

Mt. Murphy Road Bridge Project Phase 1B – Stakeholder Advisory Committee (SAC) Meeting #3

SAC Attendees

Kris Payne
Spencer Rubin
Melody Lane
Daniella Faita
Bill Center
Hilde Schweitzer
Mike Bean
Mark E. Smith
Jerry Griffin
Elena DeLacy
Alice Butler
Tim Kulton
Jerry Griffin

Guests

Jeremy McReynolds-Gold Rush
Discovery State Park
Lauren Mancuso
Mr. and Mrs. Mancuso

El Dorado County (EDC)

Matt Smeltzer
Janet Postlewait
Jon Balzer

CH2M HILL

Leslie Bonneau
Hans Strandgaard
Chris Benson
Hans Larsen

Don MacDonald Architects & Associates

Will Henderson

El Dorado Transportation Commission

Dan Bolster

PREPARED BY: Hans Larsen/CH2M HILL

DATE: September 25, 2014

On September 24, 2014, from 5:30 pm to 8:30 pm, El Dorado County hosted the third Stakeholder Advisory Committee (SAC) meeting for the Mt. Murphy Road Bridge Alternatives Analysis project. The meeting was held at the Grange located in Coloma, CA. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss bridge aesthetics, review alignment alternatives, and review the scoring of the alternatives using the previously developed screening criteria.

Materials handed out during the meeting included “Mt. Murphy Road Bridge Project Phase 1B – Alternatives Development Summary – Revised September 1, 2014” and “Mt. Murphy Road - Screening Criteria” scoring sheets dated September 10, 2014.

The following summary has been prepared to provide an overview of the discussions that took place during the meeting and is not intended to represent a verbatim meeting transcript.

Agenda and Project Update

Matt Smeltzer/ El Dorado County (County) Deputy Director of Engineering welcomed participants and talked to the importance of continued public input on the project. He also addressed some questions that had been received prior to the meeting and introduced Jon Balzer as the County’s new project manager.

Matt addressed safety as an important consideration for developing and scoring the alternatives. Maintaining access at all times during construction and improving safety are priorities for the County. He also addressed the fact that previously reported projected future average daily traffic (ADT) numbers are likely too high because of overestimated growth projections and that a newer traffic study is being conducted to provide a more current projection of future ADT demand along Hwy 49 through the Park and on Mt Murphy Road. He noted that traffic numbers for most roads are available on the County’s website and the numbers will be updated when the new traffic model is finalized. Another topic addressed was the desire from some SAC members to see a one-lane bridge considered. Matt commented that a one-lane bridge is not likely to be eligible for HBP funding because ADT on Mt Murphy Road is greater than the maximum ADT allowed for consideration as a one-lane bridge.

Leslie Bonneau/CH2M HILL provided an overview of the meeting agenda and an update of the project development process to date. It was noted that input received during the SAC meeting #1 was an important part of coming up with the draft screening criteria presented at the SAC meeting #2. Input received during the SAC meeting #2 was used to refine and finalize the screening criteria, and the SAC also helped to formulate the alternatives.

One SAC member commented that the meeting summary from previous SAC meetings contained errors and the County has not corrected the documents. Matt said that all comments on the meeting summaries were reviewed and a need for corrections was not identified. Meeting summaries are not intended to provide verbatim minutes to the meetings.

However, County staff has further reviewed these requested corrections and has the following response:

Requested additions to the April 8, 2014 SAC Meeting are not related to the bridge project itself, and do not warrant a correction to the summary.

Requested additions to the May 28, 2014 SAC Meeting Summary regarding access and operations, evacuation plans, safety, environmental resources and right of way are all issues that have been included in the criteria agreed upon by the SAC.

It was noted that while this was the last SAC meeting, there are multiple future opportunities for public input during the environmental analysis process.

Bridge Aesthetics

Will Henderson/Don McDonald Architects & Associates presented a PowerPoint presentation of general bridge aesthetics to the SAC and explained that the discussion was intended to be non-site specific. The information on bridge aesthetics is intended to be a reference point for thinking about how a new Mt Murphy Bridge might look and feel. A slide was included that showed the Pine Street Bridge in Nevada City, CA where a replica of the historic steel truss was designed to replace the existing structure and maintain the historic nature of the bridge and viewshed.

Questions/Comments

Q: Can artwork be used instead of signage for directing bicycles and pedestrians?

A: Depending on the Class of bike lane, various options are available to alert users at the bridge.

