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foothill community built on California's rich gold rush history.*



**City Manager's Report**  
**July 8, 2025, City Council Meeting**  
**Prepared by: Carole Kendrick, Director of Development Services**  
**Item #: 12.1**

**Subject:** Main Street 1906 Bridge Historic Designation Options

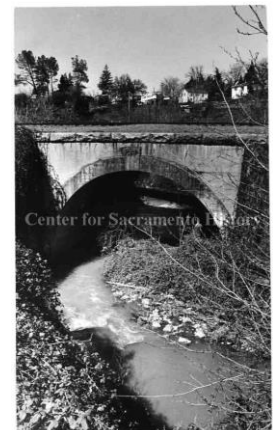
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**Recommendation:** Formal consideration of historic designation pathways for the 1906 Bridge.

**Purpose:** This item aims to explore potential avenues for securing a historic designation for the 1906 Bridge.

**Strategic Plan Strategy:** Maintain/Improve Quality of Life - Strategy 8) Document Historical Assets, a. Explore and recommend options to update and document the City's Historical Assets Inventory.

**Background:** At the May 13, 2025, and May 27, 2025, City Council meetings, Placerville resident Mike Drobesh initiated a discussion regarding the 1906 Bridge. Mr. Drobesh formally requested that the City Council investigate and pursue the necessary steps to secure historic status for the bridge. This request highlights a growing community interest in preserving and recognizing the historical significance of local landmarks. The City Council is now tasked with exploring the feasibility and implications of such a designation, which could involve research into the bridge's historical context, structural integrity, and potential benefits or challenges associated with historic status.



The 1906 Bridge is situated off Main Street, between Canal Street and Forni Road, as delineated in Attachment A. The subject property lacks a specific zoning designation, as indicated in Attachment B, but is assigned a General Plan land use designation of Community Business District (CBD), as illustrated in Attachment C.

**Discussion:** Development Services staff has investigated the available avenues for pursuing a historic designation for the 1906 Bridge, and several options have been provided below for consideration.

**Option 1.** Apply to nominate the Main Street 1906 Bridge in Placerville for **California Historical Landmark (CHL)**.

According to [ohp.parks.ca.gov](http://ohp.parks.ca.gov) guidelines, the following procedural steps are required:

- 1) Verify eligibility by confirming and documenting the bridge's statewide significance, such as its role in the Gold Rush, rail or settlement history or unique engineering features or link to a notable builder, architect or engineer. This would require research from resources including

the Center for Sacramento History, El Dorado County Historical Society, National Register of Historic Places, and Caltrans Historic Bridge Inventory.

- 2) Compile a 5–10-page historical narrative detailing the bridge’s historical context, significance, timeline, location and current condition, supported by primary/secondary sources, photos, maps, and ownership details (City of Placerville).
- 3) Complete DPR 523 forms (A, B, and L) from the Office of Historic Preservation (OHP) website, including citations and visuals.
- 4) Engage stakeholders by notifying the City of Placerville (property owner) and securing community support.
- 5) Submit one digital PDF (and optional hard copy) to the OHP at 1725 23rd Street, Suite 100, Sacramento, CA 95816, with a cover letter.
- 6) Follow up during the State Historical Resources Commission’s quarterly review, addressing questions, public comments, or facilitating a site visit. More detailed information and guidelines can be found on [ohp.parks.ca.gov](http://ohp.parks.ca.gov).

For the bridge to be eligible for designation as a California landmark under Sec. 5031(a) of the Public Resources Code, a high standard must be met and the bridge must have statewide historical significance by meeting one of these criteria:

**Uniqueness or Significance:** The property must be the first, last, only, or most significant of its type in Southern, Central, or Northern California. If it has lost its historic appearance, it may be listed as a site.

**Association with Key Figures/Groups:** The property must be linked to an individual or group with a profound influence on California’s history, tied to their significant achievements, not merely their birthplace or death place unless historically notable. If integrity is lost, it may be listed as a site.

**Architectural/Design Excellence:** The property must be a prototype, outstanding example, or notable work of a period, style, architectural movement, or master builder, with excellent physical integrity and a strong design relationship to its original site.

