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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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Contents

	Introduction	1
	Opportunities and Constraints	5
	Alternatives Development	7
	Purpose and Need Statement	7
	Community Values	7
	Stakeholder Input	9
	Alternatives Descriptions	9
	Alternatives Analysis	10
	Environmental Assessment	15
	Cost Estimates	17
	Recommendations	18
List of Figures		
	Figure 1 – Study Area	2
	Figure 2 – Purpose and Need	4
	Figure 3 – Environmental Constraints	6
	Figure 4 – Proposed Alternatives	8
	Figure 5 – Transportation Analysis	11
	Figure 6 – Population and Employment	14
	Figure 7 – Potential Environmental Effects	16
	Figure 8 – Market Areas	19

INTRODUCTION

The American River Crossing Alternatives Study was prepared to evaluate alternatives for connecting South Natomas and Sacramento's Central City within the study area shown in Figure 1. The need for an additional multi-modal crossing of the American River (and associated Parkway) was established in the *Sacramento 2030 General Plan*, City of Sacramento, 2009 and recognized in the *Metropolitan Transportation Plan/Sustainable Communities Strategy 2035*, Sacramento Area Council of Governments, 2012. Regional Transit (RT) also has plans for a new crossing within the study area as part of the Green Line light rail transit (LRT) extension to North Natomas and the Airport. The range of alternatives considered in the study are listed below.

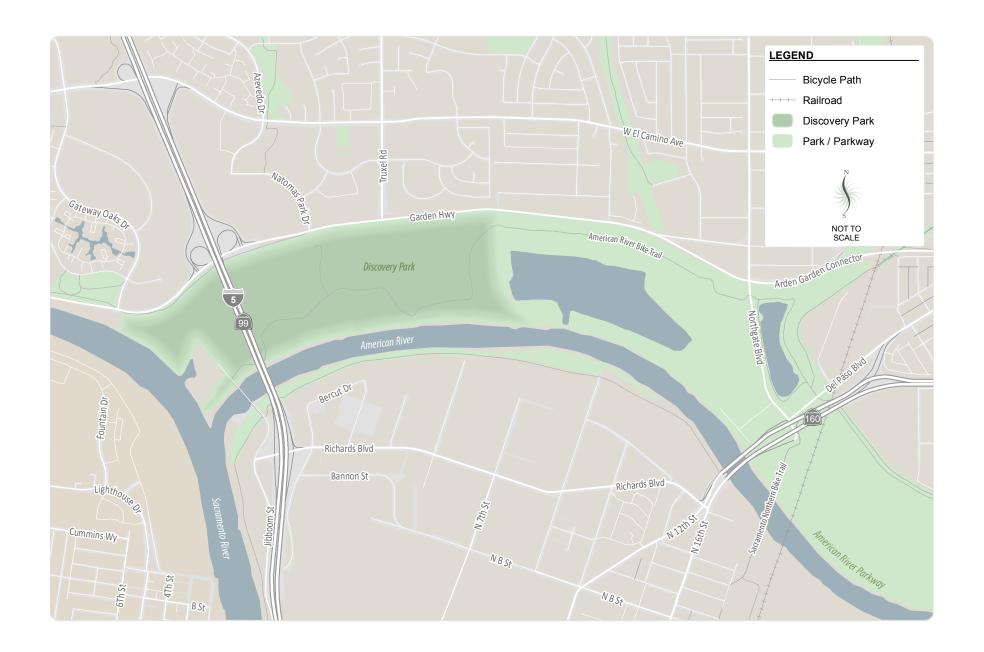
- No project This option presumes the bridge planned by RT to serve the Green Line light rail transit (LRT) extention to the Airport will be constructed. This bridge includes a bicycle and pedestrian facility but excludes vehicles. This alternative is also included in the American River Parkway Plan 2008, Sacramento County, 2008.
- Modifications of existing bridges These options would be focused on enhancing existing crossing opportunities.
- New multi-modal bridge This option would include one or more new multi-modal bridges accessible by pedestrians, bicyclists, cars, buses, trucks, and LRT.



Looking towards downtown from the American River Levee



Looking towards South Natomas from from the American River Levee





To inform the development and analysis of potential alternatives, the study relied on stakeholders and the public as direct participants in the study process. The process started with defining the purpose and need for a new crossing, which directly responds to the fundamental question of why a new crossing is needed and what objectives it should achieve. The purpose and need statement was refined throughout the study based on stakeholder and public input and the final version is contained in Figure 2. This final statement is grounded in community values expressed through the General Plan and other adopted plans plus input expressed by stakeholders and the public during the planning process.

