

City of Sacramento
City Council - 5PM Report
915 I Street Sacramento, CA 95814
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File ID: 2025-00499

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Discussion Item 1.

Truxel Bridge Concept and Feasibility Study (T15235000)

File ID: 2025-00499

Location: Truxel Road and Garden Highway in District 3, Represented by Vice Mayor Talamantes; Sequoia Pacific Boulevard and Richards Boulevard crossing the Lower American River in District 4, Represented by Councilmember Pluckebaum

Recommendation: Adopt a **Resolution:** 1) accepting the Truxel Bridge Concept and Feasibility Study Report; 2) adopting Alternative 3B as the preferred alternative to guide future phases of the Truxel Bridge implementation; and 3) directing the City Manager or the City Manager's designee to identify and recommend actions toward implementation of the preferred alternative

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Attachments:

- 1- Description/Analysis
- 2- Resolution
- 3- Bridge Alternatives

Description/Analysis

Issue Detail: In 2013, the City prepared the American River Bridge Crossings Alternatives Study to examine the most appropriate options to improve mobility options across the American River. With only freeway bridges currently available, the American River serves as a critical mobility barrier for local trips, transit, and bicyclists and pedestrians. The study examined noise, visual, biological, cultural, and recreational impacts, as well as impacts on Vehicle Miles Travelled (VMT), congestion, emergency response, and land use factors. The report recommended three multi-modal bridge options to improve mobility, reduce VMT, improve emergency response, and provide transit and active transportation access.

The City Council adopted these recommendations (Resolution 2013-0267). Subsequently, a multi-modal bridge at Truxel Road was incorporated into the 2035 and 2040 General Plans and incorporated into Regional Transportation Plans adopted by the Sacramento Area Council of Governments (SACOG). The bridge is critical infrastructure to support high frequency transit to Natomas, to support direct travel for local trips serving South Natomas, and to provide for bicycle and pedestrian access. The 2040 General Plan also included lane reductions on Truxel Road to emphasize its function for local trips and transit.

Caltrans awarded a grant in 2022 to the City of Sacramento, as a subrecipient to the Sacramento Area Council of Governments (SACOG), to prepare the Truxel Bridge Concept and Feasibility Study. The study was intended to identify key design concepts consistent with the planned multi-modal bridge and identify a preferred bridge design alternative to support the next steps for full environmental review, design, and construction.

After completing analysis and public engagement, staff recommends that the City Council approves Alternative 3B as the preferred alternative to be used to guide subsequent phases of the Truxel Bridge implementation.

Four alternatives (1, 2, 3A, and 3B), outlined in Attachment 3, were developed for the Truxel Bridge Concept and Feasibility Study with an internal Technical Advisory Committee that included Sacramento Regional Transit (RT).

- Alternative 1 was designed consistent with a CEQA alternative for the Green Line light rail extension developed by RT in 2016, and provides a conventional separation of modes grouped by direction on either side of the bridge
- Alternative 2 combines transit and cars in the same lanes with a center median for emergency services and a bidirectional Class 1 trail for pedestrians and cyclists on one side of the bridge
- Alternative 3A separates each mode into separate bidirectional couplets with pedestrians on the west side to accommodate a west side connection down to the Jedidiah Smith Trail
- Alternative 3B mirrors the modes of 3A allowing for an east side pedestrian connection down to the Jedidiah Smith Trail using a switchback.

Staff recommends Alternative 3B as the option that best meets the needs for operations of all modes. The next step to advance development of the bridge is to move ahead with formal Planning, Alternatives Analysis, and Environmental Documentation (PA&ED).

Policy Considerations:

A new all-modes two-lane bridge over the Lower American River at Truxel Road is a component of the adopted Sacramento 2040 General Plan - Mobility Element and the regional Metropolitan Transportation Plan/Sustainable Communities Strategy (MTP/SCS).

