

Agenda Report

March 17, 2025

TO: Honorable Mayor and City Council

FROM: Department of Public Works

SUBJECT: ADOPT A MITIGATED NEGATIVE DECLARATION FOR THE HOLLY STREET BRIDGE SEISMIC RETROFIT PROJECT AND APPROVE PROJECT DESIGN PLANS

RECOMMENDATION:

It is recommended that the City Council:

1. Find on the basis of the whole record before it (including the initial study and any comments received), that there is no substantial evidence that the project will have a significant effect on the environment and that the Mitigated Negative Declaration reflects the lead agency's independent judgement and analysis; and, therefore adopt a Mitigated Negative Declaration for the Holly Street Bridge Seismic Retrofit project pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act, and adopt a Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program; and
2. Approve the Holly Street Bridge Seismic Retrofit project reflected in the attached Project Design Plan.

BACKGROUND:

The City, in coordination with Caltrans, proposes to rehabilitate and seismically retrofit the Holly Street Bridge which spans the Arroyo Seco Flood Control Channel, Arroyo Seco Trail, and North Arroyo Boulevard. Located southeast of the intersection of Linda Vista Avenue and Holly Street, the concrete arch-deck span bridge was built in 1925 and is approximately 45 feet wide and 400 feet long. It carries two lanes of traffic (one in each direction) and two sidewalks, with no barrier between pedestrians and vehicles. The current Annual Average Daily Traffic (AADT) is 7,453.

According to the 2024 Caltrans Bridge Inspection Report, the bridge has a sufficiency rating of 32.6 and is classified as Structurally Deficient. The proposed project includes deck rehabilitation, concrete barrier repairs, joint rehabilitation, retrofit of the spandrel columns, concrete spall repair, and bonded grout treatment.

In 2019, the City of Pasadena released a Draft Initial Study with Proposed Mitigated Negative Declaration (IS/MND) for the Holly Street Bridge Seismic Retrofit project, followed by a 30-day public review period. During this review period, the City hosted a community workshop. In 2024, as a result of project scope modification, the City re-engaged the public and presented the project at a community open house and District 6 town hall meeting. These events provided project details and gathered public feedback. Four comments were received during the review period, and responses are included in Appendix E of the Final IS/MND (Attachment A). A Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program (MMRP), outlining the necessary measures to reduce environmental impact, is provided in Appendix D of the Final IS/MND.

Project approval and adoption of the MND are appropriate and necessary at this point in the design process, which is sufficiently complete to approve the project, and necessary to ensure permits are in place prior to soliciting construction bids. MND adoption is required for the issuance of a Notice of Determination (NOD). The Holly Street Bridge spans the Arroyo Seco Flood Control Channel which is operated and maintained by the Los Angeles County Flood Control District (LACFCD). LACFCD will require an encroachment permit before construction can begin but will not engage in the permit process with the City until a NOD has been issued. Securing the encroachment permit at this point, prior to awarding a construction contract, ensures that permit requirements are incorporated into the bidding process and mitigates potential construction delays.

The project design is currently 65% complete, with only minor changes expected during the permitting process. Project design plans are included as Attachment B. Prior to construction, Public Works staff will return to the City Council to affirm the NOD or adopt an updated MND, if necessary, and request approval of a construction contract.

COUNCIL POLICY CONSIDERATION:

This project is consistent with the City Council's strategic goals to improve, maintain, and enhance public facilities and infrastructure, and support and promote the quality of life.

ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS:

The California Environmental Quality Act (Section 21000, et. seq. of the California Public Resources Code, hereafter CEQA) requires analysis of agency approvals of discretionary "projects." A "project," under CEQA, is defined as "the whole of an action, which has a potential for resulting in either a direct physical change in the environment, or a reasonably foreseeable indirect physical change in the environment." The Holly Street Bridge Seismic Retrofit project is defined as a project under CEQA.

In accordance with the requirements of CEQA, an Initial Study (IS) was prepared in order to identify and analyze the project's potential effects on the environment. The IS considered 20 environmental topics to comprehensively evaluate the project's potential environmental impacts. Based on the analysis in the IS, potentially significant impacts

were identified related to Biological Resources, Cultural Resources, and Tribal Cultural Resources; however, all impacts will be mitigated to a less than significant level through project design and incorporation of avoidance, minimization, and mitigation measures BIO-1 through BIO-7, CUL-1 through CUL-2, and TCR-1 through TCR-2.

