



San Bernardino County

Department of Public Works

Environmental Management
Division

825 E. Third Street, Rm. 123 • San Bernardino, CA 92415

Phone Number (909) 387-8109 • Fax Number (909) 387-7876

NOTICE OF PREPARATION

FROM: San Bernardino County Department of Public Works
Environmental Management Division
825 E. Third Street, Rm. 123
San Bernardino, CA 92415-0835

TO: Responsible Agencies, Trustee Agencies, and Interested Parties

DATE: May 19, 2025

SUBJECT: Notice of Preparation of a Draft Environmental Impact Report for the National Trails Highway at 3 Bridges Project

The County of San Bernardino ("County") will be the Lead Agency and will prepare a Draft Environmental Impact Report ("EIR") for the proposed National Trails Highway at 3 Bridges Project ("Project") described below. We are interested in your agency's views as to the appropriate scope and content of the Draft EIR's environmental information pertaining to your agency's statutory responsibilities related to the Project. We will need the name of a contact person for your agency. For interested individuals, we would like to be informed of environmental topics of interest to you regarding the Project.

Because the County has already determined that an EIR is required for the proposed Project, and as permitted by State California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines Section 15060(d) (Preliminary Review), the County will not prepare an Initial Study for the Project. Further, the proposed Project, its location, and its potential environmental effects are described below. The County welcomes public input during the Notice of Preparation (NOP) review period.

Project Title: National Trails Highway 3 Bridges Project (Project)

Project Number: H15281

Project Applicant: San Bernardino County, Department of Public Works

Project Location: The Project is located on the National Trails Highway, also known as U.S. Route 66. The bridges are situated between the unincorporated communities of Amboy and Chambless in San Bernardino County. Please see the below table for more specific locational information for each bridge.

Bridge Name	County Bridge No.	State Bridge No.	Existing Bridge Length (Feet)	Approximate Bridge Width (Feet)	Location
Amboy Ditch	70	54C0274	18	28	900 feet east of Old Amboy Rd
Saltworks Ditch	74	54C0278	18	28	0.66 miles west of Saltus Rd
Mound Ditch	79	54C0283	18	28	0.55 miles east of Kelbaker Rd

Public Review Period: May 19, 2025 to June 20, 2025

Responses and Comments: Please send your responses and comments by June 20, 2025, to Manikhone (Manie) Cruz, Planner II, at manikhone.cruz@dpw.sbcounty.gov or at the following address. An email response is preferred, if available to you.

Manikhone (Manie) Cruz
Planner II – Capital Improvement Section
Department of Public Works, Environmental Management Division
825 E. Third Street, Rm. 123
San Bernardino, CA 92415-0835

Document Availability: Notice of Preparation

This Notice of Preparation can be viewed on the County of San Bernardino website at: <https://dpw.sbcounty.gov/#notices> . If unavailable on the website, you may obtain the document in electronic format by telephoning the Department of Public Works at (909) 387-8109, or by emailing Manie Cruz, Planner II at manikhone.cruz@dpw.sbcounty.gov. To request a PDF version of the document, please reference the project title above.

Project Description:

The San Bernardino County Department of Public Works (County), in coordination with the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans), proposes to replace three (3) timber trestle bridges with concrete bridges on the National Trails Highway (NTH), formerly known as US Route 66. A summary of the existing bridges including their length, width, and locations is provided in the above table.

The existing bridges were constructed in the 1930s and span over man-made ditches or "flash flood washes". The existing bridges vary in length but share similar construction components. The typical existing timber trestle bridges are composed of simply-supported timber stringer spans with a laminated timber deck supported on timber struttled abutments and bents consisting of timber piles. The bridges are approximately 28-feet wide with guardrails that do not meet current standards.

Through the years, the bridges have been modified by various maintenance and repair work with the intent of maintaining public safety and prolonging the service life of the bridges. The proposed replacements will resolve the bridge deficiencies.

The three existing, two-lane timber bridges will be replaced with bridges designed to American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO) standards for two-lane concrete bridges, guardrail, guardrail end treatments, and approaches. The existing soil is sandy and susceptible to scour, so pile extensions would be utilized at the piers and the abutment foundation would be designed for scour. The bridge barrier would be a concrete barrier Type 85 with bicycle railing painted white which is Manual for Assessing Safety Hardware (MASH) approved and best matches the original railing. The bridge lengths would match the existing lengths, if possible, but would be lengthened as needed to convey the storm flows. Each replacement bridge would accommodate two 12-foot-wide lanes, two 3-foot-wide shoulders and two 2-foot-wide railings. The vertical profile of the bridges will remain close to the existing profile except for those bridges locations in which it is determined that additional vertical clearance is required to provide sufficient water conveyance beneath the bridge. It is anticipated that any such necessary changes in vertical profiles would be three feet or less, with the elevation gradually conforming to the existing roadway elevations.