Based on this statement, the clear need for a new crossing stems from limited accessibility for all modes between South Natomas and the Central City that requires most trips to use Interstate 5 (I-5) or State Route 160 (SR-160) to complete a trip between these locations. Further, existing facilities do not meet acceptable standards for bicycles and pedestrians and the use of state highways for local trips contributes to existing peak period congestion. Constructing a new crossing would respond to the need but also be expected to accomplish additional objectives listed under the project purpose.



Existing Narrow Sidewalk on SR- 160 (looking towards downtown)

NFFD

The proposed action is needed for the reasons listed below.

- Limited connectivity across the American River creates a barrier to
 economic activity, land use development, social exchanges, and access to
 jobs within the Central City and South Natomas. The barrier causes longer
 trip lengths between origins and destinations that are physically close,
 which discourages walking and bicycling, reduces public health, creates
 inefficient transit routing, consumes more fuel, and generates higher levels
 of air pollutants and Greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions due to the reliance
 on automobiles.
- 2) Limited connectivity across the American River contributes to peak period travel delays on I-5.
- 3) Limited connectivity across the American River contributes to longer emergency response times and limits evacuation alternatives.
- 4) Limited connectivity across the American River creates a barrier to recreational opportunities within the American River Parkway.

PURPOSE

The proposed action will achieve the following objectives.

- 1A) Add bridge capacity across the American River between the Central City and South Natomas that serves multiple modes and minimizes the growth in vehicle miles of travel (VMT), air pollutants, and GHG emissions.
- 1B) Minimize the growth in vehicle traffic on nearby residential streets caused by trips with either origins or destinations outside of the Central City and South Natomas accessing any new or modified bridge of the American River.
- 2) Add bridge capacity with the primary function of providing local connectivity between the Central City and South Natomas to reduce the overall reliance of local trips on state facilities.
- 3) Add bridge capacity that increases options for evacuations and emergency/disaster response for the Central City and South Natomas.
- 4) Improve recreational access to the American River Parkway as part of any bridge capacity improvements.



The other key components of the study included a constraints and opportunities analysis to identify potential crossing locations. This was followed by an alternatives analysis that evaluated each crossing location in terms of modal options, transportation performance, environmental impacts, and construction costs. This information was synthesized and reviewed against the need and purpose statement to develop the final study recommendations. Key elements of the study are described in this executive summary while the Technical Report and the project study website below contain the detailed information developed during the study and presented to the stakeholders and the public.



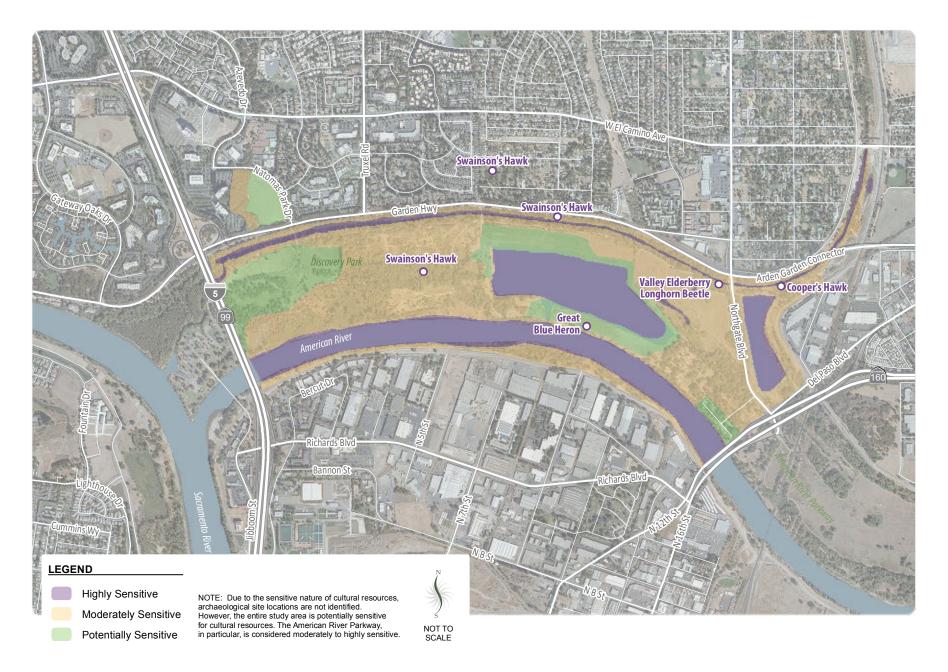
http://www.cityofsacramento.org/transportation/planning-policy/AmericanRiverCrossingStudy.html

OPPORTUNITIES AND CONSTRAINTS

The opportunities and constraints analysis was designed to avoid or minimize potential environmental impacts while also finding the best locations for providing a multimodal crossing. The main constraints included the following types.

