

**NOTICE OF PREPARATION OF A
DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT
FOR THE THREE CREEKS TRAIL PEDESTRIAN BRIDGE PROJECT**

As the Lead Agency, the City of San José will prepare an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) for the Three Creeks Pedestrian Bridge Project (**File Number PP13-085**). The City welcomes your input regarding the scope and content of the environmental information that is relevant to your area of interest, or to your agency's statutory responsibilities in connection with the proposed project.

The project description, location, and probable environmental effects that will be analyzed in the EIR for the project are attached.

According to State law, the deadline for your response is 30 days after receipt of this notice; however, we would appreciate an earlier response, if possible. Please identify a contact person, and send your response to:

City of San José, Planning Division, Attn: John Davidson
City Hall, 200 East Santa Clara Street, 3rd Floor, San José CA 95113-1905
Phone: (408) 535-7895, e-mail: john.davidson@sanjoseca.gov

The Department of Planning, Building and Code Enforcement of the City of San José will hold a Public Scoping Meeting for the EIR to describe the proposed project and the environmental review process and to obtain your verbal input on the EIR analysis for the proposal. This EIR Public Scoping Meeting is scheduled for **Tuesday, October 21, 2014 at 6:30 p.m. at the Willow Glen Community Center (2175 Lincoln Avenue, San Jose CA)**. You are welcome to attend and give us your input on the scope of the EIR so that it addresses all relevant environmental issues.

John Davidson, Senior Planner
Planning Division



Deputy

Date: October 9, 2014

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Introduction

The purpose of an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) is to inform decision-makers and the general public of the environmental effects of a proposed project that an agency may implement or approve. The EIR process is intended to provide information sufficient to evaluate a project and its potential for significant impacts on the environment, to examine methods of reducing adverse impacts, and to consider alternatives to the project.

The EIR for the proposed project will be prepared and processed in accordance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) of 1970, as amended. In accordance with the requirements of CEQA, the EIR will include the following:

- A summary of the project;
- A project description;
- A description of the existing environmental setting, potential environmental impacts, and mitigation measures;
- Alternatives to the project as proposed; and
- Environmental consequences, including (a) any significant environmental effects which cannot be avoided if the project is implemented; (b) any significant irreversible and irretrievable commitments of resources; (c) the growth inducing impacts of the proposed project; (d) effects found not to be significant; and (e) cumulative impacts.

Project Background

The City of San José is in the process of developing the Los Gatos Creek Trail and the Three Creeks Trail as part of a citywide effort to improve the pedestrian and bicycle trail system. The proposed project would be a component of the Three Creeks Trail, which will follow the former Western Pacific railroad alignment recently acquired by the City, and would provide a connection between the Los Gatos Creek, Guadalupe River, and Coyote Creek trail systems. A dirt trail along the proposed Three Creeks Trail alignment is currently open to the public, but the existing Willow Glen railroad trestle is fenced off due to safety concerns.

In 2004, the City of San José completed an environmental impact assessment for the Los Gatos Creek Trail, Reach 4 project, including retrofit of the Willow Glen trestle focusing on deck repair and replacement (City Project File No. PP04-01-014). Subsequent to that action, the City further studied the potential to retrofit the trestle and determined that the extent of a retrofit project would be much greater than anticipated. Based on the relative merits of a retrofit versus a replacement project, the City decided to advance the replacement project and conducted a new environmental analysis. The City adopted an Initial Study/Mitigated Negative Declaration (SCN 2013112050, City Project File No. PP13-085) and obtained regulatory permits for the replacement project in early 2014. The Initial Study/Mitigated Negative Declaration was the subject of legal action, which resulted in a judicial determination that there was substantial evidence in the record supporting a fair argument that the project may have a significant effect on the environment. The court ordered that an EIR be prepared.

