

# City of Santa Fe, New Mexico

# memo

**DATE:** July 8, 2025

**TO:** Historic Districts Review Board Members

**VIA:** Heather Lamboy, Planning & Land Use Department Director *HL*  
Maggie Moore, Assistant Land Use Director *MM*  
Gary Moquino, Historic Preservation Division Manager

**FROM:** Lani McCulley, Senior Planner, Historic Preservation Division *LM*

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**2025-010684-HDRB, Shelby St. Foot Bridge, Downtown & Eastside Historic District,** contributing, Wonderstone Consulting LLC, agent for City of Santa Fe, owner, requests to construct a pedestrian bridge. An exception is requested to section 14-5.2(D)(5)(b) for not matching the material being replaced in composition, design, color, texture, and other visual qualities.

**REFERENCE ATTACHMENTS (Sequentially):**

**CITY SUBMITTALS**

District Standards & yard wall  
& fence standards.

Historic Inventory Form

Zoning Review Sheet

Other:

**APPLICANT SUBMITTALS**

Proposal Letter

Site Plan/Floor Plan

Elevations

Photographs

Other: [exception criteria]

**STAFF RECOMMENDATION:**

Staff finds that the exception criteria have not been met and recommends denial of the exception to section 14-5.2(D)(5)(b) for not matching the material being replaced in composition, design, color, texture, and other visual qualities. However, staff recommends approval of the design option 2,

which closely emulates the existing bridge and complies with Section 14-5.2(D) General Design Standards for all Historic Districts, and 14-5.2(E) Downtown and Eastside Design Standards.

**Sample motions:**

- a. In case 2025-010684-HDRB, for Shelby Street Footbridge, approve/deny the reconstruction of the footbridge structure using design one/two as submitted.

Should the Board deny the exception request, the applicant shall return with an alternative proposal for review and approval before proceeding to a building permit.

The property lies within the Historic Downtown Archaeological Review District. See Chapter 14, SFCC, Article 14-3.13(B)(1). In the Archaeological Review Committee hearing on June 26, 2025, the ARC requested that all ground disturbance be monitored, given the significant cultural resources in the area of potential effect (APE).

**BACKGROUND & SUMMARY:**

The Shelby Street Footbridge is located on the south side of Alameda Street at the base of Shelby Street. The footbridge is contributing to the Downtown and Eastside Historic District. It is located above the stone-lined channel constructed by the Civilian Conservation Corps in the 1930s. The area is part of the Santa Fe River Park, which is a passive recreational area with landscaping, picnic tables, and a walking path. The park is restricted to parcel sections from twenty to one hundred feet wide, bounded on one side by the ten-foot drop to the riverbed and on the other side by Alameda Street. This parkway was developed for the visual enhancement of the nature of the site.



Figure 1: Location of Shelby Street Footbridge.

The Shelby Street Footbridge was constructed in 1968, most likely as a replacement for a timber bridge that was constructed in the 1930s as part of the Civilian Conservation Corps project. The 1968 bridge is constructed of concrete slabs with timber and stone abutments and concrete girders, and a steel pipe railing. An additional concrete beam was placed between the girders for added support at an unknown date. The exterior of the girders is embedded with sandstone blocks set into a concrete bed, which gives the footbridge an appearance of rock construction in an arch. The entrance to the bridge is bordered on each side by low sandstone parapets about 12” in height, and the metal railing is embedded in square masonry end posts at about 18” in height. The entrance on the north of the bridge has curved stone walls up to four feet in height flanking the approach to the bridge. These walls connect to the masonry end posts. The south entrance has had stones removed to accommodate the widening of the pedestrian path.



Figure 2: Side view of Shelby Street Footbridge.

The bridge was approved for demolition under case 2025-010683-HDRB.

**APPLICANT’S REQUEST:**

The applicant proposes the following:

- 1) Construct a replacement footbridge for the Shelby Street Footbridge. The new bridge will be brought up higher to the bank of the river and be extended from 37’3” long to 42’0” long. It will also be widened from 4’0” wide to 6’0” wide. The rail height will be raised from 18” to 3’10”. The proposed design is metal with no stone facades and a concrete approach. The pilasters or end caps will be constructed of CMU and stucco, a concrete deck, and painted metal railings.  
\*\*An alternative design (design 2) with a stone façade, brick approach, and stone pilasters or end caps, and a brick deck is offered.



Figure 3: Rendering of Design 1.



Figure 4: Rendering of Design 2.

### **EXCEPTION CRITERIA AND RESPONSES:**

Exception to section 14-5.2(D)(5)(b): Staff request an exception to “*For all façades of significant, contributing and landmark structures, architectural features, finishes, and details other than doors and windows, shall be repaired rather than replaced. In the event replacement is necessary, the use of new material may be approved. The new material shall match the material being replaced in composition, design, color, texture, and other visual qualities. Replacement or duplication of missing features shall be substantiated by documentation, physical or pictorial evidence.*”

(i) *Do not damage the character of the district*

Applicant Response: The Shelby Street bridge is one of several small bridges that crosses the Santa Fe River, connecting the north and south banks. Small foot bridges and vehicular bridges which have existed since the river began to channelize around 1893 with the construction of the Two-Mile Dam. Sanborn Fire Insurance maps and other historic maps indicate that the bridges crossing the river were stone, wood, and now concrete- changing materials over time

to accommodate the modernizing and engineering needs for crossing a river channel. The nearest pedestrian bridge to the Shelby Street bridge is the Brother's Lane bridge. This bridge was last replaced around 2016 and is now a wooden bridge with wooden rails. Given that bridge materials change over time, removal of the stone bridge will not damage the character of the district.

Removing the bridge entirely would change the character of this location along the river park, but the bridge will be replaced. The current situation of having a closed and dangerous bridge along a main street in the downtown area is damaging to the district, despite being constructed of materials not of historical age. Demolishing and replacing the bridge is not.

The removal of the bridge will not affect the space that embodies the bridge, which is the river park. The river park, with other bridges crossing the river, will remain intact and the overall character and design of the river park property will continue with the bridge replacement. However, the request is to remove historic material, and this request is being made because of the structure's condition and the inability to restore the structure. The historic material will be removed, but the design presentation has demonstrated that a replacement bridge will maintain and contribute to the river park, and the design of the bridge will be in keeping with the historic district standards. One of the proposed designs offers the potential of reusing the stone for a reconstructed stone façade if that is desired by the HDRB. The other design is proposed to be non-intrusive visually and stylistically. A commemorative plaque is also proposed to mitigate the removal of the historic material.

Staff Response: Staff find that this criterion is not met. While the footbridge the evaluation of the damage to the existing bridge demonstrates the need for replacement, staff recommends that the replacement bridge emulates the existing contributing structure, as the footbridge is an integral part of the district, and it would harm the district to lose the 1968 footbridge.

(ii) *Are required to prevent a hardship to the applicant or an injury to the public welfare*

Applicant Response: As is demonstrated through photos and letters in the demolition case preceding this case, the structure has failed, and the bridge is a public safety concern as it lacks structural integrity. The bridge is beyond repair. Removal of the historic material that composes the bridge is required to prevent injury to the public welfare, both bodily injury and liability to the City of Santa Fe.

Staff Response: Staff find that this criterion has not been met. The evaluation of the bridge by Wilson and Company clearly shows that the existing bridge is unsafe and would require enough work that replacement is required; however, staff point out that the replacement bridge should emulate the existing contributing structure, as no hardship prevents this.

(iii) *Strengthen the unique heterogeneous character of the City by providing a full range of design options to ensure that residents can continue to reside within the historic districts*

Applicant Response: Several design options were considered, and options 1 and 2 have been chosen to present to the HDRB in the design review case. Both designs strengthen the unique heterogeneous character of downtown Santa Fe and the river park area.

The design options considered were:

- 1) Leave the bridge and permanently close it.

- 2) Demolish the bridge and not replace it.
- 3) Demolish the bridge and replace it with a modern prefab pedestrian bridge as seen in other areas along the Santa Fe River.
- 4) Demolish the bridge and replace it with a modern prefab pedestrian bridge with non-structural rock girders to match closely the existing design.

Staff Response: Staff find that this criterion is met. The applicant has provided the Board with two options for consideration regarding the reconstruction of the footbridge. Staff recommends option 2 of the designs offered for approval, which most closely emulates the 1968 footbridge.