- <u>Environmental</u> These constraints include biological (i.e., plants, animals, water, and air quality) and cultural resources that are regulated by federal, state, and regional agencies.
- <u>Physical</u> These constraints include natural and man-made physical features that would influence the feasibility or cost of constructing a new crossing.
- Land Use These constraints include land uses that have a special status or sensitivity that would influence the feasibility or cost of constructing a new crossing. The constraints were based on the project team's review of available information and input from the stakeholder advisory committee.

Opportunity crossing locations were identified by reviewing the constraints, adopted land use and transportation plans, and stakeholder input during their September 13, 2012 and October 30, 2012 meetings. The Technical Report contains the detailed opportunity and constraints analysis while Figure 3 shows the extent of key environmental constraints throughout the study area due to the sensitive habitat and cultural history of the American River Parkway.





ENVIRONMENTAL CONSTRAINTS (BIOLOGICAL AND CULTURAL RESOURCES)

ALTERNATIVES DEVELOPMENT

The opportunities and constraints analysis along with the following information helped to narrow the potential opportunities for new or modified bridge crossings of the American River to the eight alternatives shown in Figure 4.

- Purpose and Need Statement
- Community Values
- Stakeholder Input

Each of these items is described in more detail below followed by a discussion of the alternatives.

Purpose and Need Statement

The pupose and need statement in Figure 2 includes specific objectives that helped guide the alternatives development. For example, an objective such as 'reducing the growth in vehicle miles of travel (VMT)' meant that an alternative would need to increase walking and bicycling or reduce travel distrances for drivers. Alternatives in this early planning phase were not required to meet all objectives but an alternative's performance did influence the final recommendations in this study.

Community Values

Community values from adopted plans and expressed by stakeholders provided a framework for developing potential alternatives. Several adopted plans are relevant to a new or modified crossing of the American River within the study area.

- Sacramento 2030 General Plan. City of Sacramento, 2009.
- River District Specific Plan. City of Sacramento, 2011.
- Sacramento Railyards Specific Plan. Design, Community & Environment and City of Sacramento. 2007.
- The 2010 Sacramento City/County Bikeway Master Plan. County of Sacramento and City of Sacramento. 1995.
- Pedestrian Master Plan. City of Sacramento. 2006.
- American River Parkway Plan. County of Sacramento. 2008.
- Metropolitan Transportation Plan/Sustainable Communities Strategy. Sacramento Area Council of Governments. 2012.

Each of these plans includes goals, principles, objectives, or policies that reflect community values. The main values expressed by these policies related to a new or modified crossing of the American River are summarized below.

- An accessible riverfront that preserves open space, protects the natual environment, provides opportunities for recreation, and integrates with the Central City environment.
- An efficient, multimodal transportation system that offers residents and visitors transportation choices and provides efficient access to destinations.













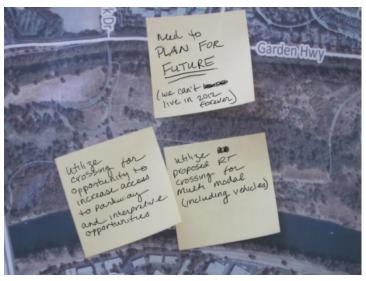


Stakeholder Input

Stakeholder input on community values and crossing opportunities was obtained at multiple meetings. The stakeholder discussions generally reinforced the values already contained in the adopted plans noted above although there was a strong desire from multiple stakeholders to elevate the importance of environmental protection given the unique recreational and habitat resources contained within the American River Parkway. It was also noted, that the American River Parkway Plan 2008 only contained the No Project alternative described above and that the Plan may require an update to allow for other alternatives.



Comment About Habitat Restoration



Comments Related to a New Bridge

Alternatives Descriptions

This study considered the No Project alternative plus the eight alternatives shown in Figure 4, which offer opportunities to modify existing bridges, construct a new bridge, or modify a planned bridge as explained below.

 No Project - Regional Transit has proposed a new bridge between Truxel Road and Sequoia Boulevard to serve the Green Line LRT extension to the Airport. The initial concept for this bridge is to have a single set of LRT tracks on one side of the bridge and the other side would have a sidewalk and a bidirectional bike facility.

