



CITY OF YUBA CITY
PLANNING COMMISSION
STAFF REPORT

Meeting Date: January 8, 2020

To: Chair and Members of the Planning Commission

From: Development Services Department

Presentation By: Brian Millar, Interim Director of Development Services

Project: Public hearing to consider a General Plan Amendment (GPA 19-03) filed by the City of Yuba City to amend Policy No. 5.2-I-12 of the Yuba City General Plan Transportation Element to add the segment of Bridge Street between North Palora Avenue and Second Street to the list of streets where exceptions to the minimum Level of Service (LOS) D are allowed. The policy amendment would provide for a LOS F on this street segment, where LOS A represents uncongested traffic operations and LOS F represents potential stop-and-go traffic operations. The City has completed a Draft Supplement to the 2004 General Plan Environmental Impact Report (SEIR) for this project, Environmental Assessment 19-08, consistent with the California Environmental Act (CEQA) Guidelines Section 15163. The SEIR focuses on potential impacts related to traffic and circulation, and included completion of a traffic study. The Planning Commission will provide a recommendation on the proposed traffic policy amendment to the City Council, who will consider the matter along with the SEIR at a future, noticed public hearing.

Applicant: City of Yuba City

Owner: N/A

Location: Bridge Street corridor, between North Palora Avenue and Second Street

Background

The General Plan, adopted in 2004, has a Transportation Element policy (5.2-I-12) which establishes a minimum traffic level of service (LOS) standard of D, where LOS A represents uncongested traffic operations and LOS F represents potential stop-and-go traffic operations. The General Plan established certain roadway exceptions to this standard, where a LOS F is permitted to occur (applying to SR 20 between SR 99 to and across the Feather River Bridge, on Bridge Street for the Twin Cities Bridge, and for Lincoln Road (for a future bridge across the Feather River, if constructed)).

The City is considering an amendment to transportation Policy 5.2-1-12 to allow an additional roadway exception to the LOS D standard for use of a LOS F along Bridge Street between North Palora Avenue

stretching east to Second Street. (The project location is shown on the below maps.)

Project Description

The proposed project would amend Policy 5.2-I-12 of the Yuba City General Plan Transportation Element to add a portion of Bridge Street to the list of streets where exceptions to the City's General minimum LOS D policy are granted, as indicated below.

Traffic Level of Service

5.2-I-12 Develop and manage the roadway system to obtain LOS D or better for all major roadways and intersections in the City. This policy does not extend to residential streets (i.e., streets with direct driveway access to homes) or bridges across the Feather River nor does the policy apply to state highways and their intersections, where Caltrans policies apply. Exceptions to LOS D policy may be allowed by the City Council in areas, such as downtown, where allowing a lower LOS would result in clear public benefits. Specific exceptions granted by the Council shall be added to the list of exceptions below:

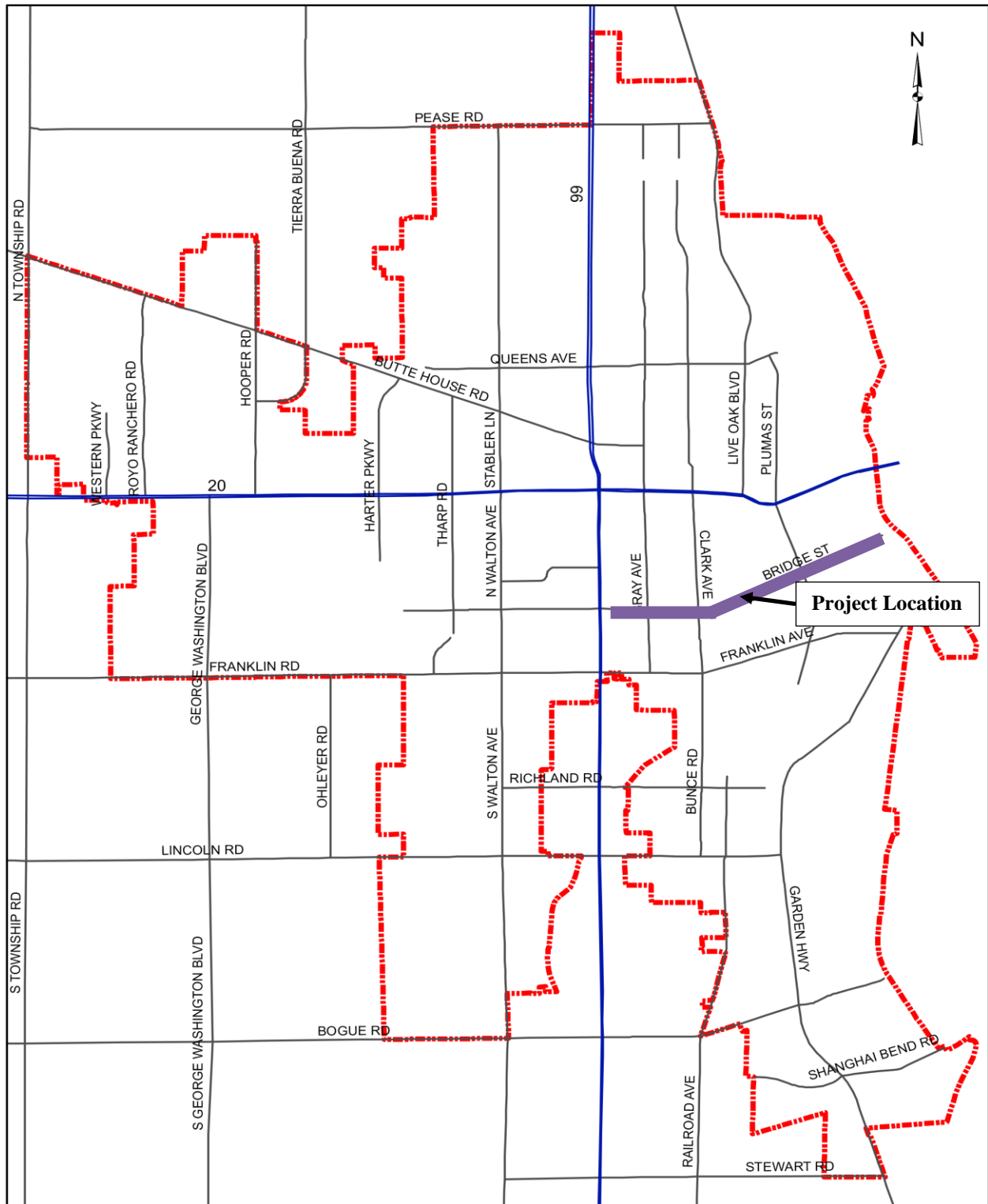
- SR 20 (SR 99 to Feather River Bridge) – LOS F is acceptable;
- SR 20 (Feather River Bridge) – LOS F is acceptable;
- Bridge Street (Twin Cities Bridge) – LOS F is acceptable;
- Lincoln Road (New Bridge across the Feather River) – LOS F is acceptable;
- **Bridge Street from North Palora Avenue to Second Street – LOS F is acceptable. (proposed)**

No new development will be approved unless it can be shown that required level of service can be maintained on the affected roadways.

The proposed General Plan Amendment requires analysis pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). The City has prepared a Supplemental Environmental Impact Report (SEIR) based on provisions of CEQA. The SEIR focused on the potential for significant traffic and circulation impacts if the proposed project (portion of Bridge Street allowance of LOS F) were approved. As part of this analysis, a traffic impact analysis was prepared. The SEIR findings are discussed below under Staff Analysis.

The proposed policy amendment for the segment of Bridge Street does not change any land use designation in the General Plan, nor is there any specific land use proposal as part of this General Plan Amendment. The proposed policy amendment would not result in any physical changes, modifications or roadway construction improvements to the Bridge Street corridor.

Project Location



1. Traffic and Circulation Analysis:

To assist in the analysis of potential traffic and circulation impacts related to the proposed General Plan traffic policy amendment for the affected segment of Bridge Street, the City had its traffic engineering consultant, KD Anderson, prepare a traffic impact analysis (December 2020). The analysis included an assessment of existing conditions, as well as cumulative conditions both with and without the proposed traffic policy amendment, summarized below, and included use of the traffic modeling (using the City's traffic model) to address existing and future traffic conditions.