## **RELEVANT CODE CITATIONS:**

### **14-5.2 HISTORIC DISTRICTS**

#### **(A) General Provisions**

##### **(1) General Purpose**

In order to promote the economic, cultural, and general welfare of the people of the *city* and to ensure the harmonious, orderly and efficient growth and *development* of the *city*, it is deemed essential by the *governing body* that the qualities relating to the history of Santa Fe, and a harmonious outward appearance, which preserve *property* values and attract tourists and residents alike, be preserved, some of these qualities being:

- (a) The continued existence and *preservation* of historical areas and *buildings*;
- (b) The continued construction of *buildings* in the historic styles; and
- (c) A general harmony as to style, form, color, height, proportion, texture and material between *buildings* of historic design and those of more modern design.

#### **(C) Regulation of Significant and Contributing Structures in the Historic Districts**

(Ord. No. 2004-26)

##### **(1) Purpose and Intent**

It is intended that:

- (a) Each *structure* to be recognized as a physical record of its time, place, and use. Changes that create a false sense of historical *development*, such as the addition of conjectural features or architectural elements from other *buildings*, shall not be undertaken;
- (b) Changes to *structures* that have acquired historic *significance* in their own right shall be retained and preserved, recognizing that most *structures* change over time;
- (c) Distinctive features, finishes, and construction techniques or examples of craftsmanship that characterize a *structure* be preserved; and
- (d) New additions and related or adjacent new construction be undertaken in such a manner that if removed in the future, the original form and integrity of the historic *property* and its environment would be unimpaired.

**(D) General Design Standards for All H Districts**

In any review of proposed additions or alterations to *structures* that have been declared significant or contributing in any historic district or a *landmark* in any part of the *city*, the following standards shall be met:

(1) General

- (a) The status of a significant, contributing, or *landmark structure* shall be retained and preserved. If a proposed alteration will cause a *structure* to lose its significant, contributing, or *landmark* status, the *application* shall be denied. The removal of historic materials or alteration of architectural features and spaces that embody the status shall be prohibited.
- (b) If a proposed alteration or new construction will cause an adjacent *structure* to lose its significant, contributing, or *landmark* status, the *application* may be denied.

(2) Additions

- (a) Additions shall have similar materials, architectural *treatments* and styles, features, and details as the existing *structure*, but shall not duplicate those of the existing *structure* in a manner that will make the addition indistinguishable from the existing *structure*.
- (b) Additions to *buildings* that meet the standards of Subsection 14-5.2(E) shall continue to meet those standards set forth in Subsection 14-5.2(E) in addition to the standards set forth in this section.
- (c) Additions are not permitted to *primary façades*.
- (d) Additions are not permitted to the side of the existing footprint unless the addition is set back a minimum of ten (10) feet from the primary facade. The addition shall not exceed fifty percent of the square footage of the existing footprint, and shall not exceed fifty percent of the existing dimension of the primary facade. To the extent architecturally practicable, new additions shall be attached to any existing noncontributing portion of *structures* instead of attaching them to the significant or contributing portion.
- (e) The height of additions:
  - (i) For significant and *landmark structures* shall be a minimum of six (6) inches less than the parapet or equivalent roof-feature of the existing adjacent connecting facade.
  - (ii) For contributing *structures* shall be no more than one additional *story* higher than the existing *structure*. To the extent architecturally practicable, two-story additions shall be set to the rear or the side rear of the *structure*. When an additional *story* is to be placed upon an existing contributing *structure*, that footprint may be no greater than fifty percent of the footprint of the existing *structure*, subject to the provisions of Subsection A(1) above. For the purposes of this paragraph, an additional *story* shall not exceed twelve (12) feet from the existing rooftop to the highest point of that *story*.

(5) Windows, Doors, and Other Architectural Features

- (a) For all facades of significant and *landmark structures* and for the primary facades of contributing *structures*:
  - (i) Historic windows shall be repaired or restored wherever possible. Historic windows that cannot be repaired or restored shall be duplicated in the size, style, and material of the original. Thermal double pane glass may be used. No opening shall be widened or narrowed.
  - (ii) No new opening shall be made where one presently does not exist unless historic documentation supports its prior existence.
  - (iii) No existing opening shall be closed.
- (b) For all façades of significant, contributing and *landmark structures*, architectural features, finishes, and details other than doors and windows, shall be repaired rather than replaced. In the event *replacement* is necessary, the use of new material may be approved. The new material shall match the material being replaced in composition, design, color, texture, and other visual qualities. *Replacement* or duplication of missing features shall be substantiated by documentation, physical or pictorial evidence.

(E) **Downtown and Eastside Design Standards**

The *governing body* recognizes that a style of architecture has evolved within the *city* from the year 1600 to the present characterized by construction with *adobe*, hereafter called "old Santa Fe style", and that another style has evolved, hereafter called "recent Santa Fe style", which is a *development* from, and an elaboration of the old Santa Fe style, with different materials and frequently with added decorations.

(1) Old Santa Fe Style

Old Santa Fe style, characterized by construction with *adobe*, is defined as including the so-called "pueblo" or "pueblo-Spanish" or "Spanish-Indian" and "territorial" styles and is more specifically described as follows:

- (a) With rare exception, *buildings* are of one *story*, few have three stories, and the characteristic effect is that the *buildings* are long and low. Roofs are flat with a slight *slope* and surrounded on at least three sides by a firewall of the same color and material as the *walls* or of brick. Roofs are never carried out beyond the line of the *walls* except to cover an enclosed *portal* or *porch* formed by setting back a portion of the *wall* or to form an exterior *portal*, the outer edge of the roof being supported by wooden columns. Two- *story* construction is more common in the territorial than in other sub-styles, and is preferably accompanied by a balcony at the level of the floor of the second *story*. Façades are flat, varied by inset *portales*, exterior *portales*, projecting vigas or roof beams, canales or water-spouts, flanking buttresses and wooden lintels, architraves and cornices, which, as well as doors, are frequently carved and the carving may be picked out with bright colors. Arches are almost never used except for nonfunctional arches, often slightly ogive, over gateways in freestanding *walls*;

- (b) All exterior *walls* of a *building* are painted alike. The colors range from a light earth color to a dark earth color. The exception to this rule is the protected space under *portales*, or in church-derived designs, inset panels in a *wall* under the roof, in which case the roof overhangs the panel. These spaces may be painted white or a contrasting color, or have mural decorations;
  - (c) Solid *wall* space is always greater in any façade than window and door space combined. Single panes of glass larger than thirty (30) inches in any dimension are not permissible except as otherwise provided in this section;
  - (d) The rule as to flat roofs shall not be construed to prevent the construction of skylights or installation of air conditioning devices, or any other necessary roof *structures*, but such *structures* other than chimneys, flues, vents and aerials, shall be so placed as to be concealed by the firewall from the view of anyone standing in the *street* on which the *building* fronts;
  - (e) True old Santa Fe style *buildings* are made of *adobe* with mud plaster finish. Construction with masonry blocks, bricks, or other materials with which the *adobe* effect can be simulated is permissible; provided, that the exterior *walls* are not less than eight (8) inches thick and that geometrically straight façade lines are avoided. Mud plaster or hard plaster simulating *adobe*, laid on smoothly, is required; and
  - (f) It is characteristic of old Santa Fe style commercial *buildings* to place a *portal* so that it covers the entire sidewalk, the columns being set at the curb line.
- (2) Recent Santa Fe Style

Recent Santa Fe style intends to achieve harmony with historic *buildings* by *retention* of a similarity of materials, color, proportion, and general detail. The dominating effect is to be that of *adobe* construction, prescribed as follows:

- (a) No *building* shall be over two stories in height in any façade unless the façade shall include projecting or recessed *portales*, *setbacks* or other design elements;
- (b) The combined door and window area in any *publicly visible* façade shall not exceed forty percent of the total area of the façade except for doors or windows located under a *portal*. No door or window in a *publicly visible* façade shall be located nearer than three (3) feet from the corner of the façade;
- (c) No cantilevers shall be permitted except over projecting vigas, beams, or wood corbels, or as part of the roof *treatment* described below;
- (d) No less than eighty percent of the surface area of any *publicly visible* façade shall be *adobe* finish, or stucco simulating *adobe* finish. The balance of the *publicly visible* façade, except as above, may be of natural stone, wood, brick, tile, terra cotta, or other material, subject to approval as hereinafter provided for *building permits*;
- (e) The *publicly visible* façade of any *building* and of any adjoining *walls* shall, except as otherwise provided, be of one color, which color shall simulate a light earth or dark earth color, matte or dull finish and of relatively smooth texture. Façade surfaces under *portales* may be of contrasting or complimentary colors. Windows, doors and *portals* on *publicly visible* portions of the *building* and *walls* shall be of

one of the old Santa Fe styles; except that *buildings* with *portals* may have larger plate glass areas for windows under *portals* only. Deep window recesses are characteristic; and

- (f) Flat roofs shall have not more than thirty (30) inches overhang.

