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Item 12.1 1906 Bridge

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Sun, Jul 6, 2025 at 7:00 AM

To: John Clerici <jclerici@cityofplacerville.org>, Nicole Gotberg <ngotberg@cityofplacerville.org>

Cc: regina oconnell <roconnell@cityofplacerville.org>, Cleve Morris <cmorris@cityofplacerville.org>, Ryan Carter <rcarter@cityofplacerville.org>, Jackie Neau <jneau@cityofplacerville.org>, David Yarbrough <dyarbrough@cityofplacerville.org>

Mayor and Vice Mayor,

I am unable to attend your meeting on July 8th. I was also not aware of the discussions held during your May meetings regarding our stone railroad bridge.

In reviewing the staff report, I found an excellent, detailed description of the various historic designations possible for this old bridge. Of course, they all involve time and funding, something the City sorely lacks at this time.

The report doesn't mention that this bridge was part of the Southern Pacific Railroad Company line crossing over Hangtown Creek. It sits unused since they abandoned the line into Placerville in the 1980's. Other parts of their Placerville right of way were purchased by Caltrans for the Highway 50 Ops project. Your agenda items reminds me just how many years have passed since a railroad served Placerville!

As a railroad historian and photographer, I can assure the Council this bridge was an important part of the freight and passenger transportation system into Placerville and central El Dorado county. The economic and societal contributions of rail lines into the Sierra foothills were many.

Research will show the daily importance of the Placerville line and bridge. The SP Placerville branch carried millions of board feet of lumber to market from mills like Michigan Cal and Placerville Lumber Co. In the summer, the Placerville Fruit Growers Association produced refrigerator cars loads of fresh fruit. Several trains a day ran on the line into the 1950's. Every commodity now on a truck, once crossed over that bridge. Daily passenger service to Sacramento ended in the early 1940's.

Regarding bridge condition, during my tenor on the Council, with Steve Youel's help, the bridge was cleared of brush, trees and debris using Cal Fire crews from Growlersburg camp.

I would request the Council consider additional public input and assistance. Working with the criteria outlined by the Development Director, perhaps private funding could be secured. I would welcome the chance to share my knowledge and resources to help preserve this structure.

Thank you for your consideration.

Cordially yours,

Mark Acuna