The Main Street 1906 Bridge is unlikely to qualify for California Historical Landmark (CHL) listing status. Its condition is fair to poor, with significant accumulation of dirt and vegetation on the deck. The bridge is no longer in active use and is largely obscured from public view by trees and other vegetation. Public access is challenging due to its location. The bridge's aesthetic does not appear to be unique or noteworthy, closely resembling numerous other small, single-arched bridges throughout California. Furthermore, the bridge does not seem to be associated with any individual or group that significantly influenced California history. This latter point could, however, be verified through extensive archival research.

**Option 2.** Apply to nominate the Main Street 1906 Bridge in Placerville for designation as a **California Point of Historical Interest (CPHI)**

The application process is the same as the CHL Program with one big exception and that is CPHI nominations focus on local significance. Much less extensive documentation is required since the scope is narrower (city or county level).

**Option 3.** Apply to nominate the Main Street 1906 Bridge for designation on the **California Register of Historical Resources**.

To nominate a structure to the California Register of Historical Resources, the structure would need to meet at least one of the following criteria:

- 1) The site is linked to events that significantly shaped California's history or cultural heritage.
- 2) The site is connected to the lives of notable individuals from the past.
- 3) The site showcases distinctive architectural or artistic characteristics, represents a specific type, period, or construction method, or is the work of a significant creative figure.
- 4) The site has provided or is likely to provide important information about prehistory or history.

The application process for all three options mentioned above starts with the completion of DPR 523 Forms which can be found on the California State Office of Historic Preservation website at [https://ohp.parks.ca.gov/?page\\_id=21238#:~:text=The%20California%20Register%20program%20encourages,grant%20funding%20and%20affords%20certain](https://ohp.parks.ca.gov/?page_id=21238#:~:text=The%20California%20Register%20program%20encourages,grant%20funding%20and%20affords%20certain)

**Option 4.** Apply to register the bridge on the National Register of Historic Places. The Federal registration process is very similar to the State process.

To be eligible for the National Register of Historic Places, the bridge must meet at least one of four criteria and retain historical integrity in aspects like location, design, materials, and setting. **Criterion A (Event)** requires the bridge to be linked to significant historical events, such as Placerville's gold rush, transportation, or economic development, potentially as a key trade or railway link. **Criterion B (Person)** demands a direct connection to a notable figure, like an engineer or local leader, supported by documentation. **Criterion C (Design/Construction)** applies if the bridge showcases distinctive engineering or construction techniques. **Criterion D (Information Potential)** is less typical but applies if the bridge offers unique historical or archaeological insights.

The bridge meets the age requirement (over 50 years old). The bridge must retain enough original features to reflect its historical significance, though minor modern repairs are acceptable. Researching Placerville's 1906 historical event context—focusing on transportation, mining, or infrastructure—can strengthen a nomination under Criterion A. For Criterion C, compare the bridge's design (concrete arch) to others in the Caltrans Historic Bridge Inventory. Required forms include NPS Form 10-900, 10-900-a, photographs, and maps. Benefits of listing include recognition, potential tax credits, grants, and federal project reviews. The nomination process involves OHP, public comment, State Historical Resources Commission (SHRC), and National Park Service (NPS) reviews, taking months. [National Register Bulletin 15](#) provides detailed technical information on the eligibility and registration process.

**Environmental:** The potential historic listing of the 1906 Bridge would not be considered a “project” as defined in the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Statute and Guidelines. If any rehabilitation or restoration were to occur, the activity would be exempt from CEQA as a categorical exemption per 15331 Historical Resource Restoration/Rehabilitation.

Class 31 consists of projects limited to maintenance, repair, stabilization, rehabilitation, restoration, preservation, conservation or reconstruction of historical resources in a manner consistent with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties with Guidelines for Preserving, Rehabilitating, Restoring, and Reconstructing Historic Buildings

**Cost:** The cost to prepare this staff report is approximately \$400.00.

**Budget Impact:** Pursuing a historical designation for the 1906 Bridge would require substantial research, consequently reallocating resources from other active projects. The precise time commitment and staffing needs for this undertaking remain undetermined, and no specific budgetary allocation has been identified in the 2025/2026 budget for this purpose.



M. Cleve Morris, City Manager



Carole Kendrick, Director of Development  
Services

Attachments:

Attachment A: Aerial Photograph

Attachment B: Zoning Map

Attachment C: General Plan Land Use Designation Map