Project Location

The Three Creeks Trail Pedestrian Bridge Project is in Willow Glen, a neighborhood of San José. The project is situated between a residential neighborhood and a commercial/industrial area on a crossing over Los Gatos Creek between Lonus Street and Coe Avenue (latitude 37°18'53.16"N, longitude 121°54'13.00"W) (see Figure 1). Existing land uses adjacent to the project site include: Residential Neighborhood, Neighborhood/Community Commercial, Light Industrial, and Downtown.

Project Description and Alternatives

The proposed project includes the replacement of the existing wood railroad trestle with a pre-fabricated, 210-foot-long, single-span steel truss bridge with a poured concrete deck. The new bridge would be on the same alignment as the existing bridge. The wood abutments would be replaced with new concrete abutments supported on driven H-piles. There would be no permanent supports in the creek channel. Temporary supports might be needed for erection of the new bridge. Small retaining walls would be installed adjacent to the new bridge abutments to allow for the future Los Gatos Creek trail connection to the northeast and for a viewing area on the south side of the new bridge.

Aesthetic treatments are included in the bridge design. The pedestrian bridge will include design elements that recall the former Western Pacific Railroad operations and trestle structure, including two large emblems inset in the pavement representing the Western Pacific and Union Pacific Railroads, and an interpretive display panel focusing on the timeline and history of the trestle as it relates to the surrounding community. The final aesthetic treatments are continuing to be refined.

The demolition of the existing bridge would require operation of cranes, excavators, and loaders along the length of the bridge. A work lane, approximately 20 feet wide, would be established along the upstream side of the bridge running parallel to the full length of the bridge. The existing trestle deck is supported by a total of 81 wood piles, with additional support from wood braces. Pile removal techniques would include the following complete- and partial-removal methods:

- Vertical pulling involves gripping the pile with a chain, cable, or collar, and pulling with an excavator or hydraulic crane.
- Vibratory extraction involves attaching a vibratory hammer to the pile to break the seal between the pile and the soil and pulling with a crane or excavator from the top of the existing bridge deck.
- Horizontal snapping or breaking typically involves pushing or pulling the pile laterally to break off the pile near the ground line.
- Subsurface cutting involves using hydraulic or pneumatic saws or shears attached to an excavator to cut the pile below the ground line.

The piles and bridge deck are composed mostly of creosote-treated wood, and demolition would generate a large amount of treated wood waste. Construction debris would be disposed of in accordance with California Department of Toxic Substances Control regulations for treated wood waste.

The construction of the new bridge would involve excavating ground for the abutments and retaining walls using backhoes and excavators, pile driving of H-piles, placement of reinforcing steel and concrete, assembly of a pre-fabricated steel truss bridge using large cranes, and placement of a concrete deck on the bridge using a concrete pump truck. The approaches to the bridge would be prepared by placing sub-base and then placing concrete pavement. Aggregate paving would be provided to connect the new bridge approaches to the existing dirt trails.

There are no large-diameter trees directly under the trestle, but some nearby tree branches hang over the trestle.

Overhanging branches would need to be pruned, and in some cases nonnative trees would be removed to allow equipment access. It is not expected that any native trees would be removed.

The EIR also will include an evaluation of an alternative that would preserve the existing Willow Glen trestle – a Retrofit Alternative. Construction activities would occur under a Retrofit Alternative in order to make the trestle safe for pedestrian and bicycle use. These activities include repairs to many of the individual wooden piles, pile caps, and horizontal wooden braces; repairs to the abutments on the north and south ends of the bridge; and a complete replacement of the bridge deck. The new bridge deck is expected to be concrete, with railing details and other architectural features to be determined. In order to accommodate this construction activity, a temporary work lane would be established in the creek corridor similar to the proposed project. In addition, preservation of the wooden trestle would require ongoing maintenance activities such as fire suppression and brush clearing in the creek channel to clear obstructions following storms.

The EIR also will consider a No Project Alternative – no bridge retrofit or replacement activities occur, but ongoing maintenance would be required for safety such as fence repair, brush clearing, and fire suppression.