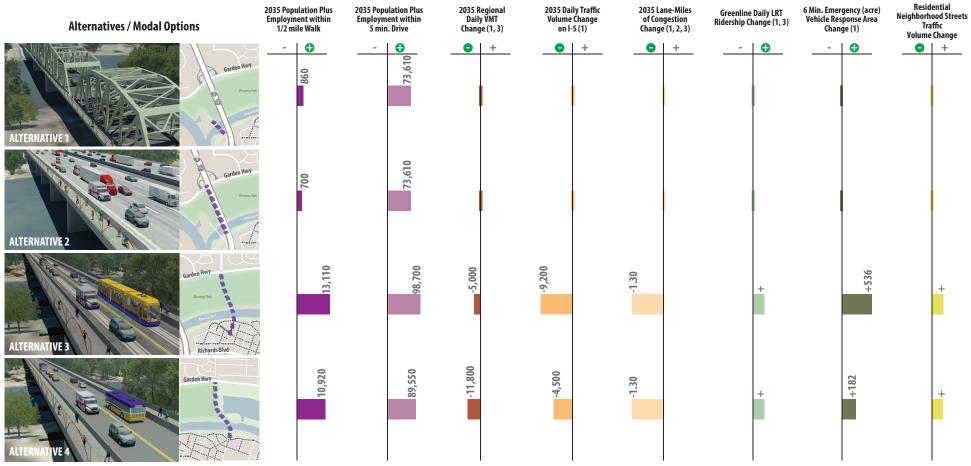
- Alternative 1 widens the Jibboom Street Bridge to provide enhanced bicycle and pedestrian facilities that connect into the existing Parkway bike network and trails.
- Alternative 2 includes the addition of a bike/pedestrian facility
 adjacent to I-5; the facility will be separated from the freeway
 and will connect into the existing bike network and trails. It will
 also provide an all-weather connection for cyclists.
- Alternative 3 adds vehicles to the No Project Regional Transit
 Green Line bridge and includes bicycle and pedestrian facilities
 on both sides of the bridge that would connect to Parkway
 trails and paths. The proposed alternative for this study does
 not reflect any specific input from Regional Transit.
- Alternative 4 connects into Garden Highway at a "T"
 intersection on the north side and connects into 7th Street on
 the south. This alternative accommodates all modes and
 connects into the existing bike facilities on both sides of the
 river and within the Parkway.
- Alternative 5 connects to West El Camino Avenue on the north side and 10th Street on the south side; it also connects to an existing bike path as well as to Parkway trails and paths. This alternative projected a different distribution of trips during initial traffic modeling because of the landing at West El Camino; it also provides capacity for all modes.

- Alternative 6 provides an extension of Northgate Boulevard on the north side connects into 10th Street on the south side and provides capacity for all modes. Similar to Alternatives 3-5, it would also include connections to Parkway trails and paths.
- Alternative 7 connects into Northgate Boulevard on the north side and Street W in the River District Specific Plan on the south side. This would allow the portion of Northgate Boulevard between the Arden Garden Connector and the Riverdale Resort access to be closed to vehicles and used as a bike/pedestrian facility only.
- Alternative 8 provides an all-weather Northgate Boulevard (viaduct structure) that would be out of the flood plain and connect to a new SR-160 bridge at grade with full access to both directions on SR-160. This alternative would provide capacity for all modes, as well as an all-weather crossing. This also presents an opportunity to create a "gateway entrance" into the City as recommended by stakeholders.

ALTERNATIVES ANALYSIS

The alternatives analysis included a transportation evaluation, environmental assessment, and cost estimates. The transportation evaluation compares network performance, accessibility effects, and potential traffic impacts to neighborhoods. Figure 5 summarizes the results while the Technical Report contains more detailed information.