# Historic Cultural Properties Inventory (HCPI) Base Form (FORM 1)

*Historic Preservation Division, New Mexico Department of Cultural Affairs*

Date of Form: June 7, 2025

For HPD Office use only:			
HCPI No. _____	District No. _____	NRHP <input type="checkbox"/> SRCP <input type="checkbox"/>	Criteria <input type="checkbox"/> A <input type="checkbox"/> B <input type="checkbox"/> C <input type="checkbox"/> D

1. Name of property:  Shelby Street Footbridge	2. Location:  Over Santa Fe River Downtown and Eastside Historic District – Santa Fe	3. Local Reference Number: Santa Fe ID: N/A  4. County: Santa Fe Parcel # 910017966
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5. Property Type: <input type="checkbox"/> Buildings: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Structures: Bridge <input type="checkbox"/> Site <input type="checkbox"/> Object	
6. Date of Survey: May 20, 2025	
7. Previous Survey Date(s): <input type="checkbox"/> Yes: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No:	
8. Name of Project: HDRB Status Evaluation	
9. Lat/Long: 35.6850349, -105.9392324	

10. Photo Information: John W. Murphey, photographer. Photo 1: View of east elevation, facing southwest.

11. Brief Description of the Property:

Erected in 1968 by staff of the State Parks and Recreation Commission, the Shelby Street Footbridge is an approximately 26-foot-long standard girder-slab span crossing the Santa Fe River (Photo 1). It is dressed with sandstone curtain walls designed to give the appearance of a masonry arch bridge. The bridge was crudely constructed and is now in poor condition, with a major punch-through in the deck and areas of concrete delamination. These issues prompted the City of Santa Fe to close the bridge in 2022 (Photo 2).

***Continued on Page 5.***

12. Who uses the property? Not in use

13. Construction Date: 1968

Known  Estimated Source: Newspaper article

14. Setting:  
 Suburban  Rural  Village  Urban If Urban:  Commercial  Industrial  Residential  Public: Park

15. Relationship to Surroundings:  Similar  Dissimilar  
 Comments: N/A

16. Additional Perspective: (Photos, drawing, footprint, etc., indicate north arrow when possible)



Portion of Parcel # 910017966 with Shelby Street Footbridge highlighted.

Source: Office of the Santa Fe County Assessor  
 Blue parcel lines are not accurate

17. Surveyor:  
 (your name, address,  
 telephone number, and any  
 group affiliation)

John W. Murphey  
 Architectural Historian  
 Architectural History Services  
 505-577-7593/707-583-7819  
 John@archhistoryservices.com

For: Current owner:

18. Owner (if known) and  
 other knowledgeable people:

Current owner: Assumed to be  
 the City of Santa Fe, though no  
 deed was located for the  
 property, per Office of the  
 Santa Fe County Clerk

19. Is Property Endangered?  Unknown  No  Yes How?

20. Significance to Current Community:  Unknown  None  Low  Moderate  High  
 Describe: Unknown

21. Other Significance or Information of Interest: (such as historical, legendary, structural, former ownership, etc.)  
 See Historical Overview.

22. National or State Register:

Is this property individually listed on a historic register?  Unknown  No  Yes  
 If yes:  State  National

**If 'no' or unknown, do you think this property is eligible for listing?**  No  Yes  
 Why? See Evaluation of Historical Status

23. National or State Historic District: City of Santa Fe

Is this property in a historic district?  Unknown  No  Yes  
 If yes:  Significant  Contributing  Non-contributing  No Status  
 Per City of Santa Fe official designation map

**If 'yes', what is the name of the district?**  State  National  City of Santa Fe:  
 Downtown and Eastside Historic District

24. Supplemental Forms:

None  HCPI Detail Form (FORM 2)  Continuation Sheets, # pages: \_\_\_\_\_

# Historic Cultural Properties Inventory (HCPI) Detail Form (FORM 2)

*Historic Preservation Division, New Mexico Department of Cultural Affairs*

For HPD Office use only:		<i>Please complete HCPI FORM 1 before completing FORM 2</i>		
HCPI No. _____	District No. _____	NRHP _____	SRCP _____	Criteria <u>  </u> A <u>  </u> B <u>  </u> C <u>  </u> D
1. Name of property:  Shelby Street Footbridge	2. Location:  Over Santa Fe River Downtown and Eastside Historic District - Santa Fe	3. Local Reference Number: Santa Fe ID: N/A		
		4. County: Santa Fe		
		5. Date of Survey: May 20, 2025		
Bridge Data				
6. Feature Crossed: Santa Fe River 7. Bridge Type: Pre-cast concrete girder-slab with masonry false spandrel wall 8. Total Structure Length: 38' ± 9. Number of Spans: one 10. Main Span Length: <b>26' ±</b> 11. Main Substructure: Timber abutment (assumed) and stone abutments and bridge seats 12. Deck Width: <b>4' ±</b> 13. Railing Type: Steel pipe rail				
14. Designer/Engineer: Unknown		Builder/Contractor: New Mexico State Parks and Recreation Commission Force Account Labor		
15. Modifications: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <u>  </u> ___ No known modifications  <u>#1 Date: Unknown.</u>				

16. Primary Architectural Style  Not Applicable

- |  |   |  |   |   |
|--|---|--|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Art Deco/Streamline Moderne | <input type="checkbox"/> Gothic Revival | <input type="checkbox"/> Mission Revival | <input type="checkbox"/> Pueblo           | <input type="checkbox"/> Spanish-Pueblo Revival |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Bungalow/Craftsman          | <input type="checkbox"/> International  | <input type="checkbox"/> Neo-Classical   | <input type="checkbox"/> Queen Anne       | <input type="checkbox"/> Territorial            |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Colonial Revival            | <input type="checkbox"/> Italianate     | <input type="checkbox"/> Northern NM     | <input type="checkbox"/> Ranch            | <input type="checkbox"/> Territorial Revival    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Folk Victorian              | <input type="checkbox"/> Mediterranean  | <input type="checkbox"/> Prairie         | <input type="checkbox"/> Spanish-Colonial | <input type="checkbox"/> Tudor Revival          |

Notes: \_x\_ Other: Urban style park bridge

17. Documents Available and Their Locations  
None: See Documentation Note

SITE:

18. Attached or Associated Properties

Are associated properties eligible for listing: The adjacent channel is listed in the National Register of Historic Places, to which the subject is a Non-Contributing resource.

19. Site Plan: Field Sketch, AHS.

**Shelby Street Footbridge, Erected 1968**

**East Alameda Street**

**CCC Stone Retaining Walls**

**Santa Fe River**

<b>Total Structure Length: 38' ±</b>
<b>Number of Spans: One</b>
<b>Main Span Length: 26' ±</b>
<b>Deck Width: 4' ±</b>

**CCC Stone Retaining Walls**

**Santa Fe River Park Pathway**



# Historic Cultural Properties Inventory (HCPI) Detail Form (FORM 2)

Historic Preservation Division, New Mexico Department of Cultural Affairs

For HPD Office use only:		Please complete HCPI FORM 1 before completing FORM 2			
HCPI No.	District No.	NRHP	SRCP	Criteria	A B C D
1. Name of property:  Shelby Street Footbridge	2. Location:  Over Santa Fe River Downtown and Eastside Historic District -Santa Fe	3. Local Reference Number: Santa Fe ID: N/A			
		4. County: Santa Fe			
		5. Date of Survey: May 20, 2025			

## Architectural Description Continued

### Setting

The Shelby Street Footbridge crosses the river near the base of Shelby Street in downtown Santa Fe. It is positioned above a stone-lined channel constructed by the Civilian Conservation Corps in the early 1930s. Pedestrian walkways, added in the 1950s during the area's tenure as a state park, flank the bridge on both the east and west approaches.

