

Memorandum

To: CHAIR AND COMMISSIONERS

CTC Meeting: March 11-12, 2009

Reference No.: 2.2c.(3)
Action Item

From: CINDY McKIM
Chief Financial Officer

Prepared by: Jay Norvell
Division Chief
Environmental Analysis

Subject: **APPROVAL OF PROJECT FOR FUTURE CONSIDERATION OF FUNDING
02-PLU-70, PM 35.1/35.5
RESOLUTION E-09-13**

RECOMMENDATION:

The Department of Transportation (Department) recommends that the California Transportation Commission (Commission), as a responsible agency, approve the attached Resolution E-09-13.

ISSUE:

The attached resolution proposes to approve for future consideration of funding the following project for which a Final Environmental Impact Report (FEIR) has been completed:

- Route 70 in Plumas County – Replace the Spanish Creek Bridge near Quincy. (PPNO 3066)

This project in Plumas County will replace the existing Spanish Creek Bridge and construct roadway improvements north of the city of Quincy. The project is programmed in the 2008 State Highway Operation and Protection Program. The total estimated project cost is \$58,064,000, capital and support. Construction is estimated to begin in Fiscal Year 2009-10.

A copy of the FEIR has been provided to Commission staff. Issues with the construction permanently impacting historic resources and the public controversy regarding the project resulted in an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) being completed for this project. Upon completion of the EIR, impacts related to historic resources were found to be significant and unmitigable. As a result, a Statement of Overriding Considerations was adopted.

The Department has approved this project for construction. This approval and the filing of the Notice of Determination with the Office of Planning and Research will satisfy the environmental requirements for this stage of the project planning process.

Attachments

CALIFORNIA TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION

Resolution for Future Consideration of Funding

02-PLU-70, PM 35.1/35.5

Resolution E-09-13

- 1.1** **WHEREAS**, the California Department of Transportation (Department) has completed a Final Environmental Impact Report pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and the CEQA Guidelines for the following project:

 - Route 70 in Plumas County – Replace the Spanish Creek Bridge north of Quincy. (PPNO 3066)
- 1.2** **WHEREAS**, the Department has certified that the Final Environmental Impact Report has been completed pursuant to CEQA and the State CEQA Guidelines for its implementation; and
- 1.3** **WHEREAS**, the California Transportation Commission, as a responsible agency, has considered the information contained in the Final Environmental Impact Report; and
- 1.4** **WHEREAS**, the Final Environmental Impact Report did identify significant effects after mitigation; and
- 1.5** **WHEREAS**, a Statement of Overriding Considerations was adopted and Findings were made pursuant to the State CEQA Guidelines.
- 2.1** **NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** that the California Transportation Commission does hereby adopt the Findings and Statement of Overriding Considerations that support approval of the above referenced project to allow for future consideration of funding.

**CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION FINDINGS FOR
PROPOSED REPLACEMENT OF THE SPANISH CREEK BRIDGE
(BRIDGE NO. 09-0015) ON STATE ROUTE 70 IN PLUMAS COUNTY,
POST MILE 35.3, NEAR THE COMMUNITY OF KEDDIE.**

The following information is presented to comply with State CEQA Guidelines (Title 14 California Code of Regulations, Chapter 3, Section 15901) and the Department of Transportation and California Transportation Commission Environmental Regulations (Title 21, California Code of Regulations, Chapter 11, Section 1501). Reference is made to the Final Environmental Impact Report (FEIR) for the project, which is the basic source for the information.

The following effects have been identified in the EIR as resulting from the project. Effects found not to be significant have not been included.

Cultural Resources

Adverse Environmental Effects:

In accordance with 36 CFR 800, Caltrans has found that implementation of Alternative B (Construction of a new bridge and removal of the existing bridge) would result in an adverse effect to the Spanish Creek Bridge (Bridge No. 09-0015), the Feather River Highway Historic District, a segment of the Maxwell Ditch, and a segment of the Utah Construction Road. Project redesign to avoid adversely affecting these historic properties proved to be imprudent due to the structural condition of the existing bridge and limited options for alternate highway alignments. Alternate highway alignments are limited due to the local topography and the existing railroad alignment.

Findings:

Specific economic, legal, social, technological, or other considerations, including provision of employment opportunities for highly trained workers, make infeasible the mitigation measures or project alternatives identified in the final EIR.