- Bridge Street is an east-west arterial that extends from an intersection with Sharp Street in western Yuba City, across SR 99 thru the policy area and then becomes Fifth Street as it crosses the Feather River into Marysville and continues as Fifth Street to SR 70. Today, Bridge Street is a four-lane facility in the area of SR 99 west of Gray Avenue. A two-lane roadway exists from Gray Avenue to Cooper Avenue. The road widens to four lanes in the area from Cooper Avenue easterly through the Shasta Street intersection. The road narrows to two lanes east of Shasta Avenue over the Feather River where the Fifth Street Bridge project is under construction. Bridge Street continues as a two-lane street below the Fifth Street Bridge approach to an intersection on 2nd Street. Bridge Street has separated sidewalks in the study area, and on-street parking is

prohibited. The posted speed limit on Bridge Street in the study area is 35 mph.

- Sidewalks are provided in nearly all areas of Bridge Street west of the Shasta Street intersection and are included in the Fifth Street Bridge Replacement Project. Crosswalks are marked at signalized and all-way stop controlled intersections, and button pedestrian activation is provided at each of the signalized study intersections.
- Bicycle facilities are limited along Bridge Street. Class II bike lanes exist in the area from Cooper Avenue easterly to a location approximately 250 feet west of the Plumas Street intersection. At the very easterly end of B Street (approximately 300' east of Second Street), there is an existing bike ramp to access the levee.
- The Bridge Street Corridor study area has facilities for alternative transportation modes, including bus stops.

The following are LOS definitions used for the traffic analysis:

LEVEL OF SERVICE (LOS) DEFINITIONS		
LOS	Signalized Intersections	Unsignalized Intersection
"A"	Uncongested operations, all queues clear in a single-signal cycle. Delay ≤ 10.0 sec	Little or no delay. Delay ≤ 10 sec/veh
"B"	Uncongested operations, all queues clear in a single cycle. Delay > 10.0 sec and ≤ 20.0 sec	Short traffic delays. Delay > 10 sec/veh and ≤ 15 sec/veh
"C"	Light congestion, occasional backups on critical approaches. Delay > 20.0 sec and ≤ 35.0 sec	Average traffic delays. Delay > 15 sec/veh and ≤ 25 sec/veh
"D"	Significant congestions of critical approaches but intersection functional. Cars required to wait through more than one cycle during short peaks. No long queues formed. Delay > 35.0 sec and ≤ 55.0 sec	Long traffic delays. Delay > 25 sec/veh and ≤ 35 sec/veh
"E"	Severe congestion with some long standing queues on critical approaches. Blockage of intersection may occur if traffic signal does not provide for protected turning movements. Traffic queue may block nearby intersection(s) upstream of critical approach(es). Delay > 55.0 sec and ≤ 80.0 sec	Very long traffic delays, failure, extreme congestion. Delay > 35 sec/veh and ≤ 50 sec/veh
"F"	Total breakdown, stop-and-go operation. Delay > 80.0 sec	Intersection blocked by external causes. Delay > 50 sec/veh
Source: <i>Highway Capacity Manual (6th Edition)</i>		

With one exception all study area intersections analyzed as part of the project traffic study operate with Levels of Service that satisfy the City's minimum LOS D standard. However, the Bridge Street / eastbound

Fifth Street bridge on-ramp intersection currently operates at LOS F in the evening. LOS F is accepted at this location under current General Plan policy, and this location is also being addressed by the City's pending Fifth Street Bridge Replacement Project.

Traffic Study Significance Thresholds

The following standards and significance criteria were used for the traffic analysis to identify the potential for creation of a significant impact under current City transportation policies:

- Cause Level of Service at a study intersection to degrade from LOS D or better to LOS E or F.
- Exacerbate the No-project Level of Service at a study intersection operating at LOS E or F. Based upon past traffic studies in this area, exacerbation of unacceptable operations at a City signalized intersection is considered an impact if:
 - The proposed project causes an increase in the average vehicle delay of 5 seconds or more, or
 - The proposed project adds ten or more peak hour trips to an intersection.