Potential Environmental Impacts of the Project

The EIR will describe the existing environmental conditions on the project site and will identify the significant environmental impacts anticipated to result from development of the project as proposed. Where potentially significant environmental impacts are identified, the EIR will also discuss mitigation measures that may make it possible to avoid or reduce significant impacts, as appropriate. The analysis in the EIR will include the following specific categories of environmental impacts and concerns related to the proposed project. Additional subjects may be added at a later date, as new information comes to light.

1. Aesthetics

The EIR will discuss the visual setting and any impacts that would potentially occur as a result of the project.

2. Air Quality

The EIR will describe the existing air quality conditions in the Bay Area and will evaluate the project's potential air quality impacts, including short-term air quality impacts associated with construction.

3. Biological Resources

The EIR will discuss the potential for the project to result in impacts to biological resources on the site, including impacts from creosote.

4. Cultural Resources

The EIR will provide a comprehensive discussion on the historic significance of the existing bridge structure, the potential for archaeological resources to be present on the site, and the project's potential impacts on those resources.

5. Geology and Soils

The EIR will discuss the existing geologic and soil conditions, including potential impacts from seismic activity, on the project site, and will discuss the potential for the project to result in impacts to geology and soils on the site.

6. Greenhouse Gases

The EIR will examine the potential for the project to result in global climate change impacts due to greenhouse gas emissions.

7. Hazardous Materials

The EIR will discuss the potential for soil contamination from project construction as well as other hazardous materials in the project area.

8. Hydrology and Water Quality

The EIR will discuss the hydrologic and hydraulic conditions on the project site as well as drainage conditions in the project area and the potential for flooding. Water quality impacts and conformance with the Santa Clara Valley Urban Runoff Pollution Prevention Program as well as other Regional Water Quality Control Board requirements will be addressed.

9. Land Use

The EIR will discuss the proposed project's consistency with adopted plans and policies.

10. Noise

The EIR will include a discussion of noise impacts primarily resulting from project construction. The analysis will identify the existing setting and the noise levels associated with construction activities; post-construction project operations are not expected to increase noise levels beyond what is currently occurring at the site. Conformance to the City of San José's noise guidelines will be analyzed.

11. Transportation

The EIR will describe the existing roadway conditions in and around the site, including the local streets and intersections, and provide an analysis of impacts including those impacts that would occur during construction.