The National Trails Highway is posted at a speed limit of 55 miles per hour, with all the bridges located on straight segments of the road. The alignment would remain unchanged; however, up to 800 feet of pavement improvements on either side of each bridge may be needed to conform to the existing roadway vertical profile. Grading within the existing channels around the bridges may be needed to ensure sufficient storm conveyance and drainage of the area.

A temporary, parallel road (also known as a “shoo-fly”) would be constructed at each bridge location to accommodate through-traffic during construction. Construction of each bridge replacement is expected to be completed in one season, limiting the time the detour would be in place to one season as well. Based on weather conditions and construction activities, it is possible that there could be intermittent closures of the temporary parallel road.

Permanent acquisition of right-of-way is not anticipated; however, temporary construction easements may be needed to accommodate construction of the temporary detour routes. There is one existing utility, a fiber optic telecommunication line, which may require relocation as part of this project. All utility relocations would be included within the defined limits of the Project area.

Typical equipment for roadway construction would include heavy construction earthmoving equipment, dump trucks and pavers. Typical bridge construction equipment would include cranes, pile drivers, drill rigs, excavators, concrete trucks, and concrete pumps.

Purpose

The purpose of the Project is to replace structurally deficient bridges in order to:

- Enhance safety on National Trails Highway by providing new vehicular crossings for three bridges;
- Provide a transportation facility consistent with County and Caltrans Standards, as well as local and regional plans.

Need

The existing National Trails Highway Bridges are rated “Structurally Deficient” by Caltrans under Federal Highway Administration prescribed inspection criteria. Full replacement of the bridges is needed because the current structures do not meet structural design standards.

Environmental Factors Potentially Affected

The County has determined that the proposed Project will require preparation of an EIR pursuant to CEQA. The following environmental topics will be addressed in the EIR.

Aesthetics: The EIR will describe the aesthetic and urban design implications of the proposed Project, including its visual relationships to the surrounding vicinity and the potential visual impacts perceived by vehicular users.

Agriculture and Forestry Resources: The EIR will evaluate potential impacts related to land used or zoned for agriculture or forestry resources or designated as farmland by the state.

Air Quality: The EIR will describe the potential short- and long-term impacts of replacing three bridges on local and regional air quality based on methodologies defined by the MDAQMD.

Biological Resources: The EIR will evaluate potential impacts on biological resources, including the Desert Tortoise (*Gopherus agassizii*), resulting from replacement of three bridges. Mitigation measures will be defined as necessary to avoid or reduce the potential impacts.

Cultural Resources: The EIR will describe any potential impacts and mitigation needs associated with historic and cultural (archaeological) resources, including the National Trails Highway Historic District, which is eligible for the National Register of Historic Places. The Saltworks Ditch Bridge and the Mound Ditch Bridge are contributing elements of the National Trails Highway Historic District.

Energy: The EIR will evaluate whether there are any inefficient, or unnecessary consumption of energy resources.

Geology and Soils: The EIR will describe the potential geological and paleontological implications of replacing the three bridges.

Greenhouse Gas Emissions: The EIR will describe the potential impacts on local greenhouse gas emissions and global climate change, following the latest approach and methodologies recommended by State and regional agencies that could result from the proposed three bridge replacements.

Hazards and Hazardous Materials: The EIR will describe the potential for hazardous material use or hazardous waste investigation anticipated from the Project and will describe any associated potential impacts and mitigation needs. Potential construction period hazards, hazardous material impacts, and mitigation needs will also be described.

Hydrology and Water Quality: The EIR will evaluate potential impacts on hydrology and water quality resulting from replacing the three bridges, including possible effects related to drainage and flooding.

Land Use and Planning: The EIR will describe the potential effects of replacing three bridges on existing and planned land use characteristics in the Project vicinity.

Mineral Resources: The EIR will evaluate whether the project will result in the loss of availability of a known mineral resource or a local mineral resource recovery area.

Noise: The EIR will describe potential construction and long-term operation noise (traffic, mechanical systems etc.) impacts and related mitigation needs.

Population and Housing: The EIR will describe the anticipated effects of the three bridges replacement on existing and projected population and housing characteristics for the nearby communities.

Public Services: The EIR will describe potential impacts, including temporary construction impacts, on public services and any mitigation needs.

Transportation: The EIR will describe the transportation and circulation implications of the proposed Project, including its resulting vehicle miles travelled.

Tribal Cultural Resources: The EIR will describe potential impacts to tribal cultural resources and describe the results of tribal consultation.

Utilities and Service Systems: The EIR will describe potential impacts on local utility and service systems.

Wildfires: The EIR will describe potential increases in exposure/risk to wildfires to the project site and surrounding areas.