The project promotes the following General Plan policies:

- Prioritizing mobility, comfort, health, safety, and convenience for those walking, followed by those bicycling and riding transit, ahead of design and operations for those driving (M-1.1);
- Planning and making investments to foster a transportation system that improves the health of Sacramento residents through actions that make active transportation, non- motorized modes, high-occupancy, and zero- emission vehicles (ZEVs) viable, attractive alternatives to automobiles that use internal combustion engines (M-1.3);
- Seeking opportunities to create a finer-grained network of streets and walking and bicycling connections, especially within a 1/2-mile walk of light rail stations and transit stops (M-1.7);
- Engaging the community in decisions that affect mobility, including planning, design outcomes and implementation, with a particular focus on planning with, and not for, historically marginalized, disadvantaged communities and environmental justice communities (M-1.10);
- Striving to increase bicycling and walking citywide so that it can meet its equity, reduced vehicle miles traveled, and sustainability goals (M-1.11);
- Prioritizing designs that strengthen the protection of people bicycling such as improvements that increase visibility of bicyclists, increase bikeway widths, raise bikeways, design safer intersection crossings and turns, and separate bikeways from driving traffic wherever feasible (M-1.18);
- Collaborating with the Sacramento Regional Transit District (RT) to facilitate the implementation of high-frequency transit service on a network of interconnected corridors with characteristics that best support high-frequency transit service and those characteristics that meet City goals, managing corridor operations to provide for adequate transit vehicle speed and reliability (M-1.20);
- Coordinating with the Sacramento Regional Transit District (RT) to plan for the extension of frequent transit service and other related transit improvements that are comfortable, convenient, and interconnected from the Greater Land Park, North Natomas, Pocket/Greenhaven, South Area, and South Natomas Community Plan Areas to areas with concentrated employment. This may include frequent bus service provided by RT as an interim solution along routes ultimately planned for light rail service (M-1.21);
- Supporting implementation of transit- only lanes to facilitate high-frequency reliable bus and/or light rail service to and between major destinations, job centers, residential areas, and intermodal facilities in Sacramento (M-1.24);
- Planning and seeking funding for new bridges, when appropriate, to improve multimodal connectivity and provide for emergency evacuation routes (M-5.3);

Economic Impacts: None.

Environmental Considerations:

California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA): Pursuant to section 15262 the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) guidelines, a project involving only feasibility or planning

studies for possible future actions that have not yet been approved or funded does not require the preparation of an EIR or Negative Declaration. The Truxel Bridge project was analyzed and approved at a programmatic level through the 2040 General Plan Master Environmental Impact Report. Before advancing to construction, project-level environmental review will be required.

Sustainability: Transportation is responsible for 57% of Sacramento's local greenhouse gas emissions, the single largest sector. Providing safe multi-modal transportation alternatives helps to reduce single-occupant vehicle use and contributes towards Sacramento's climate change goals. This feasibility study furthers the City's commitment to sustainability by laying the groundwork to significantly reduce the use of fossil fuels, encourage less driving, reduce dependence on private automobiles, and support expansion of bicycle, pedestrian, and public transit access. The recommended actions also support Climate Action and Adaptation Plan Measure 2.6 directing the City of Sacramento to strive to remove and minimize the effect of natural and man-made barriers and obstacles between and within existing neighborhoods, corridors, and centers to ensure that the transportation network is continuous.

Commission/Committee Action: On January 16, 2025, the Active Transportation Commission passed a Motion rejecting the Truxel Bridge Concept and Feasibility Study and instead recommended that the City Council direct staff to evaluate and study a Truxel Bridge alternative without personal motor vehicles.

Rationale for Recommendation: Staff has completed the Truxel Bridge Concept and Feasibility Study. The Study recommendations were developed transparently and objectively with ongoing input from community members, advocates, and a dedicated project development team that included RT.

Staff is recommending Alternative 3B as the preferred alternative for the following reasons: 1) Alternative 3B, like 1 and 3A, does not combine light rail and general purpose lanes which was a concern for both RT and City emergency services; 2) Alternative 3B, like 2 and 3A, can minimize property takes on Sequoia Pacific Boulevard by avoiding existing buildings; 3) Alternative 3B allows for an east side connection down to the Jedidiah Smith Trail for pedestrians and cyclists with a switchback that goes under the bridge, which narrows the aerial footprint of the connection; 4) Alternative 3B, like 3A, provides a two-way separated bikeway (Class IV) with transit lanes as a buffer from automobile lanes to lower the stress level on pedestrians and cyclists; 5) Alternative 3B, like 2 and 3A, avoids the need to relocate a high-voltage PG&E tower thereby reducing cost and complexity; and 6) Alternative 3B, like 1 and 3B, can more easily be converted from buses to light rail if some form of bus transit must be run prior to expansion of the Green Line.