Traffic Impacts of the LOS Policy Amendment

Because the project itself will not cause additional traffic, implementing the GPA will not result in any additional study location operating at a deficient condition based on Level of Service whether under the current policy (i.e., LOS D) or the proposed policy (i.e., LOS F). The amendment does not result in direct impacts to pedestrians, bicyclists, or transit riders and does not interfere with the implementation for future plans for these transportation modes. The policy change does not create any new safety issue or exacerbate current safety issues.

Cumulative Impacts – No Project

Under long-term conditions the background traffic volumes on Bridge Street will increase dramatically based on future traffic volume forecasts, with or without a City LOS F standard, created using the current citywide travel demand forecasting model. Even though the Fifth Street Bridge Replacement Project and the balance of the City's Bridge Street Corridor Project will result in a four-lane facility from SR 99 to the Feather River crossing, the signalized intersections at Gray Avenue, Plumas Street, Shasta Street, and Second Street will operate at LOS F. In general, these conditions result from the absence of a third bridge over the Feather River and the resulting concentration of both future traffic generated by development in Yuba City and Marysville and regional traffic growth on the two existing crossings (i.e., Tenth Street and Fifth Street bridges).

As the area along Bridge Street is primarily built out, the feasibility of further improvements beyond the work already included in the Bridge Street Corridor Plan is limited. Review of the area indicates that at the Plumas Street intersection it could be possible to create an eastbound right turn lane by eliminating on-street parking, but this improvement would not improve conditions to less than LOS F and would affect use of the adjoining property.

Cumulative Plus Project Impacts

Because the amendment does not create additional traffic future cumulative Levels of Service at study intersections would not change. The change in General Plan policy does not alter the feasibility of future corridor improvements beyond those already expected. The change in policy does not change the level

of commitment to alternative transportation modes (i.e., pedestrian, bicycle and transit) already anticipated for the Bridge Street Corridor.

Traffic Queueing

The traffic analysis for the project also examined potential impacts related to queuing of traffic along the affected segment of Bridge Street. Poor traffic conditions can result in traffic delays which in turn can lead to queues of waiting vehicles. While not a General Plan policy issue, the City considers the effects of peak period queueing to determine whether waiting vehicles will extend beyond the limits of turn lanes and cause a safety issue for through traffic. The same HCM techniques employed to evaluate Levels of Service also identify the queue lengths within a statistical probability. Traffic engineers commonly employ the 95th percentile queue length (i.e., queue length exceeded only 5% of the time) for this evaluation and consider lengths in excess of available storage to be a potential safety issue. The study found LOS F would occur in future conditions at two of the study locations: for the eastbound left turn movement at Sutter Street/westbound Fifth Street ramps, and along Bridge Street at the eastbound Fifth Street ramps.

2. Proposed General Plan Amendment

The Transportation Element is intended to provide guidance and specific actions to ensure the continued safe and efficient operation of Yuba City's circulation system. The Element is based on a fundamental philosophy that traffic conditions in the City can be managed through a comprehensive program of transportation planning, land use planning, and growth management strategies. This Element includes provisions for roadway, transit, airport, pedestrian, and bicycle transportation modes, as well as parking.

State law recognizes that circulation and land use are closely related and requires that policies in this Element and the Land Use Element be tied together. Careful integration of the City's traffic and circulation policies with its land use policies ensure that there is sufficient roadway capacity to accommodate traffic generated by planned future development.

Key "Guiding Policies" and "Implementing Policies" from the Transportation Element of the General Plan are provided below:

GENERAL PLAN GUIDING POLICIES

Circulation and Street System

- 5.2-G-1 Promote safe and efficient vehicle circulation.
- 5.2-G-2 Make efficient use of existing transportation facilities, and, through the arrangement of land uses, improved alternate transportation modes, and provision of more direct routes for pedestrians and bicyclists, strive to reduce the total vehicle-miles traveled per household.
- 5.2-G-4 Coordinate local actions with state and County agencies to ensure consistency.

Traffic Level of Service

- 5.2-G-5 Maintain acceptable levels of service and ensure that future development and the circulation system are in balance.