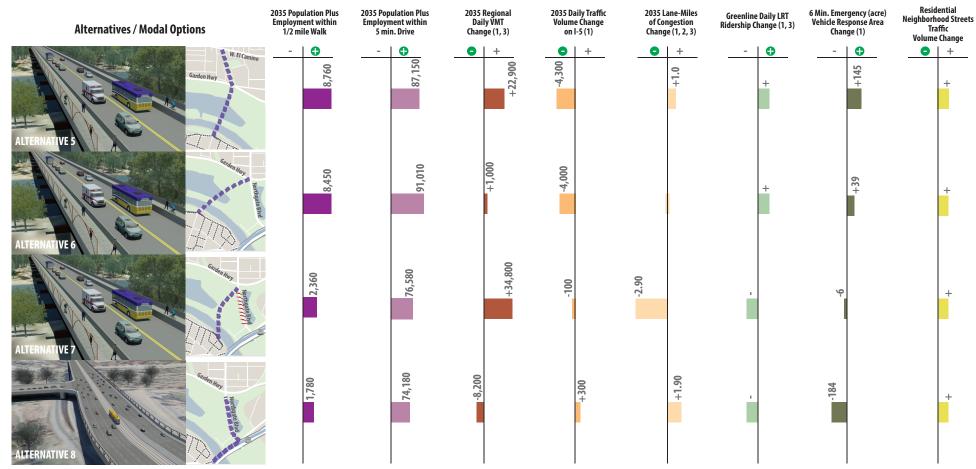




Notes: Shaded cells denote highest value.

- (1) [2035 with new bridge] [2035 no project]
- 2) Change within study area during PM peak period.
- (3) Some results are within the margin of forecasting error.
- Desired direction of change based on purpose and need statement.





Notes: Shaded cells denote highest value.

- (1) [2035 with new bridge] [2035 no project]
- 2) Change within study area during PM peak period.
- (3) Some results are within the margin of forecasting error.
- ① Desired direction of change based on purpose and need statement.

The transportation analysis revealed that the location of the bridge and the modes it accommodates had a substantial effect on the selected performance measures shown in Figure 5. The analysis measures were selected in consultation with the stakeholder advisory committee and were specifically designed to help evaluate the objectives contained in the purpose and need statement (Figure 2). Hence, there is a direct connection between the purpose objectives and the alternative analysis.

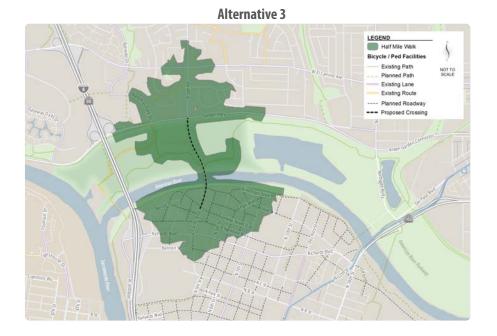
The first set of measures focus on accessibility by measuring how many people are projected to live or work within ½-mile walk and a 5 minute drive. Figure 6 displays an example of how this type of analysis was prepared and shared with the stakeholders (a complete set of analysis data and mapping is available in the Technical Report). Utilization of a new bridge is directly related to these measures and high values indicate the potential for substantial use. Alternative 3 scored the highest on these measures and the other centrally located alternatives also performed well.

The next set of measures included the change in 2035 conditions compared to the no project alternative for regional daily vehicle miles of travel (VMT), daily traffic volume on I-5, and lane-miles of congestion. Some changes were too small to register especially for the bicycle and pedestrian only bridge alternatives given the vehicle focus of these measures. Alternative 4 performed the best for VMT reduction, Alternative 3 for volume change on I-5, and Alternative 7 for the reduction in lane-miles of congestion.

The last three measures are not directly related but convey information that was of importance to stakeholders. The introduction of vehicles as part of the multi-modal bridge alternatives was viewed as potential competition for Green Line LRT ridership. The analysis showed the opposite for Alternatives 3-6 as they increased accessibility to the Central City and South Natomas, which had small positive effects on future ridership. Alternatives 7 and 8 did show a small negative effect on Green Line ridership, but all of the ridership changes were small (i.e., less than 3 percent of daily ridership), which is within the margin of error for 2035 forecasts. Alternatives 3-6 also shared positive effects for the emergency vehicle response area by increasing the coverage area within a 6-minute travel time from the South Natomas Fire Station. Alternatives 7 and 8 reduced the coverage area largely due to being at the extreme eastern edge of the study area. Alternative 7 also eliminates a portion of Northgate Boulevard, which shrinks the potential coverage area, and Alternative 8 creates a full access intersection at Northgate Boulevard and SR-160 that would have slower speeds, which also effectively reduces the coverage area since it is based on travel time. The final measure was daily traffic volume changes on residential neighborhood streets. All the alternatives are projected to increase traffic on residential neighborhood streets in South Natomas and the Central City by attracting more trips into these areas. This effect is expected to be greatest for the Alternatives 3-8 that include vehicles. The City of Sacramento has a history of addressing these types of impacts effectively through neighborhood traffic calming programs and that would likely be required as part of implementing any of these alternatives.