The City prepared a Notice of Intent (NOI) to Adopt a MND for the project, which established a public review period of the IS/MND from July 17, 2019, to August 15, 2019. The NOI was posted at the Los Angeles County Clerk's Office and was sent to owners/occupants of surrounding properties and interested agencies, organizations, and individuals. The NOI included details about the project, instructions on accessing the Draft IS/MND, guidelines for submitting comments, and an announcement of the date of a Public Workshop. During the public review period, the Draft IS/MND was available for review on the City's environmental notices webpage at <https://www.cityofpasadena.net/planning/environmental-notice/>. Printed copies of the documents were also available at the City of Pasadena Public Works Division and at the Pasadena Central Library. The Public Workshop was held at La Casita del Arroyo on July 31, 2019 to provide an opportunity for the public to discuss the project and the Draft IS/MND.

Four comments on the Draft IS/MND were received during the public review period and the City has prepared responses to each of these comments included in Appendix E of the Final IS/MND. A Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program has been included in Appendix D of the Final IS/MND to summarize the mitigation measures necessary to ensure the project will have a less than significant impact on the environment.

Since public circulation of the Draft IS/MND in 2019, the seismic and rehabilitation design has been refined and the Final IS/MND has been updated to include the revised project description. The refinement of the design consisted of utilizing deck rehabilitation instead of replacement; concrete barrier rehabilitation instead of replacement; joint rehabilitation; spandrel column retrofit; and removing archway stiffening, pier cap strengthening, retrofit foundation hold downs, and crack sealing. These revisions did not result in a new significant effect, new mitigation measures, or the determination that substantial evidence in light of the whole record exists that project may have a significant effect on the environment which cannot be avoided or mitigated. As such, public recirculation of a Draft IS/MND is not required, per CEQA guidelines 15073.5.

While public recirculation of the Draft IS/MND is not required, public input is important to the City and since several years had passed since the 2019 public engagement, the City provided the public three additional opportunities to view the IS/MND and discuss the project. The first opportunity was by presenting the project at a District 6 Town Hall meeting on July 24, 2024. The second opportunity was hosting a Public Open House at La Casita del Arroyo on August 20, 2024. The third opportunity was by making the document accessible to the public and requesting written comments between August 12, 2024 and September 11, 2024. A notice which included details about the project, instructions on accessing the Draft IS/MND, guidelines for submitting comments, and an

announcement of the date of the Public Open House was sent to owners/occupants of surrounding properties. Copies of the IS/MND were available for review on the City's environmental notices webpage at <https://www.cityofpasadena.net/planning/environmental-notices/>; City of Pasadena Public Works Division, and at the Linda Vista Branch Library. No public comments were received during this renotification period.

As the project proceeds through the Flood Control District encroachment permit and funding process, its final design may change slightly. There is no expectation that any design modifications would have increased or different environmental effects than those already discussed and mitigated in the IS/MND; however, City staff will review all changes and would return to City Council with any necessary further environmental review.

On the basis of the whole record, including but not limited to the project's IS and responses to public comments received, there is no substantial evidence that the project could have a significant effect on the environment after the implementation of mitigation measures. Therefore, staff recommends that the City Council adopt the proposed MND and the corresponding MMRP, and approve the project as reflected in the design plan.

It should also be noted that due to the use of Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) funding for the project, the project is also subject to review under the National Environmental Policy Act (42 U.S.C. 4321 et seq, hereinafter NEPA). Caltrans, through delegation of authority by FHWA, is the NEPA lead agency for the project. On October 3, 2019, Caltrans approved a NEPA Categorical Exclusion based on a set of environmental technical studies that showed the project would result in no significant impacts to the environment with inclusion of appropriate avoidance, minimization, and mitigation measures. Due to the refinement of the project description, Caltrans reviewed the proposed revisions to the project and determined that it still qualified under a Categorical Exclusion. Caltrans revalidated the NEPA Categorical Exclusion on September 8, 2023. No further review under NEPA is required unless there is a change in project design.

FISCAL IMPACT:

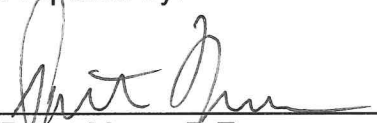
There is no fiscal impact as a result of this action. The project is fully funded through the completion of the design phase by existing budgeted appropriations in the *Holly Street Bridge – Seismic Retrofit (73323)* Capital Improvement Program project. It is anticipated that construction funds will be appropriated with the FY 26 budget adoption. Both the design phase and construction phase are funded by a Caltrans Highway Bridge Program grant which requires no local agency matching funds.

Respectfully submitted,



GREG DE VINCK, P.E.
Director of Public Works

Prepared by:



Brent Maue, P.E.
Acting City Engineer

Approved by:



MIGUEL MÁRQUEZ
City Manager

Attachment A – Initial Study/Mitigated Negative Declaration
Attachment B – Project Plans for Construction of Holly Street Bridge Seismic Retrofit