City Council support for the Truxel Bridge Concept and Feasibility Study recommendation will allow staff to focus resources to identify necessary strategies to implement the desired improvements.

Financial Considerations: The Truxel Bridge Concept and Feasibility Study was fully funded by grant funds and local funding support. Future steps toward environmental documentation, final design, and construction of the bridge will require state and federal grant funding, as the total cost for the project will ultimately be hundreds of millions of dollars, regardless of the alternative selected. The study examines potential funding sources for implementation.

This past January, as directed through Motion 2025-0009, the City submitted a grant application for first phase of planning and environmental clearance for the Truxel Bridge to the federal Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity (RAISE) program, although it should be noted that the new federal administration renamed the program to Better Utilizing Investments to Leverage Development (BUILD) and reduced the nationwide program funding by 90 percent.

With the priority on transit access, any future funding will need to be a partnership between the City and RT, as the two agencies have access to different types of state and federal funding programs that can be combined to support a multi-modal bridge.

Local Business Enterprise (LBE): Not applicable.

Background:

The intent of the Truxel Bridge Concept and Feasibility Study is to add detail to the City's adopted plans to extend Truxel Road south with a new two-lane all-modes bridge over the lower American River from South Natomas into the urban core as identified in the General Plan and MTP. One goal of the study is to develop a preferred layout for the different users of the bridge including people walking, cycling, driving, and riding transit. Another goal is to identify the physical constraints and design requirements of the various local, regional, state, and federal partners in order to identify a feasible horizontal and vertical alignment to advance to the next phase of implementation.

This effort follows the American River Crossing Alternatives Study adopted in 2013 that established the need and purpose for crossing the Lower American River. That analysis identified the primary reasons for a new and/or improved crossings including the need to address activities that are limited due to existing conditions, future congestion, emergency response times, and natural disaster evacuation routes. That analysis also recognized the consequences of having to make longer trips utilizing State highways including more car trips, leading to more fuel consumption, producing more air pollution.

There are four existing routes to cross the Lower American River into the Central City. The Jibboom Street Bridge provides a low-volume 2-lane crossing with sidewalks near the confluence with the Sacramento River that connects the Sacramento River Bike Trail and the Two Rivers Bike Trail to the beginning of the Jedidiah Smith Memorial Trail/American River Bike Trail in Discovery Park. Access to the Jibboom Street Bridge and Discovery Park can be frustrated by seasonal flooding. I-5 provides an all-weather 8-lane bridge with a posted speed limit of 65 MPH, no accommodations for

pedestrians, and access for cyclists when no other options are available. State Route 160 provides a 6-lane bridge with a narrow substandard pathway on the westbound span with a connection to Northgate Boulevard that is also subject to seasonal flooding. Pipe's Bridge is immediately east of State Route 160 offering a bicycle and pedestrian only crossing for the Sacramento Northern Bikeway but the connection beneath State Route 160 is also prone to seasonal flooding.

The City Council considered improvements to the first three of these existing crossings as well as five new crossings in the 2013 study. City staff provided quantitative and qualitative analysis of these eight alternatives and the City Council adopted the recommendations of the American River Crossing Alternatives Study to support further analysis for pedestrian and bicycle facilities on I-5, a new two-lane all-modes bridge at Truxel Road, and all-weather improvements to Northgate Boulevard with an aerial connection to State Route 160. Subsequently, the multi-modal bridge at Truxel Road was included in the 2035 General Plan and 2040 General Plan, as well as the 2035 Metropolitan Transportation Plan (federal and state mandated regional transportation plan (RTP) and Sustainable Communities Strategy (SCS)), and as currently adopted by SACOG as transportation projects in the upcoming 2040 Blueprint (RTP/SCS).

In order to advance this critical infrastructure, the City Council approved application for Caltrans Sustainable Transportation Planning Grant funding for the Truxel Bridge alternative which was awarded in 2022 for this concept and feasibility study (Resolution 2021-0323). The study launched in June of 2023 and public engagement continued through Fall of 2024.

