1915 and 1932 as a single multi-span structure consisting partially or entirely of pin-connected steel "Pratt" trusses (one of the reasons for the bridge's significant draw as a tourist attraction for bridge enthusiasts).

Response A-2:

The comment states that the Nacimiento Lake Bridge is included in the Monterey County Register of Historic Resources (Register). As such, it is considered an historic resource under CEQA. As described in Section 2.2 *Historical Resources* of the Draft EIR, the bridge was one of five bridges added to the Register by the County Board of Supervisors in 1998. All five of the bridges consist entirely or in part of pin-connected steel "Pratt" trusses, which contributes to their historic significance. In the staff report to the Board recommending adding the five bridges to the Register, it was noted that none meet current bridge design or seismic safety standards, and that the Nacimiento Lake Bridge specifically would have to be demolished and replaced, since seismic retrofit was determined to not be economically feasible.

The comment affirms the information included in the Draft EIR regarding the status of the Nacimiento Lake Bridge as a local historic resource and, in turn, an historic resource under CEQA.

Comment A-3:

The Bridge is a focal point in Monterey County for tourists and provides financial gain to Monterey County from that tourism. The bridge is listed on two nation-wide general tour sites and many specialty sites guidebooks, touring maps and websites for wine tours, bridge enthusiasts, bicyclists, motorcycle groups and "backroads touring" guides (a partial list of those sites follows this letter). The historic pull of the bridge provides national exposure of Monterey County and more importantly, is financially lucrative for Monterey County businesses.

Response A-3:

This comment states the HRRB's understanding of the importance of the bridge to Monterey County as tourist attraction. This comment does not concern the adequacy of the Draft EIR. No revisions to the Draft EIR are necessary.

Comment A-4:

The DEIR's proposed mitigations addressing the bridge's loss (photos and a plaque) cannot overcome the significant loss of this historic resource and the loss of revenue to the County.

Response A-4:

Mitigation measures identified in Section 2.2 *Historical Resources* of the Draft EIR involving the photo-documentation of the bridge prior to demolition and the installation of a marker or commemorative plaque at the site of the replacement bridge represent feasible measures that would reduce, but not avoid, the project's significant impact to the historic resource.

This comment affirms the Draft EIR's conclusion the project would result in a significant unavoidable impact to an historic resource since there is no feasible mitigation that would reduce this impact to a less-than-significant level. The Draft EIR determined that the demolition of the bridge, as proposed by the project, would result in a significant unavoidable impact. No revisions to the Draft EIR regarding impacts to historic resources are necessary.

Comment A-5:

Since the Public Works Department's own studies state replacement will be structurally successful and financially equitable to construction of a new bridge (a new bridge with absolutely no historic or tourism appeal), HRRB believes adoption of Alternative 3.3 to be the only County's only reasonable choice.

Response A-5:

This comment states the HRRB’s opinion that retrofit of the existing bridge, as described in Section 3.3 *Bridge Retrofit Alternative* of the Draft EIR should be the County’s preferred alternative to the proposed project. The comment states that replacement (*retrofit*) of the existing bridge would be comparable in cost and structural integrity to construction of a new bridge.

The description of the Bridge Retrofit Alternative includes an excerpt prepared by the structural engineers for the project which states that “...an economic analysis determined that retrofit of the existing bridge would have a cost similar to the construction of a new bridge.” However, this discussion also notes that under a retrofit scenario, new structural columns would be constructed on either side of the bridge at each existing pier and abutment, and that once completed, the columns would visually dominate the bridge structure and would therefore change the character of the bridge.

Because the Bridge Retrofit Alternative would require new structural columns to provide additional structural support to the bridge, and that the structural supports would alter the character of the bridge, and that the substandard 90-degree curve at the northern end of the bridge would still exist under the retrofit scenario, and that this alternative would have a similar cost to that of the proposed project while not achieving all of the objective of the project, this alternative was determined infeasible.

This comment states the HRRB’s opinion that retrofit of the existing bridge should be the County’s preferred alternative to the proposed project. This comment does not introduce new information that concerns the adequacy of the Draft EIR, therefore no revisions to the Draft EIR are necessary.

B. LETTER FROM THE CALIFORNIA STATE CLEARINGHOUSE, JANUARY 2, 2014

The letter from the California State Clearinghouse identifies the state agencies that received the Draft EIR for review, and notes that no state agencies submitted comments back to the State Clearinghouse by the close of the original 45-day review period on December 31, 2013. The letter acknowledges that Monterey County, as the CEQA Lead Agency, has complied with all State Clearinghouse draft environmental review requirements.

Because no state agencies submitted comments on the Draft EIR, no revisions or responses are necessary.

SECTION 4.0 COPIES OF THE COMMENT LETTERS RECEIVED ON THE DRAFT EIR

The original comment letters received on the Draft EIR are provided on the following pages.

January 17, 2014

Douglas Poochigian, P.E.
Monterey County Resource Management Agency
Public Works
168 West Alisal Street, 2nd Floor
Salinas, California 93901

Re: Historic Resources Review Board comments on the Nacimiento Lake Drive at San Antonio River Bridge Replacement – Bridge Number 4499, State Clearing House Number 201110102, Monterey County Department of Public Works

*Via Email –
poochigiand@co.monterey.ca.us*

Dear Mr. Poochigian, P.E.,

At our January 6th, 2014 meeting, the Monterey County Historic Resources Review Board (HRRB) discussed the Monterey County Public Works' Draft EIR addressing the Nacimiento Lake Drive Bridge. Recognizing safety is the County's ultimate goal and charge, the HRRB strongly opposes destruction of the existing bridge, a the projects' *only* identified significant and unmitigatable impact.