The bridge lies within a modified riparian corridor where the river has been straightened and channelized. The surrounding context includes a mix of commercial and governmental buildings, reflecting the area's urbanization from the mid to late 20th century. Mature cottonwoods, willows, and other riparian vegetation provide shade and visual relief, reinforcing the river's presence as a natural element in an increasingly dense built environment (Photo 3).

### Bridge Details

#### *Superstructure*

The bridge consists of two precast concrete girders supporting a cast-in-place or integrally cast slab deck (Photo 4). Each girder measures approximately 3 inches wide by 11½ inches high and is T-shaped, flanged into the slab. A later addition—a concrete beam measuring approximately 8½ inches wide by 9¾ inches high—was installed between the girders for supplemental support; however, the beam exhibits noticeable deflection at mid-span. The bridge spans the river at 26 feet, with a total length of approximately 38 feet including approaches.

The exterior features non-structural concrete curtain walls with a false arch profile. It is clad in local sandstone likely intended to mimic a closed-spandrel masonry arch (Photo 1). These false spandrel walls measure approximately 3 inches wide with a variable height and consist of sandstone blocks set into a concrete bed (Photo 5). The blocks exhibit pronounced horizontal striations or bedding planes that visually differ from the limestone channel walls below (Photo 6).

# Historic Cultural Properties Inventory (HCPI) Detail Form (FORM 2)

*Historic Preservation Division, New Mexico Department of Cultural Affairs*

For HPD Office use only:		<i>Please complete HCPI FORM 1 before completing FORM 2</i>			
HCPI No.	District No.	NRHP	SRCP	Criteria A B C D	
1. Name of property:  Shelby Street Footbridge	2. Location:  Over Santa Fe River Downtown and Eastside Historic District -Santa Fe	3. Local Reference Number: Santa Fe ID: N/A			
		4. County: Santa Fe			
		5. Date of Survey: May 20, 2025			

Similar to a true masonry arch, the false spandrel walls taper toward the center, narrowing from 4 feet at the base to approximately 20 inches at the “keystone”—a small vertical block located at the bridge’s midpoint (Photo 7). This keystone is decorative and non-structural.

Vertical clearance beneath the bridge at mid-span is approximately 73 inches, a limited height that has long raised flood control concerns. In the 1970s, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers identified the bridge for removal due to its inadequate hydraulic capacity.

### ***Substructure***

The bridge rests directly on the river embankment, supported by large timber blocks that serve as both abutments and bridge seats.<sup>1</sup> This rudimentary substructure reflects minimal engineering, relying largely on soil mass and timber resistance for lateral stability. The lower abutments and bridge seats are faced with stone for visual effect (Photo 8).

### ***Deck and Approach***

The bridge’s deck is formed by the concrete slab. Over time, surface deterioration has exposed the reinforcing steel mat. Near the center of the span, a punch-through has developed, accompanied by widespread concrete delamination.

The 4-foot-wide walkway is bordered on both sides by low sandstone parapets that rise approximately 12 inches above the deck surface (Photo 9). A painted metal pipe railing runs along the edges of the deck, terminating at each end in square masonry end posts approximately 18 inches high, which visually anchor the span.

On the north side, the bridge is approached by a continuation of the concrete slab (Photo 10). Curving stone walls flank this approach, rising from ground level to approximately four feet where they connect with the masonry end posts. On the south side, the original approach was removed to accommodate the widening of the pedestrian path (Photo 2).

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<sup>1</sup> Based on a restricted view of the north bank, it is presumed that timber blocks function as the back (or rear) abutment.

# Historic Cultural Properties Inventory (HCPI) Detail Form (FORM 2)

Historic Preservation Division, New Mexico Department of Cultural Affairs

For HPD Office use only:		Please complete HCPI FORM 1 before completing FORM 2			
HCPI No.	District No.	NRHP	SRCP	Criteria	A B C D
1. Name of property:  Shelby Street Footbridge	2. Location:  Over Santa Fe River Downtown and Eastside Historic District -Santa Fe	3. Local Reference Number: Santa Fe ID: N/A			
		4. County: Santa Fe			
		5. Date of Survey: May 20, 2025			

## Condition

The bridge is currently in poor condition and shows multiple signs of structural distress. A large punch-through in the deck reveals corroded reinforcing steel (Photo 11). Significant delamination has weakened the concrete surface, and cracks are evident both longitudinally and transversely beneath the deck (Photo 12). Efflorescence—white mineral deposits indicating moisture infiltration—is visible across the underside (Photo 12). These combined issues have compromised the structural integrity of the bridge, leading to its closure by the City of Santa Fe in 2022.

## Historical Overview

### Introduction

In late April 1968, Lela Wilson—a 28-year-old Clovis native and secretary for the New Mexico State Parks and Recreation Commission—stood at the center of the recently completed Shelby Street Footbridge. A State Parks photographer captured an image of Wilson, her bouffant hairstyle silhouetted, as she looked out across the Santa Fe River (Fig. 1). The pair had likely walked from the Commission’s new office at 141 East DeVargas Street to take the photo.

The bridge at the time marked the western terminus of Santa Fe River Park and likely replaced a rustic log span erected by the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) in 1934. The new structure, designed to blend with the CCC-built limestone river walls, continued to serve the same essential function: carrying pedestrians across the Santa Fe River. It fulfilled this role until 2022, when ongoing deterioration and substandard construction led officials to deem it a public hazard.

### Imagining a River Park

At the start of the Great Depression, New Mexico—like many states—did not have a single state park. With the infusion of New Deal funding and the labor of the Civilian

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Conservation Corps (CCC), the state was able to launch its first formal park program.<sup>2</sup> In August 1933, Governor Arthur Seligman issued an executive mandate establishing the New Mexico State Park Commission, enabling the state to use CCC labor for park development.

One of these recreation areas fulfilled a long-held ambition to create a linear parkway along the Santa Fe River. The ambitious but ultimately unproductive 1912 Santa Fe Preliminary Plan envisioned a “Paseo del Rio” boulevard and park stretching along the river from Camino Cabra westward to the future St. Francis Drive (Fig. 2).<sup>3</sup> With no funding attached to the proposal, the plan failed to materialize.

The river parkway concept resurfaced in the 1920s, when the City of Santa Fe, the Chamber of Commerce, and civic groups such as the Kiwanis and Lions Clubs launched a campaign to establish the Santa Fe River Park.<sup>4</sup> Although preliminary drawings were prepared, progress stalled due to resistance from property owners unwilling to sell land fronting the river. With the arrival of the CCC, the project resurfaced. An editorial in the *New Mexican* stated the federal program put a “chance in front of [civic leaders] to secure one of the most beautiful parks in the country.”<sup>5</sup>

### **Building a Riparian Park**

In Santa Fe, the Civilian Conservation Corps undertook two state park projects concurrently. In the Sangre de Cristo foothills, CCC crews developed Little Tesuque Canyon—later designated Hyde Memorial State Park—into an all-season recreation area with campsites, stone shelters, a lodge, and a ski run.<sup>6</sup> At the same time, in the heart of the city, crews from the same camp—headquartered in what would become the Casa Solana subdivision—constructed an urban riparian park along the Santa Fe River, transforming the corridor into a landscaped public space that served both recreational and flood-control purposes. Early plans had envisioned the two parks being connected.

<sup>2</sup> John W. Murphey, “Santa Fe Historic Context Study: 1610-1986,” Document prepared for the City of Santa Fe (Revised June 4, 2021), 55.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, 56

<sup>4</sup> “Alleged Catron Obstructs Park Development; Matter to Come Before Council on Wednesday,” *Santa Fe New Mexican*, April 24, 1934, 2.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>6</sup> Mary Wright Coan, “The New Deal in Little Tesuque,” *New Mexico Magazine* (July 1934), 24-25+.

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The river park would extend nearly two miles along the Santa Fe River, starting at the lower reservoir and moving downstream to a point near St. Francis Drive. Unlike earlier efforts, federal officials assisted in acquiring riverfront parcels, resulting in more than 90 quitclaim deeds made to the State of New Mexico by local landowners.<sup>7</sup>

The project’s primary goal was to straighten and channelize the river for flood control. Until this point, the river routinely flooded, damaging homes and property along its course. A secondary goal was to create an urban recreation area, with a concentration of amenities placed between College Street (now Old Santa Fe Trail) and Shelby Street.