Q: How far in the process does CH2M HILL’s contract go?

A: The contract goes through the preparation of the environmental document.

Q: Are you (Will) going to be part of the project going forward? We like your presentation and hope that a bridge architect will be involved in the design.

A: It was explained that his firm is contracted to continue into the PA/ED phase of the project. It was also noted that a bridge architect is often included where there is significant public sentiment about what the bridge should look like.

Q: Will public input on aesthetics be incorporated into the bridge design?

A: This is not the last time the public will have input on the bridge and public input regarding the look of the bridge will be collected during the design process. During the PA/ED phase, assumptions will be made to determine the project footprint and cost estimating for each alternative.

Q: What does the bridge architect do compared to the engineers on a project?

A: The bridge architect makes sure that the federal and state disability access requirements are met, that the bridge fits into its environment, and that the context of the setting is appreciated.

Q: There are concerns about lighting on the bridge. Are there legal, political, or other reasons against lighting on the bridge? Are there conflicts with what is required for vehicular and pedestrian safety and what the neighbors might want?

A: Many advancements have been made in lighting in recent years to reduce light pollution and focus lighting where it is needed. The design team will assess options for lighting and discuss with the public during development of the environmental document.

Alternatives Review

Following the bridge aesthetics presentation, Chris Benson/CH2M HILL and Hans Larsen/CH2M HILL provided an overview of the alternative alignments exhibit showing Alternatives 1 through 9 and explained the general features and impacts of each proposed alignment.

The following is a summary of questions from the SAC during review of the alternatives:

Q: Where would a temporary bridge be constructed?

A: The location would likely be downstream from the existing bridge but the exact location has not been determined.

Q: What bridge widths are being considered?

A: The maximum bridge width being considered is 46 feet and the minimum is 32 feet.

Q: Can barrier separated bike/pedestrian paths be provided on the replacement bridge?

A: That is not being considered at this time since the additional width needed to barrier separate the pedestrians and bicyclists from vehicular traffic would make for a wider bridge and would also likely require the additional width to be paid for by the County. There are also three types of bike facilities – Class I-III and each have different signing and striping requirements and provide for either dedicated or un-dedicated space for users.

Q: When will the hydrologic modeling be completed?

A: It will be completed in stages. Some preliminary work is needed during the preliminary phase. The hydrologic studies get more detailed as you move into the environmental document and final design stages as needed to meet regulatory requirements.

Q: Was the boat launch area considered in laying out Alternative 6?

A: Yes, it was laid out to miss the beach launch area, but it can be moved up or downstream a bit if necessary.

Q: Can Highway Bridge Program (HBP) funds be used if the bridge is moved as far away from the original as Alternative 8 is proposing?

A: Yes, the HPB program allows moving the bridge up to 3 miles from the original location, but Caltrans and FHWA may have something to say about the amount of roadwork needed to make the connections if it is moved too far away.

Q: Could HBP funding be used for Alternative 9, the Scott Road widening?

A: Yes, there is precedence for putting the cost of a replacement bridge toward a road only project, but the much higher costs and impacts to property owners make Alternative 9 very unlikely and it scored very poorly using the screening criteria.

Q: The far downstream alternatives like Alternative 6 and 8 does not provide connectivity near the existing bridge location, will that be a consideration?

A: Yes, the scoring criteria included mobility and access to the historic core of the town for residents.

Q: Will you consider Alternative 1 and Alternative 5 or some hybrid in the next phase?

A: The SAC input is important for developing alternatives and corridors we consider. Alternatives 1 and 5, will be considered as a range for locating an alternative corridor to study in the next phase.

Q: Can a one-lane bridge be considered?

A: There are certain requirements that must be met to be eligible for federal funding from the HBP. Caltrans has commented that the ADT is not low enough to allow a one-lane bridge. The AASHTO Guideline for Geometric Design of Very Low-Volume Local Roads ($ADT \leq 400$) states that a one-lane bridge can only be considered if the existing roadway is one-lane and on two-lane roads where the ADT is less than 100 vehicles per day. The projected future ADT is more than 100.

Q: Why connect Alternative 5 at Carvers Road and not at the resort entrance similar to Alternatives 1, 2, 3, and 7?

A: The original intent was to avoid impacts to existing roads and structures, but the alignment can be adjusted within the corridor to be studied. Driveway connections and conforms will be reviewed closely as roadway alignments are designed.

Q: What design guidelines are typically used to design roadways such as Mt. Murphy Road?