The HRRB recommends adoption of DEIR Alternative 3.3, "Bridge Retrofit Alternative" which the Public Works' own economic analysis determined has a *cost similar to the construction of a new bridge (emphasis added)*. This viable and cost-effective alternative serves to preserve rural Southern Monterey County's historical flavor and assures Monterey County businesses' continued financial benefits from the bridge's significant attraction of local tourism.

Nacimiento Lake Bridge is listed on the Monterey County Register of Historic Resources, meeting CEQA's historic resource definition, as well as being one of five bridges constructed between 1915 and 1932 as a single multi-span structure consisting partially or entirely of pin-connected steel "Pratt" trusses (one of the reasons for the bridge's significant draw as a tourist attraction for bridge enthusiasts).

The Bridge is a focal point in Monterey County for tourists and provides financial gain to Monterey County from that tourism. The bridge is listed on two nation-wide general tour sites and many specialty sites guidebooks, touring maps and websites for wine tours, bridge enthusiasts, bicyclists, motorcycle groups and "backroads touring" guides (a partial list of those sites follows this letter). The historic pull of the bridge provides national exposure of Monterey County and more importantly, is financially lucrative for Monterey County businesses.

**Historic Resources Review Board comments
Nacimiento Lake Drive Bridge Replacement
Page Two -**

The DEIR's proposed mitigations addressing the bridge's loss (photos and a plaque) cannot overcome the significant loss of this historic resource and the loss of revenue to the County.

Since the Public Works Department's own studies state replacement will be structurally successful and financially equitable to construction of a new bridge (a new bridge with absolutely no historic or tourism appeal), HRRB believes adoption of Alternative 3.3 to be the only County's only reasonable choice.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this issue. Please do not hesitate to contact HRRB representatives if you have any further questions for us.

Sincerely,



Kellie D. Morgantini
HRRB Vice-Chair

-- *The Nacimiento Bridge's tourism appeal is found in these (and many more) tourism and special interest sites:*

Bridge Hunters - <http://bridgehunter.com/ca/monterey/44C0009/>

Professional Photographers' site - <http://www.lomography.com/photos/tags/256-bridge/18749659>

Bridge and Tunnel Club (Wine enthusiasts) -
<http://www.bridgeandtunnelclub.com/bigmap/outoftown/california/sanluisobispo/pasorobles/nacimientolakedrive/index.htm>

Civil Engineering and Structural Design -
<http://structurae.net/structures/data/index.cfm?id=s0031217>

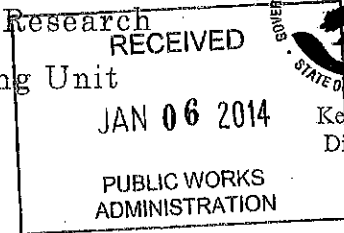
Print Media - Motorcycle Journeys Through California & Baja: Second Edition, Moon Press

Webcams - <http://www.webcamgalore.com/EN/webcam/USA/Lake-Nacimiento-California/10877.html>



Edmund G. Brown Jr.
Governor

STATE OF CALIFORNIA
Governor's Office of Planning and Research
State Clearinghouse and Planning Unit



Ken Alex
Director

January 2, 2014

Douglas Poochigian
Monterey County
168 W. Alisal Street, 2nd Floor
Salinas, CA 93901

Subject: Nacimiento Lake Drive at San Antonio River Bridge Replacement
SCH#: 2011101021

Dear Douglas Poochigian:

The State Clearinghouse submitted the above named Draft EIR to selected state agencies for review. The review period closed on December 31, 2013, and no state agencies submitted comments by that date. This letter acknowledges that you have complied with the State Clearinghouse review requirements for draft environmental documents, pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act.

Please call the State Clearinghouse at (916) 445-0613 if you have any questions regarding the environmental review process. If you have a question about the above-named project, please refer to the ten-digit State Clearinghouse number when contacting this office.

Sincerely,

Scott Morgan
Director, State Clearinghouse

**Document Details Report
State Clearinghouse Data Base**

SCH# 2011101021
Project Title Nacimiento Lake Drive at San Antonio River Bridge Replacement
Lead Agency Monterey County

Type EIR Draft EIR
Description Note: Review Per Lead

Project will replace the existing 1-lane bridge with a new 2-lane bridge. The existing bridge, which was constructed in 1921, does not meet current structural/highway design or seismic safety standards. The new bridge will be located adjacent to the existing bridge, approximately 130 feet downstream.

Lead Agency Contact

Name Douglas Poochigian
Agency Monterey County
Phone 831 755 4888 **Fax**
email
Address 168 W. Alisal Street, 2nd Floor
City Salinas **State** CA **Zip** 93901

Project Location

County Monterey
City
Region
Lat / Long 35° 48' 31" N / 120° 51' 20" W
Cross Streets Nacimiento Lake Drive at teh San Antonio River
Parcel No.
Township 24S **Range** 10E **Section** 26 **Base**

Proximity to:

Highways
Airports
Railways
Waterways San Antonio Lake and San Antonio River
Schools
Land Use public highway

Project Issues Air Quality; Archaeologic-Historic; Biological Resources; Noise; Toxic/Hazardous; Vegetation; Water Quality; Wetland/Riparian

Reviewing Agencies Resources Agency; Department of Fish and Wildlife, Region 4; Department of Parks and Recreation; Department of Water Resources; Caltrans, District 5; Air Resources Board; Air Resources Board, Major Industrial Projects; Regional Water Quality Control Board, Region 3; Native American Heritage Commission

Date Received 11/05/2013 **Start of Review** 11/06/2013 **End of Review** 12/31/2013