

NOTICE OF PREPARATION OF A DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT FOR THE NATIONAL TRAILS HIGHWAY AT 19 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 19 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. The Project Number is H15133-15135; H15137-15152.

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.

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 Ludlow and Essex in San Bernardino County.

The San Bernardino County Department of Public Works (County), in coordination with the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans), proposes to replace nineteen (19) timber trestle bridges with concrete bridges on the National Trails Highway (NTH), formerly known as US Route 66. The project is located between the unincorporated communities of Ludlow and Essex in the County of San Bernardino. A summary of the existing bridges including their length, width, and locations is provided in the above table.

The existing bridges were constructed circa 1930 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-foot wide with guardrails that are substandard. Due to the poor bridge conditions Caltrans has approved federal Highway Bridge Program (HBP) funds for their replacement.

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 all the bridge deficiencies and will remove the bridges from the Eligible Bridge List (EBL).

The 19 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 steel California ST-85 Bridge Rail painted white which is Manual for Assessing Safety Hardware (MASH) approved and best matches the existing 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 3 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, excavators, and concrete pumps.

The County welcomes interested parties’ comments as to the appropriate scope and content of the Draft EIR’s environmental information. Please send your responses and comments by Thursday, **April 03, 2025** to Arnold (AJ) Gerber, Senior Planner at arnold.gerber@dpw.sbcounty.gov or at the following address. An email response is preferred, if available to you.

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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 the Senior Planner at arnold.gerber@dpw.sbcounty.gov. To request a PDF version of the document, please reference the project title above.