Arterial Roadways

- 5.2-G-6 Design arterial roadways to carry high-volume, higher-speed traffic, thereby minimizing through traffic residential streets. Develop a system of arterial roadways in the form of a grid of four-lane arterials that will distribute traffic evenly and will avoid excessive concentrations of traffic in any given area.
- 5.2-G-7 Maximize the carrying capacity of arterial roadways by controlling the number of intersections and driveways, prohibiting residential access, and requiring sufficient off-street parking to meet the needs of each project.

Collector and Local Roadways

- 5.2-G-10 Design and reconfigure collector and local roadways to improve circulation and to connect residential and commercial areas of the City.

IMPLEMENTING POLICIES

Circulation and Street System

- 5.2-I-5 Continue to require that new development pays a fair share of the costs of street and other traffic and transportation improvements based on traffic generated and impacts on service levels.
- 5.2-I-6 Require city-wide traffic impact fees on all new development to ensure that transportation improvements keep pace with new development. The objective of this policy is to establish a secure funding source to enable timely construction of traffic improvements. Citywide impact fees have been an extremely successful way of accomplishing infrastructure improvements throughout California. The City intends to ensure that no additional development is approved without a concurrent commitment by the City and/or the developer to construct commensurate transportation improvements, as needed, or to pay appropriate fees in lieu of, to serve the development and maintain acceptable levels of service on roadways and intersections
- 5.2-I-7 When constructing or modifying roadways, plan for usage of the roadway space by all users, including motor vehicles, transit vehicles, bicyclists, and pedestrians.

Traffic Level of Service

5.2-I-12 (Subject of the General Plan Amendment)

Develop and manage the roadway system to obtain LOS D or better for all major roadways and intersections in the City. This policy does not extend to residential streets (i.e., streets with direct driveway access to homes) or bridges across the Feather River nor does the policy apply to state highways and their intersections, where Caltrans policies apply. Exceptions to LOS D policy may be allowed by the City Council in areas, such as downtown, where allowing a lower LOS would result in clear public benefits.

Specific exceptions granted by the Council shall be added to the list of exceptions below:

- *SR 20 (SR 99 to Feather River Bridge) – LOS F is acceptable;*
- *SR 20 (Feather River Bridge) – LOS F is acceptable;*
- *Bridge Street (Twin Cities Bridge) – LOS F is acceptable;*
- *Lincoln Road (New Bridge across the Feather River) – LOS F is acceptable.*
- *Bridge Street between North Palora Avenue and Second Street – LOS F is acceptable.*
(proposed amendment)

No new development will be approved unless it can be shown that required level of service can be maintained on the affected roadways.

- 5.2-I-14 Require traffic impact studies for all proposed new developments that will generate significant amounts of traffic. Specific thresholds will be based on location and project type, and exceptions may be granted where traffic studies have been completed for adjacent development.
- 5.2-I-15 Improve intersections as needed to maintain LOS standards and safety on major arterials.
- 5.2-I-16 Establish and implement additional programs to maintain adequate levels of service at intersections and along roadway segments as circumstances warrant, including the following actions:
- Collect and analyze traffic volume data on a regular basis and monitor current intersection and roadway segment levels of service on a regular basis. Use this information to update and refine the City's travel forecasting model so that estimates of future conditions are more strongly based upon local travel behavior and trends.
 - Consider, on a case by case basis, how to shift travel demand away from the peak period, especially in those situations where peak traffic problems result from a few major generators (e.g. outlying employment locations), and how major roadway capital investments can be deferred and/or reallocated to more pressing needs.
 - Perform routine, ongoing evaluation of the efficiency of the urban street traffic control system, with emphasis on traffic signal timing, phasing and coordination to optimize traffic flow along arterial corridors. Use traffic control systems to balance arterial street utilization (e.g., timing and phasing for turn movements, peak period and off-peak signal timing plans).
- 5.2-I-17 Monitor regional/arterial street LOS at regular intervals to determine if the LOS standard is being met, and provide information needed to maintain a calibrated citywide traffic model.