Statement of Facts:

Caltrans will enter into a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) with the State Office of Historic Preservation. The MOA will include stipulations for the treatment of historic properties that will be adversely affected as a result of implementation of the Spanish Creek Bridge project. The following provisions are included in the MOA:

- A. Prior to the start of any work that could adversely affect the characteristics that qualify the Spanish Creek Bridge as a historic property, large format photographs will be taken of the bridge in context as well as details of its historic engineering features. Photographs shall be processed for archival permanence in accordance with the Historic American Engineering Record (HAER) photographic specifications. Views of the bridge shall include:
 - Contextual views showing the bridge in its setting;
 - Elevation views;

CEQA Findings

- Views of the bridge piers and abutments;
 - Detail views of significant engineering and design elements.
- B. A written historical and descriptive report for the Spanish Creek Bridge will be completed. This report will provide a physical description of the bridge, discuss its construction and its significance under applicable National Register criteria, and address the historical context for its construction following the format and instructions in the HAER *Guidelines for Preparing Written Historical and Descriptive Data*, September 1993. Caltrans shall produce plans, elevations, and selected details from the original construction drawings for the Spanish Creek Bridge, in 8.5 X 11 inch format, for inclusion in the report.
- C. Upon completion of the report, copies will be retained by Caltrans District 2 Office and deposited in the Caltrans Transportation Library and History Center in Caltrans Headquarters in Sacramento. Copies will be provided to the California Office of Historic Preservation and offered to the Plumas County Historical Society and Plumas National Forest.
- D. Caltrans shall design and construct an interpretive display of historic properties adjacent to the highway near the northern bridge abutment. The display will consist of the following:
- Interpretive placards will be mounted in frames made of steel or wood. The frames will be located adjacent to State Route 70 within the paved entrance to the Spanish Creek Campground. The placards will depict the history of the Feather River Highway Historic District and the Spanish Creek Bridge as they reflect the transportation history of the Feather River Canyon. Other placards shall depict the historic of other historic properties within and near the project's area of potential effects (APE), including the Maxwell Ditch, the former Western Pacific Railroad, and the Utah Construction Road and other abandoned roadways. The placard text and graphics will distill information gathered from reputable sources, e.g., libraries and archive facilities.
 - Caltrans shall design the placards in consultation with Plumas National Forest and shall design the interpretive facilities in accordance with National Park guidelines.
 - Caltrans shall install the interpretive facilities following the removal of the now existing Spanish Creek Bridge.
 - The interpretive facilities will remain in place permanently.
 - Maintenance of the interpretive facility shall be governed by a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between Caltrans and Plumas National Forest that will allow operational control to reside with Plumas National Forest and maintenance responsibility to be shared between Caltrans and the Plumas National forest.
- E. If Caltrans determines, after construction of the Spanish Creek Bridge project has commenced, that the project will affect a previously unidentified property that may be eligible for the National Register, or affect a known historic property in an unanticipated manner, Caltrans will address the discovery or unanticipated effect

CEQA Findings

in accordance with 36 CFR § 800.13(c). Caltrans, at its discretion, may assume any discovered property to be eligible for inclusion in the National Register.

**CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION STATEMENT OF
OVERRIDING CONSIDERATIONS FOR THE PROPOSED REPLACEMENT OF
THE SPANISH CREEK BRIDGE (BRIDGE NO. 09-0015) ON STATE ROUTE 70
IN PLUMAS COUNTY NEAR THE COMMUNITY OF KEDDIE.**

The following information is presented to comply with State CEQA Guidelines (Title 14 California Code of Regulations, Chapter 3, Section 15903), and the Department of Transportation and California Transportation Commission Environmental Regulations (Title 21 California Code of Regulations, Chapter 11, Section 1501). Reference is made to the Final Environmental Impact Report (FEIR) for the project, which is the basic source for the information.

The following impacts have been identified as significant and not fully mitigable:

Pursuant to 36 CFR 800, a Finding of Adverse Effect has been determined for the following resources: the Spanish Creek Bridge (Bridge No. 09-0015), the Feather River Highway Historic District, a segment of the Maxwell Ditch, and a segment of the Utah Construction Road.

Overriding considerations that support approval of this recommended project are as follows:

The purpose of the proposed project is to provide a road crossing at Spanish Creek that complies with modern highway design standards and accommodates interregional transportation needs.

The Spanish Creek Bridge was built in 1932 and is nearing the end of its service life. The bridge fracture critical and exhibits signs of fatigue, evidenced by cracks in structural steel members. In addition, the bridge does not comply with modern seismic standards, lacks standard shoulder width, and cannot accommodate some large vehicle permit loads due to lane width and structural limitations for weight loading.

Alternative B, the preferred alternative, proposes construction of a new bridge parallel to and immediately west of the existing bridge. The adjoining sections of highway would be realigned to connect with the new bridge. The existing bridge and abandoned sections of highway would be completely removed once the new bridge is completed. Traffic would remain on the existing bridge during construction of the new bridge. The new bridge would comply with current seismic standards and would have standard eight-foot wide shoulders. The bridge would accommodate Interregional transportation needs, including large vehicle permit loads, which are often necessary for emergency situations in the Feather River Canyon.