Existing infrastructure on Sequoia Pacific Boulevard was mapped to inform the draft cross-sections. Existing buildings, power line towers, and trail connections were mapped to inform feasible horizontal alignment options. Power lines, levees, and existing grades were also mapped to inform feasible vertical alignment options. Coordination with the Army Corps of Engineers, the Central Valley Flood Protection Board, and the US Coast Guard was performed to identify navigable waterway clearance, freeboard height, and allowable impacts to water surface elevations. Consultation with Sacramento County and the United Auburn Indian Community was performed to identify cultural and biological resources in the project vicinity. The approximate height and length of a new crossing has also been calculated to inform pier placement.

A workshop was held on January 10, 2024 to introduce the community to the study, to clarify the objectives of the study, to answer questions, and to gather feedback generally regarding a new crossing of the Lower American River and specifically regarding three initial draft cross-sections. An online survey in English and Spanish collected additional public feedback for two weeks in February. Staff also presented the workshop materials to the Active Transportation Committee on February 15, 2024 for review and comment. Comments from the workshop, the Active Transportation Commission, and the online survey were used to further refine the initial draft cross-sections before they were presented to a focus group of 10 representatives from partner organizations and agencies on April 9, 2024. Comments received from the focus group led to the development of the fourth alternative (3B).

The four alternatives were brought back to the Active Transportation Commission on January 16, 2025, to identify a preferred alternative to recommend to Council. Instead, the ATC rejected all of the alternatives with a recommendation for Council to direct staff to analyze an alternative without cars.

The consultant team has substantially completed all contracted technical analysis for the Concept and Feasibility Study including preliminary foundation reporting, environmental documentation reporting, hydraulics study reporting, preliminary constructability reporting, traffic forecasting, planning level cost estimating, and funding strategy development to inform staff's recommendation. The draft final study is attached.

Please note that accepting the ATC recommendations would require amendments to the City's General Plan Mobility Element and the SACOG Regional Transportation Plan to designate the bridge as a transit-only bridge with bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure. RT would become the lead agency, as the City of Sacramento is not a designated transit agency and is therefore ineligible to directly apply for federal or state transit capital funding or to consult directly with state and federal transit oversight and funding agencies, even with active transportation components. The City would act as a responsible and commenting agency when RT is ready to advance the project toward construction and would continue to collaborate with RT in pursuing funding opportunities.

RESOLUTION NO.

Adopted by the Sacramento City Council

TRUXEL BRIDGE CONCEPT AND FEASIBILITY STUDY (T15235000)

BACKGROUND

- A. The Truxel Bridge alignment was one of the three adopted alternatives from the 2013 American River Crossing Alternatives Study. This study examined noise, visual, biological, cultural, and recreational impacts, as well as impacts on Vehicle Miles Travelled (VMT), congestion, emergency response, and land use factors. The report recommended three multi-modal bridge options as the best options for mobility, to reduce VMT, and emergency response as well as provide transit and active transportation options.
- B. The California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) awarded a grant in 2022 to the City of Sacramento, as a subrecipient to the Sacramento Area Council of Governments (SACOG), to prepare the Truxel Bridge Concept and Feasibility Study
- C. The City contracted with Dokken Engineering in 2023 to prepare the Truxel Bridge Concept and Feasibility Study and Dokken has completed all of the contracted tasks.
- D.
- D. Four alignment alternatives were prepared with input from relevant resource agencies, the public, advocate groups, and an internal project development team including the Sacramento Regional Transit District (SacRT).
- E.
- E. The four alignment alternatives were evaluated against key project criteria and alternative 3B best achieved key performance outcomes.

BASED ON THE FACTS SET FORTH IN THE BACKGROUND, THE CITY COUNCIL RESOLVES AS FOLLOWS:

- Section 1. The Truxel Bridge Concept and Feasibility Study is accepted as complete and accurate.
- Section 2. Alternative 3B is adopted as the preferred alternative to guide future design, engineering, and analysis.
- Section 3. The City Manager or the City Manager's designee is directed to identify and recommend actions toward implementation of the preferred alternative.

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Exhibit A. Truxel Bridge Concept and Feasibility Study