Alternative 8





HALF MILE WALK FROM CROSSING LOCATION - SAMPLE

Environmental Assessment

In addition to the transportation analysis, a preliminary environmental assessment was conducted to gauge the potential level of impact for each alternative. The following areas were identified as potential issue areas that should be considered in future environmental analysis.

Noise

Any bridge that includes new or increased volumes of automobiles or LRT would increase noise levels. New bridges that connect near residential areas to the north and/or south have the greatest potential for substantial impacts (Alternatives 3, 4, 5). Alternative 3 adds both LRT and automobile noise near residential areas so would likely generate the most noise. Connections that are further away from residential land uses would have less effect on those uses, though would still affect users of the American River Parkway (Alternatives 6, 7).

Visual

New bridges over the American River and through the American River Parkway would have substantial visual effects (Alternatives 3, 4, 5, 6, 7) for recreational users and for users of the land uses to the north and south of the Parkway. Widening or modifying existing infrastructure and creating new bicycle and pedestrian connections would cause less of an effect, though changes in views, especially from recreational area viewpoints (parks and trails), would still occur (Alternatives 1, 2, 8).

Biological

New crossings of the American River and the American River Parkway (Alternatives 3, 4, 5, 6, 7) have the potential to result in substantial

impacts on biological resources. Crossings that would modify existing structures (Alternatives 1, 2, 8) have less of a potential for effects, though Alternative 8 would require construction of a viaduct along Northgate Boulevard adjacent to open space and biological resources.

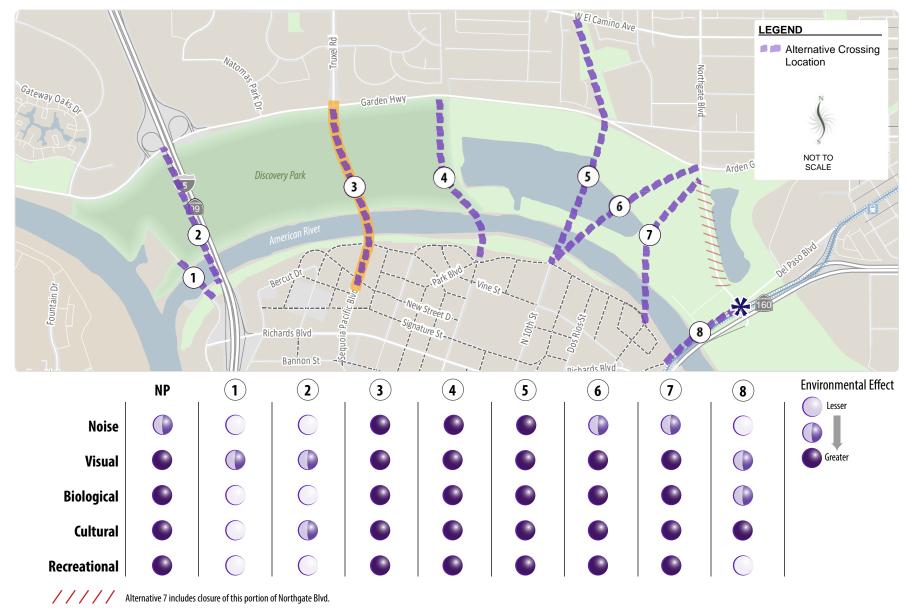
Cultural

The entire study area is located adjacent to a waterway and therefore is potentially sensitive for cultural resources. Any alternative that causes ground disturbance has the potential to impact cultural resources. The American River Parkway, in particular, is highly sensitive for prehistoric and historic resources. Alternatives requiring the least amount of excavation would have the least potential for effects (Alternative1). Because there would be limited ground disturbance and the area is highly sensitive, the impacts for Alternative 2 would be greater than Alternative 1. Alternatives 3-8 have the potential to cause substantial effects on cultural resources due to anticipated construction activity.

Recreation

Alternatives 3-7 would disrupt recreational land within the American River Parkway and would have the greatest adverse effect on recreational resources. Alternative 5 would also affect Ninos Parkway and Alternative 4 would affect a proposed park in the River District. Alternatives 1 and 2 may require some Parkway land conversion but the area would be very small. Alternative 8 would affect bicycle paths, connections and access near Northgate Blvd/SR-160 so would have a greater effect on recreation than Alternatives 1 and 2.







Alternative 8 includes new at-grade intersection with full access to both directions of SR 160.