Statement of Overriding Considerations

Alternative A (Build new bridge and seismically retrofit existing bridge) would also result in an adverse effect to the Spanish Creek Bridge, Feather River Highway Historic District, Maxwell Ditch segment, and Utah Construction Road segment. This alternative would entail construction of a new bridge adjacent to the existing bridge. The existing bridge would remain for use only by pedestrians and bicycles. The seismic retrofit work would not address fatigued steel and the bridge would remain fracture critical.

Only Alternative D, the “no build” alternative, would avoid an adverse effect to historic properties. However, this alternative would not address fatigued structural steel, seismic deficiencies, and the limited width and weight capacity of the bridge. This alternative would only postpone, at great expense, a major bridge rehabilitation or replacement project.

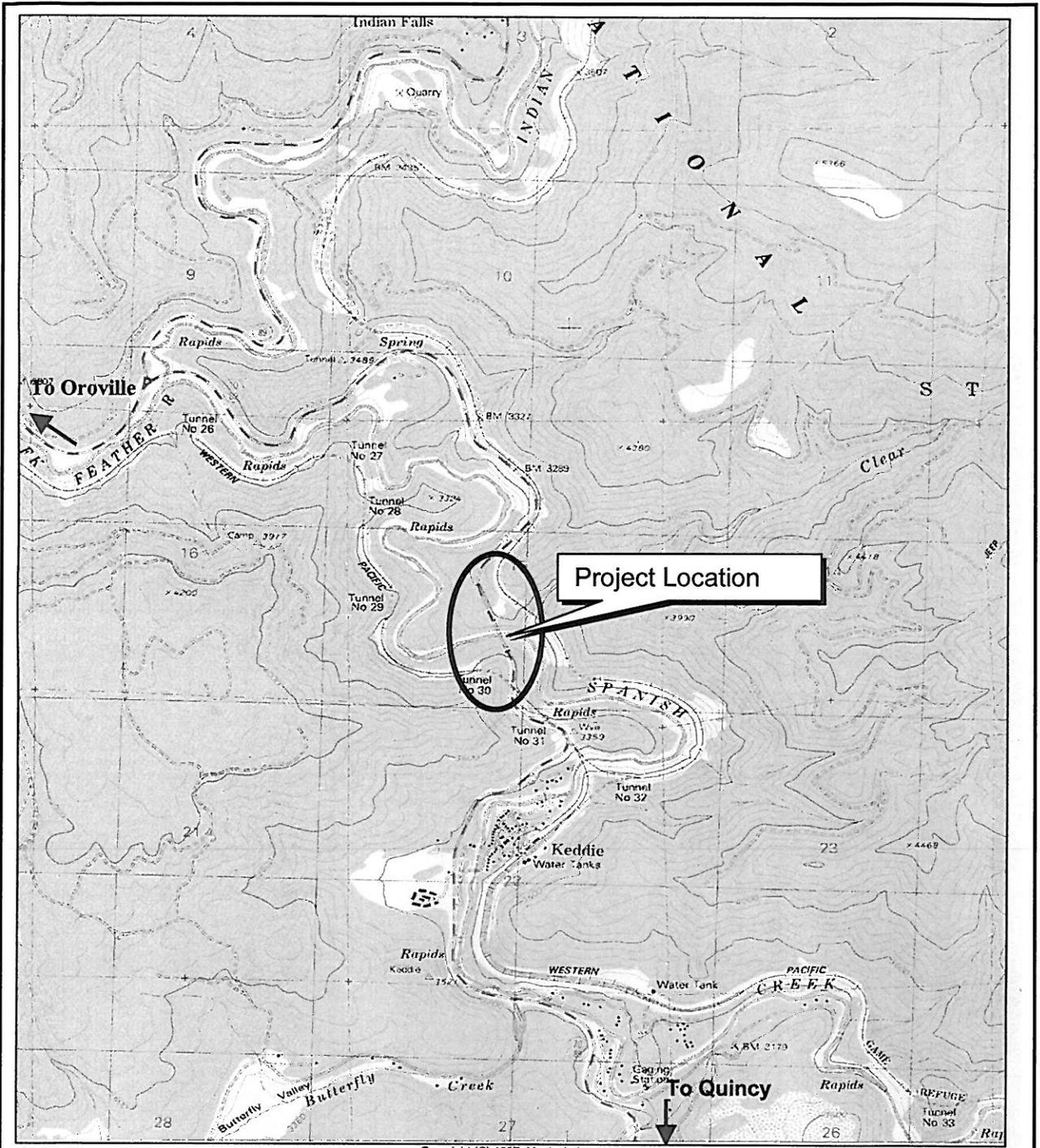


Exhibit 2 Project Location Map

	State of California Department of Transportation	Base map: Crescent Mills Quad, Township 25N, Range 9E, Section 15
	PLU-70-PM35.1/35.5 02-373100	