

December 17, 2013

Response to Ray Chrispens Questions:

Who is responsible for the decisions made? Tulare County has a staff of dedicated professional engineers whose duty and responsibility is to identify programs and projects that benefit the residents of Tulare County in the area of public works infrastructure. The engineering staff first identified the replacement of the low water crossing on Road 224 that would have been paid for by the Federal Emergency Management Agency. Subsequently, the engineering staff made contact with The State of California, Department of Transportation staff and determined that the Federal Highway Administration, through the Highway Bridge Replacement Program would fully fund a bridge that would replace the low water crossing. The replacement bridge was identified as the best alternative as it would raise the crossing out of the channel and virtually eliminate the road being washed out again in the future. Engineering staff presented this alternative to the Board of Supervisors on July 24, 2012. The Board agreed with the staff recommendation to de-obligate the FEMA funding to replace the low water crossing in-kind and approved proceeding with a project to build a replacement bridge. The Board of Supervisors re-affirmed their decision on November 5, 2013.

The staff is responsible to identifying projects such as the construction of the Road 224 bridge over Deer Creek and presenting a recommendation to the Board of Supervisors. It is the Board of Supervisors responsibility to approve the project, deny the project, or direct staff to pursue other alternatives. The Board of Supervisors responsibility and authority is derived from Streets and Highways Code Section 940 and Section 1321.

How is the amount of money for the project determined? Cost estimates were developed by County engineering staff based on the type of bridge selected and the size of bridge to be constructed. The most economical type of bridge to be used for the site was chosen, which in this case is a flat slab bridge on piers. Caltrans is responsible for providing oversight to the HBRRP. The HBRRP funding mechanism that will pay for 100 % of the bridge replacement costs. The cost estimate is submitted to Caltrans for review and concurrence.

Is the design or concept for the project developed or created by public employees? The new bridge will be designed by staff specifically employed by Tulare County Resource Management Agency for this purpose. The RMA has 11 registered Civil Engineers and one Registered Structural Engineer on staff that has the qualifications and expertise necessary for the design of roadway and bridge improvements. Staff will use specialty consultants for components of the project for which staff does not have the appropriate expertise.

A Tulare County registered civil engineer or structural engineer will approve the plans and specifications in accordance Business and Professions Code Section 6735.

Who is the governing authority with regard to this design or concept? The design of the bridge will follow all appropriate federal and state design requirements. More specifically, the bridge design will follow the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials *Standard Specifications for Highway Bridges*, 17th edition. As noted above, a RMA registered civil engineer or structural engineer will sign, seal, and date the plans as required by the Business and Professions Code. Finally, the Board of Supervisors will approve the plans, specifications and working details for the bridge project as required by the Public Contract Code Section 22039. This occurs at the time the project will be put out to bid.

How much money has been spent to date on this project? The project is currently in design development stage and as of the end of November 2013, \$110,600 has been spent for this purpose.

When was the picture on the web site taken? The picture on the website was taken during the flood events in December 2010.

When was the picture printed in the public flyer taken? The picture in the public meeting flyer was also taken during the flood events of 2010.

Where can one see what the expenditures to accomplish the project be seen? We are keeping track of the budget and expenditures on this project, just like any other project. That information is available on request.

Any change in the elevation of the bridge approach on the south side of the creek will adversely affect those residences on the west side of Road 224. We are performing a hydraulic analysis (via a consultant) that will delineate the 100-year flood elevation and the impacts that it will have on the adjoining properties, including any structures that may be affected, at the site based on existing and proposed conditions. The goal, as always, is to not create conditions that are worse than existing conditions. The design team is scheduled to have the layout of the bridge and the hydraulics analysis complete by February 2014.

The Latrine Lawyers tell me that 100,000 dollars is budgeted to expand the right of way. Who is the payee on that? Right of way costs will be reimbursed to the County through the Highway Bridge Program (federal funding source). The design team does not anticipate the need to acquire additional permanent right of way for this project, however temporary construction easements will be required and there may be a need to realign some private driveways to accommodate the new bridge and roadway approaches.