Work on this section began in the spring of 1934 and was largely completed by the end of the year. It included obliterating an ancient acequia and channeling its flow along a raised stone-lined ditch.<sup>8</sup> By August, CCC crews had constructed stone retaining walls reaching Shelby Street, where they were in the process of erecting a rustic log footbridge over the river.<sup>9</sup>

The bridge provided access to the newly built State Parks Commission headquarters on East DeVargas Street. This Pueblo Revival-style building (Fig. 3), funded with New Deal money, served as the administrative offices for the state park system. It was demolished in the 1960s to make way for a parking lot serving the new State Land Office Building.

### **A Rustic Log Bridge**

An article in the *New Mexican* described the new footbridge as made of large yellow pine logs “nearly two feet in diameter.”<sup>10</sup> Though brief, the description fits what would later be called the National Park Service rustic style of park architecture.

As a CCC project, the design of park structures and furnishings was overseen by the regional office of the National Park Service. During this period, the NPS guided park development through a series of design portfolios that covered nearly every aspect of planning and construction. The effort began in 1934 with a slim volume showcasing

<sup>7</sup> David Kammer, “Santa Fe River Park Channel,” National Register of Historic Places nomination (Washington, D.C.: June 2008), 9-18, bibliographical entry.

<sup>8</sup> “Alleged Catron Obstructs Park Development,” 2.

<sup>9</sup> “Work on River Park,” *Santa Fe New Mexican*, August 13, 1934, 1.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*

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representative park structures and expanded—under the direction of NPS architect Albert H. Good—into an encyclopedic three-volume set published in 1938.<sup>11</sup>

As articulated by Good, the Park Service design philosophy sought to promote “through the use of native materials in proper scale, and through the avoidance of severely straight line and over sophistication. . . the feeling of having been executed by pioneer craftsmen with limited hand tools . . . [and by doing so achieve] sympathy with the natural surroundings and with the past.”<sup>12</sup>

For small footbridges in parks, Good recommended the use of logs or stone, noting that such materials “appear more indigenous to our natural parks than spans of steel or concrete.”<sup>13</sup> His chapter on footbridges included photographs illustrating what the Park Service considered exemplary design. Many of these were rustic log spans, which likely influenced the design of the original Shelby Street footbridge. Unfortunately, no known photographs of that bridge survive, making it difficult to determine its actual appearance.<sup>14</sup>

### Completing the Park

The erection of the massive retaining walls extended westward beyond the Don Gaspar Avenue Bridge to a point near St. Francis Drive, and was largely completed by 1937. The State Parks Commission envisioned developing the river corridor westward through downtown into a formal park, while preserving the area east of College Street in a more

<sup>11</sup> John W. Murphey, “Maryland State Parks: A Survey of Selected State Parks in the Eastern and Western Regions,” (Report prepared for the Maryland Historical Trust, January 31, 2019), 58-59.

<sup>12</sup> Albert H. Good, *Park and Recreation Structures, Part I- Administration and Basic Service Facilities* (Washington, D.C.: United States Department of Interior, National Park Service, 1938), 176.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>14</sup> No photographs of the bridge were located at the Palace of the Governors Photo Archives (Catie Carl, email communication to John W. Murphey, May 8, 2025). Inquiries with the City of Santa Fe, the New Mexico State Archives, and New Mexico State Parks regarding park records, drawings, and photographs produced no results. It is possible that relevant materials may exist in Record Group 35 at the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA), College Park, Maryland. However, the short turnaround time and limited budget for this project did not allow for a NARA records search.

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natural state.<sup>15</sup> How much of this vision was ever fully realized remains unclear. With the major structural work completed, the CCC devoted its final years to installing picnic tables along the grassy strip lining the river between College and Shelby Streets.

By the end of the Depression, New Mexico had established four state parks built by the CCC—but the improved Santa Fe River area was not among them.

### **Santa Fe’s Unofficial Park**

After its completion, the *Santa Fe River State Park*—as it was referred to in the press—fell into a jurisdictional gray area. The park encompassed state-owned land, including the riverbed and narrow linear strips along both banks, but was bordered by city-owned and private properties. These overlapping boundaries created administrative uncertainty, and as a result, the park remained unofficially designated for nearly two decades.

After the conclusion of World War II, the Commission began efforts to improve the Santa Fe River Park. According to a 1947 newspaper account, State Parks Superintendent Charles Roehl planned to enhance the urban stretch by developing footpaths, building rock tables and benches, installing drinking fountains, and planting grass.<sup>16</sup> The project was a joint undertaking by the State Parks Commission, the State Highway Department, and the State Penitentiary, which provided prison labor for the work.

The Santa Fe River Park continued to receive incremental improvements but did not achieve official state park designation until the late 1950s. As of 1954, the New Mexico State Parks Commission operated six officially designated parks: Bluewater Lake, Bottomless Lakes, City of Rocks, Conchas Lake, Kit Carson, and Hyde Park. The Santa Fe River Park, by contrast, remained an unpublicized strip of state-owned land—maintained by the state but not formally recognized or promoted as part of the official park system.

<sup>15</sup> “City and Vicinity Given Preference in Park Work, Says Supervisor,” *Santa Fe New Mexican*, March 30, 1937, 4.

<sup>16</sup> “Roehl Tells of Plans to Make River Parkway a Place of Beauty,” *Santa Fe New Mexican*, July 15, 1947, 1.

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In its 1954 annual report, the New Mexico State Parks Commission acknowledged the unusual status of the river park running through the heart of the capital. The report flagged the unresolved question of whether the area should be formally designated a state park or incorporated into the South Capitol Complex—a growing cluster of state government offices located south of the river.<sup>17</sup> While the matter remained unsettled, the Parks Commission continued to maintain the river corridor.

In 1957, the Santa Fe River Park was officially designated as a state park. The original unit encompassed only the north bank of the river, extending approximately 0.4 miles from Delgado Street on the east to Shelby Street on the west.

### **Park Beautification**

Beautification efforts began as early as 1953, when state park employees planted lawn and installed picnic tables along the stretch between Cathedral Place and what is now Paseo de Peralta.<sup>18</sup> This initial work was followed by improvements farther west, including raising the streambed and importing topsoil to level the embankments.

Following the park’s official designation, a series of additional improvements were undertaken. The stone retaining walls were raised to accommodate more fill (Fig. 4), new picnic areas with concrete tables and benches were added, turf was planted throughout, footpaths were laid, and signage installed—including an Official Scenic and Historic Marker framed in rustic brown logs. None of the archival sources reviewed—including newspaper accounts and records from the State Parks and Recreation Commission—mention the replacement of the original CCC-built log bridge.

By 1967, a year before the current footbridge was erected, the park featured 18 designated picnic sites (“picnic pits”) and a continuous lawn along the length of its corridor.<sup>19</sup> Ongoing maintenance focused on repairing older log tables and removing dead trees and overgrowth.

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<sup>17</sup> New Mexico State Park Commission, *Your State Parks – 1954* [annual report] (Santa Fe: New Mexico State Park Commission, n. pag.); New Mexico State Parks and Recreation Division Records, Folder: “Parks & Recreation Department Publications,” New Mexico State Records Center and Archives, Santa Fe, New Mexico (hereafter PRDP).

<sup>18</sup> “A Good Start” [editorial], *Santa Fe New Mexican*, December 2, 1953, 4.

<sup>19</sup> New Mexico State Parks and Recreation Commission, “Welcome to New Mexico State Parks” [foldout brochure], (Santa Fe: State Parks and Recreation Commission, 1967), n. pag., PRDB.

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## A Replacement Bridge

The current footbridge was constructed in early 1968, likely replacing an earlier structure—possibly the original timber span built during the CCC era. A February 1968 aerial photograph shows two footbridges crossing the river at the foot of Shelby Street (Fig. 5). By the following year, only the present bridge remained (Fig. 6). The bridge was erected by park personnel under the supervision of Joe B. Rodriguez, then the area supervisor for Northern New Mexico.

The bridge’s design marked a departure from earlier CCC-era standards. Thirty years prior, National Park Service architect Albert H. Good had advised against constructing stone footbridges with a “thin and structurally weak appearance.”<sup>20</sup> He recommended a more substantial parapet wall rising above the deck, arguing that such designs maintained a more appropriate “park character” than those capped with “thin ... and more formal cap stone.”<sup>21</sup> The new bridge, by contrast, featured a tapering false spandrel and a low parapet wall—elements that contradicted Good’s guidance and lent the structure a more urban profile.