No Project (NP) Alignment



ALTERNATIVE CROSSING LOCATIONS - POTENTIAL ENVIRONMENTAL EFFECTS

Cost Estimates

A final component of the alternatives analysis was to evaluate cost estimates for each alternative. The table below summarizes total project costs for 2013 and 2023. The 2013 estimates is what the bridge would cost to design and construct in today's dollars while the 2023 estimate includes an escalation factor of 3 percent per year assuming a construction year of 2023.

	TOTAL PROJECT COST		
ALTERNATIVE	Year 2013(a)	Year 2023 (a,b)	
1	\$10 M	\$13 M	
2	\$16 M	\$21 M	
3 (c)	\$54 M	\$70 M	
4-7 (c)	\$58-\$68 M	\$74-\$86 M	
8	\$188 M	\$240 M	

Notes:

- (a) Includes construction cost plus 25% for preliminary engineering and construction administration.
- (b) Includes escalation costs of 3% per year for 10 years.
- (c) Estimate reflects a 70-foot cross section for two mixed-flow lanes, shoulders, and bicycle/pedestrian facilities on both sides of the bridge.

Key components of the cost estimates for each alternative are described below.

- Alternative 1 consists of a Pedestrian/Bike expansion added to both sides of the existing Jibboom Street Bridge over the American River. The existing bridge is a swing-type steel truss movable structure that would be expanded on each side to provide adequate pedestrian/bike facilities. The main two spans in the middle of the river are the movable spans and a pedestrian/bike path that hangs off each side of the bridge would need to accommodate the movement. The Jibboom Street bridge is 500 feet long with approaches of 300 and 200 feet for a total path length of 1,000 feet on each side of the existing bridge.
- Alternative 2 is a Pedestrian/Bike expansion added to the west side of the existing I-5 bridge over the American River. The existing two parallel bridges are fixed Caltrans-type concrete box girder bridges that would be expanded to provide adequate pedestrian/bike facilities. The I-5 bridges are 2,700 feet long with an approach of 800 feet on the south end and would need a ramp of 500 feet to tie into the existing path along Garden Highway for a total path length of 4,000 feet on the side of the existing bridge.
- Alternative 3 is a multi-modal bridge that includes vehicles, LRT, bikes, and pedestrians and would have a span of about 2,300 feet. This alternative differs from the "no project" RT bridge in that cars and buses are accommodated in two mixed-flow lanes (with shoulders) and more generous paths are provided for bicyclists and pedestrians on both sides of the

bridge. This estimate is a complete cost of a new bridge that would accommodate all of these modes, which would require a wider cross-section than proposed for the "no project" bridge.

- Alternatives 4 through 7 are stand-alone two-lane multi-modal bridges spanning across the Parkway at four locations.
 They include provisions for busses in two mixed-flow lanes, but not LRT. The range of bridge lengths at the four locations are 2,700 to 3,200 feet. Alternative 5 has an additional 1,900 feet of approach roadway included.
- Alternative 8 includes elevating Northgate Boulevard, connecting it to SR-160 with a full access at-grade intersection, and replacing the SR-160 bridges over the river and parkway.
 No new lanes are added with this alternative although stakeholders recommended consideration of reducing the number of vehicle lanes on SR-160.

These cost estimates do not include right-of-way, environmental mitigation, or enhanced aesthetic designs, but are a reasonable basis to understand the differences between the alternatives.



RECOMMENDATIONS

While each of the alternatives had merits, Alternatives 2, 3, and 8 stood out as being the best candidates to consider for implementation. This conclusion is based on the purpose and need statement, alternatives analysis findings, and potential funding opportunities.

The following information provides supporting evidence for the recommendation.

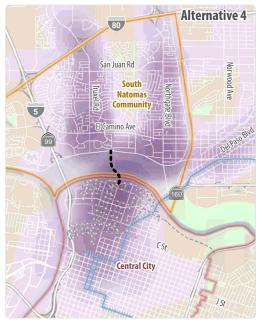
- Alternatives 1 and 2 serve bicyclists and pedestrians in the western edge of the study area and are unique in this respect.
 Only Alternative 2, though, provides an all-weather connection across the River, which elevated its performance above that of Alternative 1. These two alternatives can also be viewed as separate from the other alternatives when considering future funding. Active transportation modes are attracting greater shares of federal, state, and regional transportation funding due to their positive effects on health, air quality, GHG reduction, energy use, and travel choices. Alternative 2 is a candidate for any future funding programs dedicated to active transportation because it eliminates a significant barrier to bicycle and pedestrian travel between land uses that are physically close.
- Alternative 3 had a peer group that consisted of Alternatives 4 6 in terms of serving the direct South Natomas and Central City market areas. This was a key purpose objective and Figure 8