12. Utilities and Service Systems

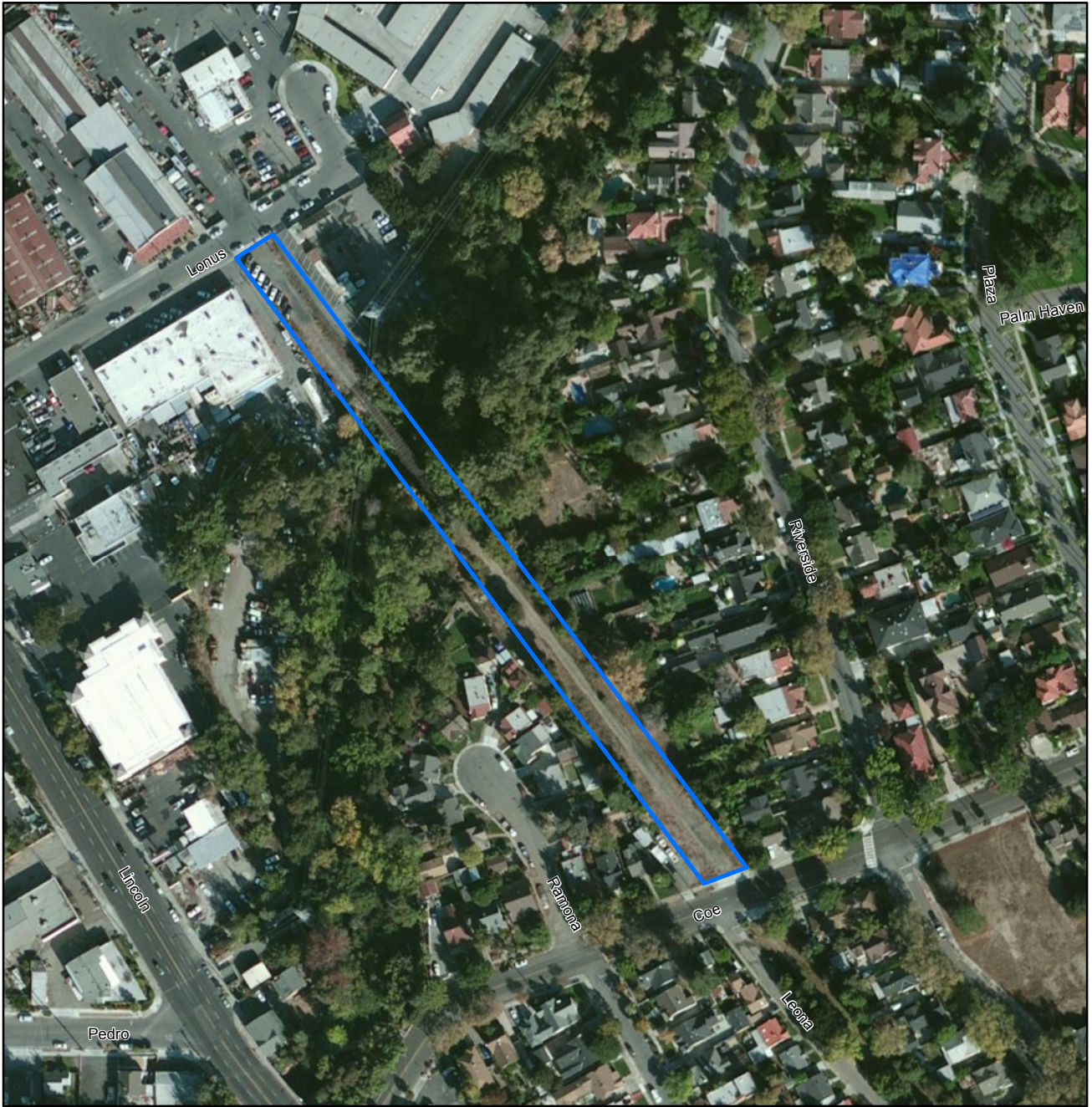
The EIR will discuss how the project may impact adjacent utilities during construction.

13. Cumulative Impacts

The EIR will include a discussion of the potentially significant cumulative impacts of the project when considered with other past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future projects in the area. The analysis will include a discussion of all projects for which applications have been filed. This section will cover all relevant subject areas discussed in the EIR and will specify which of the areas are anticipated to experience significant cumulative impacts.

14. Other Required Sections

The EIR will also include, as appropriate, other information typically required for an EIR. These other sections include the following: 1) Growth Inducing Impacts; 2) Significant, Unavoidable Impacts; 3) Significant Irreversible Environmental Changes; 4) References; and 5) EIR Authors. Relevant technical reports will be provided in a technical appendix.



Source: Esri (2010).

LEGEND

 Project Location

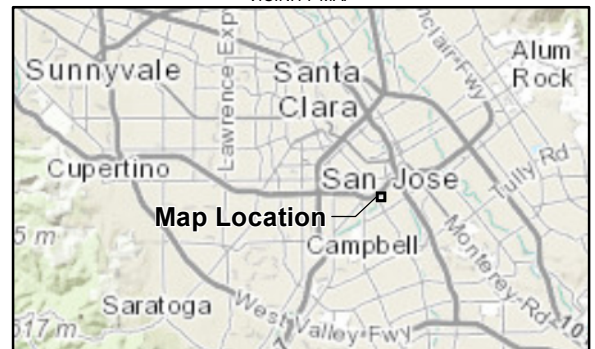


FIGURE 1
Project Location Map
 Three Creeks Trail Pedestrian Bridge Project
 City of San Jose, CA