Its completion was marked with a photograph in the local newspaper (Fig. 1), although the project went unmentioned in the State Parks and Recreation Department’s internal newsletter. It did, however, appear in the background of two promotional films produced in the late 1960s to advertise New Mexico’s state parks (Fig. 7).

## The State Park’s Final Years

The 1960s enhanced park was marketed by the state as an urban recreational amenity, focused on strolling and picnicking. A 1977 park brochure described the space as “a serene retreat in the center of Santa Fe for visitors and local residents.”<sup>22</sup>

The New Mexico State Park and Recreation Commission continued to maintain and improve Santa Fe River State Park through the 1990s. In 1999, the City of Santa Fe and the State of New Mexico entered into a joint powers agreement to support the park’s

<sup>20</sup> Good, *Park and Recreation Structures, Part I*, 192.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>22</sup> New Mexico State Parks and Recreation Commission, “New Mexico State Parks: Santa Fe River & Hyde Memorial” [foldout brochure], (Santa Fe: State Parks and Recreation Commission, 1977), n. pag., PRDB.

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ongoing maintenance and future development.<sup>23</sup> The work was reviewed by the City’s Public Works Committee and ultimately evolved into the River Trail and Greenway Improvement Project.

The City hired Wilson and Company to prepare a master plan for the park’s future development. This work included expanding the park westward and constructing pedestrian and bicycle trails from Delgado Street to Defouri Street under the Santa Fe River Downtown Urban Trail Project. As part of the project, the width of West Alameda Street was reduced to allow for a wider and more gradual embankment from Defouri Street to St. Francis Drive. Improvements to the park have continued through the use of Capital Improvements Program funds.

### **When a Footbridge Becomes a Liability**

Calls to remove the Shelby Street Footbridge began in 1983, following a U.S. Army Corps of Engineers project to channelize a section of the Santa Fe River west of Don Gaspar Avenue using heavy concrete retaining structures. The Corps’ initiative was prompted by an earlier flood study predicting that a 100-year event could submerge Shelby Street and surrounding areas under five feet of water.<sup>24</sup> The Corps had been involved with the Santa Fe River since 1957, when a major flood destroyed numerous bridges and riverfront businesses.

As part of the study and following project, the Corps identified several bridges in need of improvement or replacement, including the Old Santa Fe Trail and Defouri Street vehicular bridges, as well as pedestrian crossings like the Shelby Street Footbridge.<sup>25</sup> Each of these bridges had been determined to have a flow capacity of 2,100 cubic feet per second or less—insufficient to withstand a 100-year flood event.

As a cost-sharing arrangement, the City of Santa Fe was responsible for replacing the bridges. However, nearly all available funding was directed toward the replacement of the Old Santa Fe Trail Bridge, a high-volume crossing the city had identified in 1975 as a top priority. Its replacement turned into a costly and protracted effort that took several

<sup>23</sup> Edward Vigil (City of Santa Fe), phone message to John W. Murphey, May 30, 2025; various notices of public meetings published in the *Santa Fe New Mexican*, 1998–2000.

<sup>24</sup> Sam Atwood, “River Flood Plan Under Attack,” *The New Mexican*, May 5, 1983, A-7.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, “River Plan Presented Wednesday,” *The New Mexican*, May 3, 1983, A-7.

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years to complete. With most of the city’s budget directed to the Old Santa Fe Trail crossing, other river spans were not affected by the project, including the Shelby Street Footbridge.

The Shelby Street Footbridge avoided replacement for another 40 years. However, in 2022, with its concrete deck visibly deteriorating, the City of Santa Fe permanently closed the bridge in August after a civil engineering assessment raised safety concerns.<sup>26</sup> The structure has remained closed since.

In November 2024, the Santa Fe Governing Body approved the use of \$240,000 in state capital outlay funds to design a new structure to replace the aging and structurally deficient bridge.<sup>27</sup> This HCPI is a step in the process of replacing the bridge.

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<sup>26</sup> Nathan Lederman, “Deteriorating Footbridge in Downtown Santa Fe Closed,” *Santa Fe New Mexican*, October 15, 2022, A-1 and A-4.

<sup>27</sup> Carina Julig, “Contract Extends Capital Outlay Appropriations,” *Santa Fe New Mexican*, November 19, 2024, A-8.

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## Evaluation of Historical Status

The Shelby Street Footbridge was designated a Non-Contributing resource in the 2008 Santa Fe River Park Channel National Register of Historic Places district nomination. That nomination encompassed the immediate park development along the river, including the CCC-era stone retaining walls and other features. The rationale for the bridge’s non-contributing status was that it fell outside the district’s period of significance, ending in 1940, and that it did not stylistically fit with the National Park Service design aesthetic of the New Deal era.

While the nomination did not reference Albert H. Good’s guidance, it is clear—based on his principles quoted above—that the bridge does not embody the Park Service Rustic ideal. Its lean profile and pipe railing lack the form and naturalistic materials associated with that design philosophy.

Given its previous designation, and its poor quality of construction, the recommendation is to designate the Shelby Street Footbridge a Non-Contributing structure to the Downtown and Eastside Historic District.

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## Documentation Note

No CCC or National Park Service architectural drawings related to the original bridge or associated structures were located in local archives. However, such materials may exist within Record Group 35 (Civilian Conservation Corps) at the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) in College Park, Maryland. Additionally, no drawings or plans were found for the 1950s state park improvements or for the construction of the 1968 footbridge. The following collections were reviewed, with relevant materials noted below:

### Local Collections

#### New Mexico State Archives and Records Center

**A. Civilian Conservation Corps, New Mexico District Records**

*Citation Number:* Collection 1959-030

*Dates:* 1935–1942

**B. New Mexico State Parks and Recreation Division Records**

*Citation Number:* Collection 1979-010

*Dates:* 1939–[ongoing]

**C. Governor Arthur Seligman Papers**

*Collection:* 1959-102

*Series:* Correspondence – New Mexico Park Commission

*Citation:* Series [not specified], Folder 70, Box 3

**D. Governor Clyde K. Tingley Papers**

*Collection:* 1959-104

*Series:* Correspondence – New Mexico State Park Commission

*Citation:* Series [not specified], Folder 45, Box 2

**E. Map Collection**

*Citation Number:* Collection 1959-296

*Series:* Santa Fe – City

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**F. New Mexico Historical Film Collection**

- **Santa Fe River State Park**  
*Citation Number:* Collection 1959-000, Item 11472, Serial No. 11472
  
- **Santa Fe River State Park**  
*Citation Number:* Collection 1959-000, Item 21628, Serial No. 21628
  
- **New Mexico State Parks**  
*Citation Number:* Collection 1959-000, Item 11553, Serial No. 11553  
*Date:* Circa late 1960s

**City of Santa Fe, Land Use Division**

No records

**City of Santa Fe, Parks and Open Space Division**

No records

**New Mexico Historic Preservation Division**

**National Register of Historic Places files** (transferred to NMCRIS)  
Backing information for the Santa Fe River Park Channel NRHP missing