A: There are two design documents that would be utilized, based on the classification and ownership of the facility. AASHTO published a design document entitled “A Policy on Geometric Design of Highways and Streets” that would likely be used for a lower volume, lower speed facility such as Mt. Murphy. For a Caltrans highway such as Hwy 49, the Caltrans design manual entitled “Highway Design Manual” would be used as a design handbook.

Q: Improvements along Carvers Road will impact many private properties. Can you shift the Carvers Road alignment to the south into the Park to minimize impacts?

A: We will look at that option and coordinate with the Park.

Q: There is some confusion about the stakeholder involvement process moving forward on the project. Will the SAC be consulted after this last SAC meeting?

A: Matt explained that the SAC meetings are one step in the planning process. This is the last SAC meeting, but there will be a public meeting to present the Alternatives Analysis Report (AAR) and public involvement during the development of the environmental document.

Screening Criteria Scoring Review

Leslie explained that the alternatives were scored by the project development team using the Screening Criteria developed and refined during SAC #1 and SAC #2 meetings. Each criterion in each category was assigned a score of 1 to 5 based on the performance measure defined for a particular criterion. The score for each category is the sum of the scores for all criteria within a category and the total score is the sum of the score for all categories with best possible total score being 110. The PDT then identified three corridors that contain alternatives to be studied in the next phase of the project.

The proposed corridors include:

- Corridor 1: Existing alignment Alternatives 2A, 2B, and 7
- Corridor 2: Alternatives 3A and 3B
- Corridor 3: Alternative 6

Members of the SAC commented that they believe Alternatives 2, 3, and 7 should be the same corridor and Alternatives 1 and 5 should be included as a corridor. There was concern that alternatives 1, 5, and 6 were only one point different in total score and why Alternative 6 should be carried forward while alternatives 1 and 5 are not.

After discussion, the final agreed upon corridors include:

- Corridor 1: Existing Alignment Alternatives 2A, 2B, 3A, 3B and 7
- Corridor 2: Alternatives 1 and 5 or hybrid of the two
- Corridor 3: Alternative 6

Members of the SAC asked if criteria or categories are weighted. Leslie explained that some categories had more criterion based on the amount of input received from the SAC, which means there is some amount of inherent weighting of categories relative to one another.

The following comments from the SAC were made during discussion of the scoring:

Alternative 3A/3B:

SAC has concerns that the existing bridge will be removed due to the proximity of Alternative 3 to the existing bridge.

Alternative 4:

The review of this alternative noted that Alternative 4 did not score well and would not be considered further.

Alternative 5:

Some members of the SAC felt that Alternative 5 should score more highly on the cultural categories and noted that in many categories, Alternative 5 scored more highly than Alternative 6. SAC would like to see the northern approach tie in with the entrance to the Coloma Resort instead of at the intersection of Carvers Road and Mt Murphy Road. There is concern about flooding at the southern approach based on flooding of Hwy 49 between Alternatives 1 and 8. There is documentation to show the flood waters one to two feet above Hwy 49. Some SAC members felt that Alternative 5 was a good middle ground between losing the bridge at its existing location and still providing connectivity near the center core.

Alternative 6:

There is concern about proximity of Alternative 6 to the north beach river access and picnic areas. SAC asked if Carvers Road could be shifted south to minimize impacts to private property from improvements required along Carvers Road. Some of the SAC felt that having Alternative 6 as one of the corridors gives the Park an option they could support.

Alternative 7:

SAC noted that it would be very tight trying to fit the maximum width alignment between the Grange and Gun Shop.

Alternative 8:

SAC asked how Alternative 8 is different from Alternative 6. Chris explained that this was a variation of Alternative 6 that is located completely outside the Park boundary. SAC asked is funding is affected by how far away the new bridge is from the existing bridge route. Chris noted that the environmental document will address this and Hans added that HBP funding rules limit to 3 miles away.

Alternative 9:

The review of this alternative noted that Alternative 9 did not score well and would not be considered further.

Parking Lot Comments

No new parking lot items were identified during the SAC #3 meeting.

Next Steps

Leslie concluded the meeting at 8:30 and noted that the next meeting will be held for the general public at the Grange sometime in January with the date and time to be determined. A summary of this meeting with all materials presented will be distributed to members of the SAC. The Alternatives Analysis Report will be presented at the January public meeting.

The next public meeting will be scheduled for January 2015. Details will follow once the meeting date is set.