The Policy to be amended by the project, 5.2-I-12, includes certain exceptions to that minimum LOS and authorizes additional exceptions in those cases where the City Council may determine that “clear public benefits” would result from the use of a lower LOS. In order to facilitate future planned development, including commercial development along the noted segment of Bridge Street, the City is considering a

potential General Plan Amendment to ultimately authorize an exception to the minimum LOS D standard (allowing LOS F) for the identified segment of Bridge Street between North Palora Avenue and Second Street.

The issue of provision of “clear public benefits” to be realized through the proposed General Plan Amendment acknowledges public benefits related to:

- Increased economic development potential related to commercial development along this segment of Bridge Street (between North Palora Avenue and Second Street), including commercial and related development and creation of jobs for Yuba City residents.
- Opportunities for this segment of Bridge Street for commercial, office, and related uses as a result of increased commercial development opportunity.
- Implementation of City vision for development of the greater downtown established through the Central City Core Specific Plan and Revitalization Strategy (“Plan”) (amended 1997), including use of the central City area as a catalyst for revitalization and creation of jobs.
- Further recognizes existing and anticipated traffic conditions along Bridge Street through the downtown area.

Environmental Review

A Supplemental Environmental Impact Report (SEIR) was prepared by Land Logistics, Inc., for the City evaluating the potential traffic and circulation impacts related to the project.

When a Final Environmental Impact Report (“FEIR”) has been certified for a project, the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) defines standards and the procedure for additional environmental review in Sections 15162–15164 of the State CEQA Guidelines. When it is determined that the proposed changes to a project, or changes in the circumstances under which the project will be undertaken, would result in new significant impacts not identified in the FEIR or cause a substantial increase in the severity of significant impacts identified in the FEIR, preparation of an SEIR is required.

CEQA Guidelines Section 15163 states a Supplemental EIR may be prepared if:

- (a)(1) substantial changes would occur with respect to the circumstances under which the project is undertaken due to the involvement of new significant environmental effects or a substantial increase in the severity of previously identified significant effects (pursuant to Section 15162(a)(2) of the State CEQA Guidelines), and
- (a)(2) only minor additions or changes would be necessary to make the previous EIR adequately apply to the project in the changed situation.

The following provisions of Section 15163 also apply:

- (b) The supplement to the EIR need only contain the information necessary to make the previous EIR adequate for the project as revised.

(c) A supplement to an EIR shall be given the same kind of notice and public review as is given to a draft EIR under Section 15087.

(d) A supplement to an EIR may be circulated by itself without recirculating the previous draft of an FEIR.

(e) When the agency decides whether to approve the project, the decision-making body shall consider the previous EIR as revised by the supplemental EIR. A finding under Section 15091 shall be made for each significant effect shown in the previous EIR as revised.

In this instance, the City seeks to amend its General Plan to expand the range of streets permitted to operate at LOS F to the segment of Bridge Street located between North Palora Avenue and Second Street. An SEIR is the appropriate CEQA document given that the proposed project (amendment to City traffic policy) focuses on one segment of Bridge Street, and as there are no specific projects proposed as part of the General Plan policy amendment. Traffic and circulation analysis is the focus of the SEIR. There are no other proposed changes to the General Plan or environmental circumstances that require additional environmental review under CEQA as there are no specific land use changes or development proposed in conjunction with the policy amendment; future development projects would be subject to a determination of environmental review based on the requirements of CEQA, and projects could require preparation of specific (project-based) traffic and circulation studies.

Therefore, no additional environmental analysis is warranted in conjunction with the proposed General Plan Amendment.

Staff will provide an update on any comments received on the SEIR at the January 8, 2020 Planning Commission meeting.

Recommendation

Staff recommends that the Planning Commission take the following actions:

1. Approve the attached Resolution, recommending to the City Council adoption of the Supplemental Environmental Impact Report (EA19-08); and
2. Approve the attached Resolution, recommending to the City Council approval of GPA 19-03, allowing for recognition of Level of Service F along the portion of Bridge Street located between North Palora Avenue and Second Street.

Attachments

1. Resolution recommending approval of the Supplemental EIR.
2. Resolution recommending approval of the General Plan Transportation Element policy amendment for the Bridge Street Level of Service.
3. Supplemental Environmental Impact Report, with Traffic Study.