**New Mexico Office of the State Engineer Library**

**Santa Fe/Santa Fe River Materials**  
No material relevant to the park or bridge

**New Mexico State Parks**

No records or knowledge that Santa Fe River Park was a state park

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Illustrations



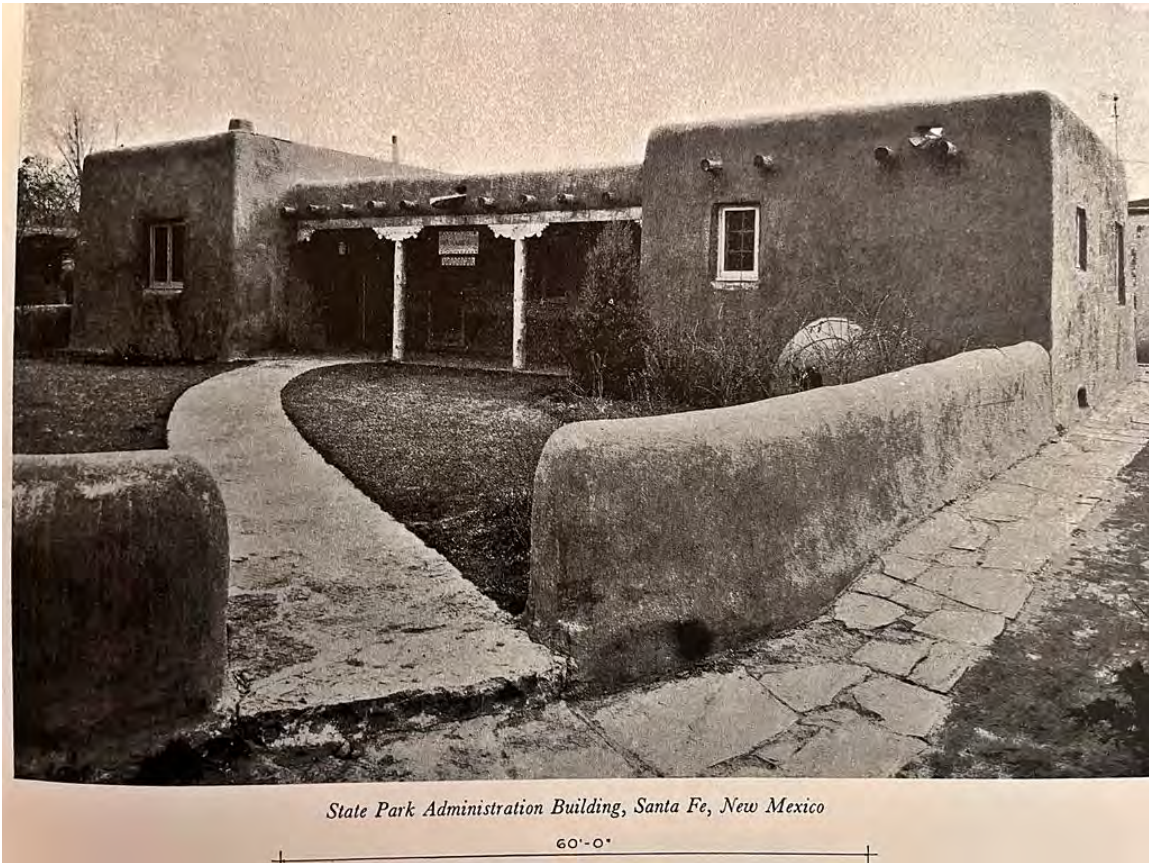
**Figure 1: Lela Wilson stands at the center of the recently completed Shelby Street Footbridge, April 1968. Courtesy of the Santa Fe New Mexican.**



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**Figure 3: Original State Park Administration that sat on the south side of the river across CCC-built log footbridge. The building was destroyed in the early 1960s create parking for the new State Land Office Building. Courtesy of Princeton Architectural Press.**

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**Figure 4: Contemporary photograph showing where the river retaining walls were extended in the early 1950s to create the Santa Fe River Park.**

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**Figure 5: February 2, 1968, aerial photograph showing two bridges at the Shelby Street crossing. A. is the bridge erected 1968; B. is likely the CCC -constructed built in 1934.**

# Historic Cultural Properties Inventory (HCPI) Detail Form (FORM 2)

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For HPD Office use only:		<i>Please complete HCPI FORM 1 before completing FORM 2</i>		
HCPI No. _____	District No. _____	NRHP _____	SRCP _____	Criteria <u>  </u> A <u>  </u> B <u>  </u> C <u>  </u> D
1. Name of property:  Shelby Street Footbridge	2. Location:  Over Santa Fe River Downtown and Eastside Historic District -Santa Fe	3. Local Reference Number: Santa Fe ID: N/A		
		4. County: Santa Fe		
		5. Date of Survey: May 20, 2025		



**Figure 6: February 27, 1969, aerial photograph, showing the completed current bridge.**

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**Figure 7: Still taken from late 1960s State Parks and Recreation Areas Commission promotion film with Shelby Street Footbridge in the background. Repeat shot taken June 1, 2025. Original photograph of the Courtesy of the New Mexico State Archives Records Center.**

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## Survey Photographs

(All images taken by John W. Murphey on May 20, 21, 22, and June 1, 2025.)



**Photo 2: South approach. Camera facing north.**

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**Photo 3: River and channel context. Camera facing west.**

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**Photo 4: Bridge superstructure: A: exterior false spandrel walls, B. girder-slab beams C. reinforced center beam. Camera facing north.**

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**Photo 5: Interior stonework of false spandrel wall.**

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**Photo 6: Exterior stonework of false spandrel wall.**

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**Photo 7: Crown of false spandrel wall with “keystone” highlighted.**

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**Photo 8: Substructure at south embankment stone abutment and bridge seat, and what appears to be timber support. Camera facing south.**

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**Photo 9: Deck and railing. Camera facing south.**

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**Photo 10: North approach. Camera facing south.**

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**Photo 11: Deck showing punch-through, delamination, and exposed rebar mat.**

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**Photo 12: Deterioration to structural members, including severe delamination and exposed rebar on the beam, along with longitudinal cracking and efflorescence across the slab.**



June 20, 2025

To: Historic Districts Review Board

**RE: Shelby Street Footbridge Replacement Designs**

Dear HDRB:

The two preceding cases heard on this structure were to determine the historic status of the footbridge and to request its demolition. The current request is for the HDRB to review and approve one of the two designs to replace the existing bridge.

An Early Neighborhood Notification (ENN) will be held June 24<sup>th</sup>, 2025, and the relevant public comment from the meeting will be presented to HDRB for their consideration in the design options.

The presentation of the case materials herein is designed to do the following:

- Help the HDRB understand the changes between the existing and proposed through photos and drawings.
- Provide images of nearby bridges for the HDRB to look at design and color of bridges crossing the Santa Fe River.
- To receive input on the overall design including whether a low-profile prefab pedestrian bridge is desired or if the HDRB finds that a bridge with a stone façade is more desirable.
- To receive input on colors of the railings and material used for the approach of the bridge and the bridge decking.
- To determine if a plaque relaying the history of the bridge and the river park is an appropriate mitigation for removal of the bridge.

#### **CASE OUTLINE**

- 1) Design Description
- 2) Figures
- 3) Response to exception criteria for replacement of a contributing (if applicable)

As the historic status review will be heard concurrently with the design presentation, we have responded to an exception to remove historic material (14-5.2(D)(5)(b)) if an exception is applicable.

## **FIGURES AND CASE MATERIALS**

- Project Location (Figure 1)
- Photos of the existing bridge (Figures 2 and 3)
- Site Plan- Existing and proposed (Figure 4)
- Examples of bridges crossing the river near the project area (Figures 5, 6, and 7)
- Design 1- Prefab Pedestrian Bridge (Figures 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, and 13)
  - Existing and proposed elevations
  - Renderings
- Design 2- Prefab Pedestrian Bridge with Rock Facing (replace in-kind option) (Figures 14, 15, and 16)
  - Renderings
- Full Size Drawings and Renderings (Appendix A)

The existing Shelby Street footbridge is a narrow 4-foot bridge with a failing deck structure and non-structural rock façade on the east and west sides. The rock used is limestone and the railings for the bridge are painted metal pipe. The bridge has been closed since 2022 when it became unsafe for pedestrian travel. In addition to being unsafe to support pedestrians, the bridge is not safe in the event of a flooding of the Santa Fe River, and it does not meet current building code or ADA compliance.

For these reasons, a demolition of the bridge was requested in the previous case. Two designs are presented here and include a prefab pedestrian bridge that is visually light and does not distract from the surroundings of the river park (Design 1) and a prefab bridge with a stone façade (Design 2). Both bridges will have the same construction materials which included: a light metal frame with pickets, a six-foot wide bridge deck of concrete or other material, and bridge approach of concrete and/or brick, and pilasters at each end of the bridge deck. Design 2 offers an in-kind bridge design with a non-structural stone façade. It may be possible to salvage the existing stones to incorporate into the new bridge façade.

Below are two tables for comparison of the existing and proposed dimensions and design elements. It is requested that the design details be discussed once a bridge design has been chosen.

Dimensions

<b>Bridge Element</b>	<b>Existing</b>	<b>Proposed</b>
Bridge Length	37'-3" long	42'-0 long
Deck	4'-0" wide, 27'-5" long	6'-0" wide, 39'-0" long
Rail Height	18"	3'-10"

Design

<b>Bridge Element</b>	<b>Existing</b>	<b>Proposed</b>
Frame/Structure	Concrete and steel wire	Prefab metal
Façade	Limestone	No stone Stone
Approach	Concrete	Concrete Brick
Pilaster/End Caps	Stone	CMU and Stucco Stone Other variation
Railings	Metal tube pipe	Metal painted black or brown
Deck	Concrete	Concrete Brick Wood

Commemorative Plaque

Both national and state the histories of the Santa Fe River Park are informative to people experiencing this area in the Downtown and Eastside Historic District. A commemorative plaque discussing the history of the park may be a good way to honor the existing bridge after it has been removed and convey the sense of place that the park creates for its users. Language and design of the plaque could be provided to the HDRB at a future hearing if this mitigation measure is chosen.