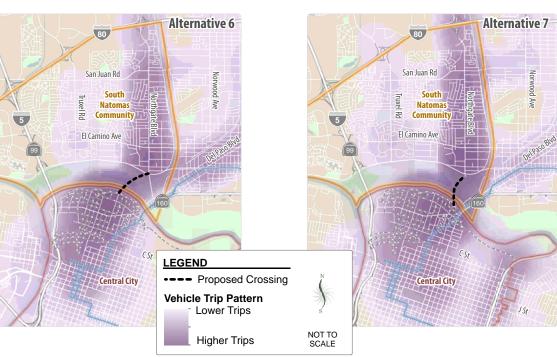
displays how the alternative bridge locations influenced travel patterns of those projected to use each bridge.

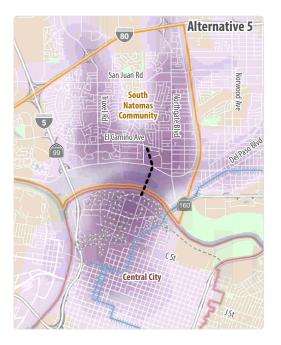
Since transportation funding is competitive, especially at the federal and state level, Alternative 3 offers a unique combination of benefits across multiple categories. First, Alternative 3 is centrally located within the study area and shares the alignment already selected by RT for the Green Line crossing of the River. This central location contributed to serving the largest number of people within a half-mile walk and a five-minute drive. Second, Alternative 3 proposes to accommodate all modes (private vehicles, buses, LRT, bicyclists, and pedestrians). Third, it provides the largest reduction in daily traffic on I-5 and fourth, it has the largest expansion in emergency vehicle response coverage area. With future transportation funds being both competitive and limited, Alternative 3 has the best opportunity to secure competitive funds because it achieves multiple objectives at the federal, state, regional, and local level and leverages investments already being planned by RT.















Alternatives 7 and 8 are at the eastern edge of the study area and both have a variety of merits but serve travel markets beyond just the South Natomas to Central City study area. This was revealed in the graphical displays of market area in Figure 8. As such, these alternatives did not perform as well in the transportation analysis compared to Alternative 3-6. Alternative 8, though, has separate merits that make it worthy of further consideration. According to Caltrans, the existing SR-160 bridge structures over the American River require rehabilitation or replacement to bring them up to current design requirements. This status qualifies these bridge structures for special federal funding. If significant rehabilitation or even replacement is required, then it may be possible to create a different type of crossing that not only better accommodates bicyclists and pedestrians but also improves accessibility by creating a full access intersection or interchange between Northgate Boulevard and SR-160. Today, access is limited to an eastbound off-ramp from SR-160 to Northgate Boulevard and a westbound on-ramp from Northgate Boulevard/Del Paso Boulevard to SR-160. Alternative 8 not only expands accessibility in the Northgate Boulevard, Del Paso Boulevard, and SR-160 corridors, it also provides an enhanced bicycle and pedestrian crossing of the American River while eliminating safety concerns associated with the existing SR-160 bridge

These recommendations were shared at a Community Workshop on May 2, 2013 and with the Stakeholders on May 9, 2013. Figure 9 shows the graphic representations of each alternative used during the meetings. In both meetings, general support was found for advancing all three alternatives but concerns were expressed about environmental impacts and mitigation within the Parkway regardless of the alternative.

As to ultimately constructing one or more of these alternatives, the City should be opportunistic about funding opportunities. Federal, state, and regional funding programs can change annually. To prepare for funding opportunities, each alternative should be accurately reflected in relevant plans including the City of Sacramento General Plan, the American River Parkway Plan 2008, the RT Green Line Project Level Environmental Analysis, and the MTP/SCS. The next step would then be to prepare preliminary engineering and environmental analysis so that specific projects are ready to advance to final design and construction.



structures.









Resources

Resources cited in this report are listed below.

- American River Parkway Plan, Sacrameto County, 2008
- Downtown/Natomas/Airport (DNA) Green Line to the Airport, Draft Transitional Analysis Report, RT, 2010
- Metropolitan Transportation Plan/Sustainable Communities Strategy 2035, SACOG, 2012
- River District Specific Plan, City of Sacramento, 2010
- Sacramento Railyards Specific Plan, City of Sacramento, 2007
- Sacramento 2030 General Plan, City of Sacramento, 2009