**PROJECT LOCATION**

The City of Santa Fe Parks and Open Space Division requests approval of a design of the replacement of the Shelby Street footbridge. The bridge crosses the river near the intersection of Shelby Street and E. Alameda on the north bank and near E. DeVargas Street on the south bank (Figure 1).



Figure 1. Project location. Bridge location shown outlined in red. (Image from HCPI form.)

**PHOTOS OF THE EXISTING BRIDGE**



*Figure 2. Shelby Street Footbridge, west elevation, view east.*



*Figure 3. Shelby Street Footbridge, east elevation, view west/southwest.*

**PHOTOS OF BRIDGES CROSSING THE SANTA FE RIVER**



*Figure 4. Bridge Style 1, metal pipe railing with narrow wooden deck.*



*Figure 5. Bridge Style 2, wooden rails with tight spacing between the pickets and a wooden deck.*



*Figure 6. Bridge Style 3, metal prefab bridge with wood decking.*

# SITE PLAN

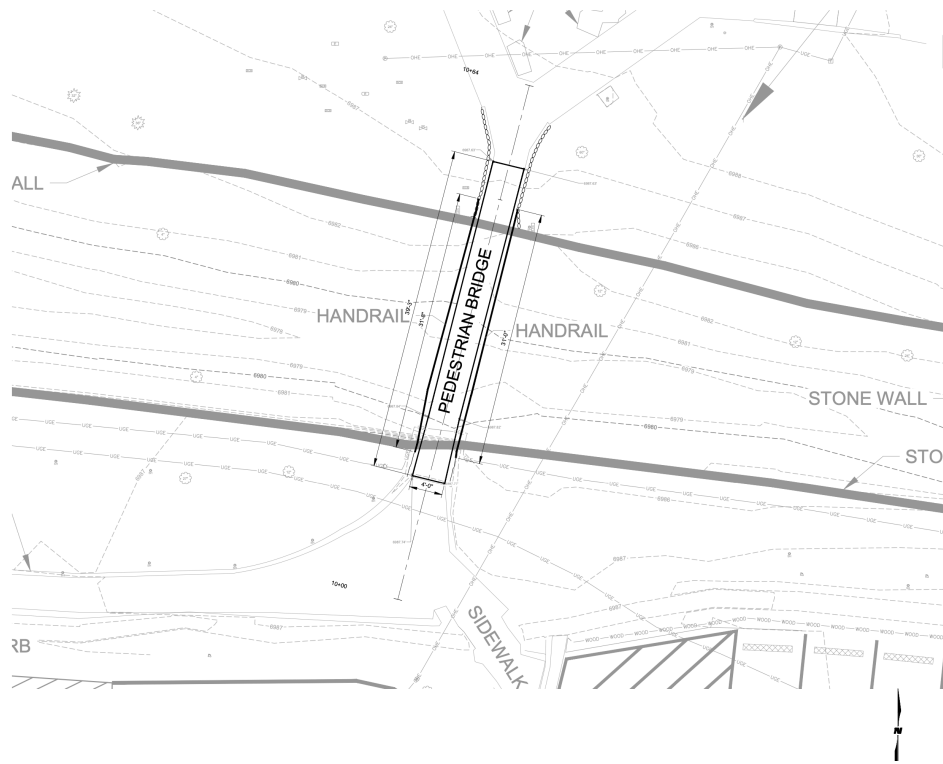
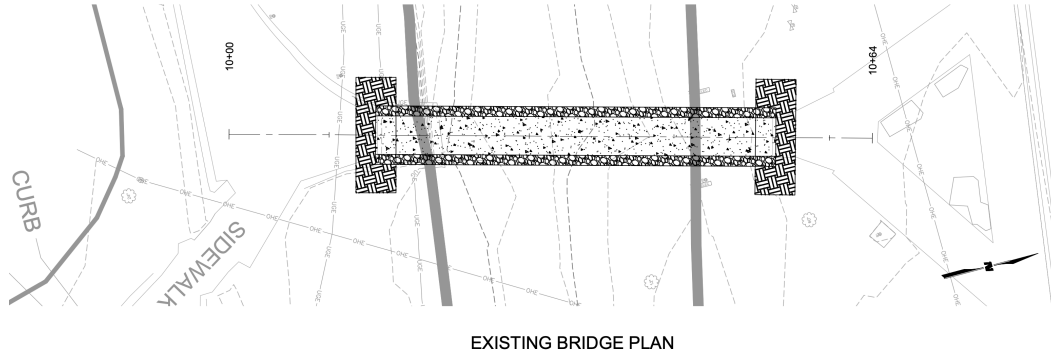
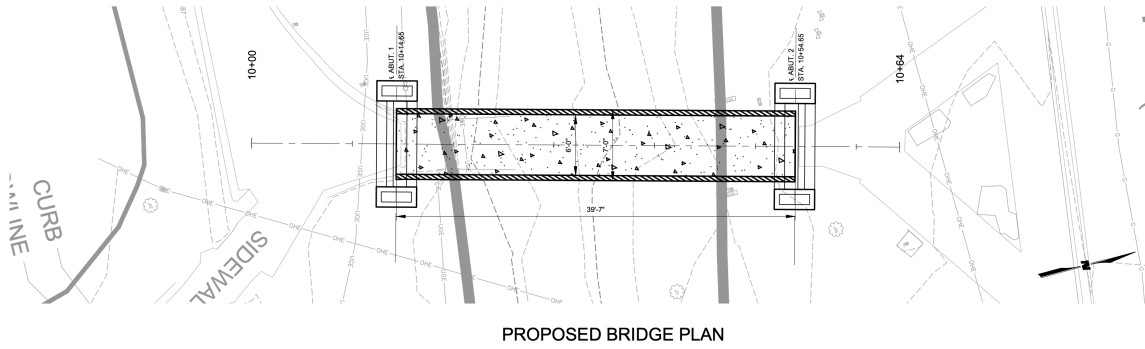


Figure 7. Existing and proposed site plan.

**DESIGN 1**



*Figure 8. Existing bridge plan view.*



*Figure 9. Proposed bridge plan view.*

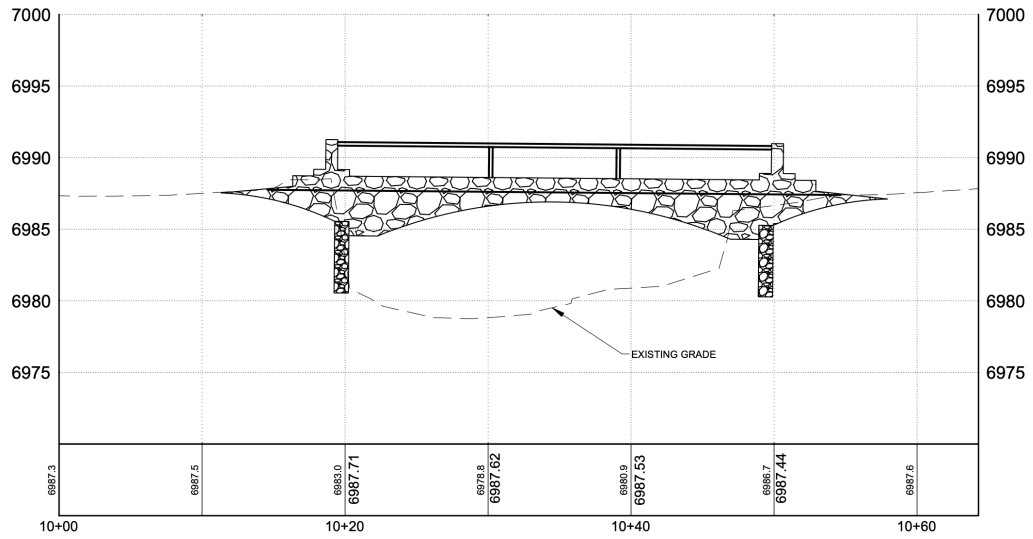


Figure 10. Existing east and west profile elevations of the bridge.

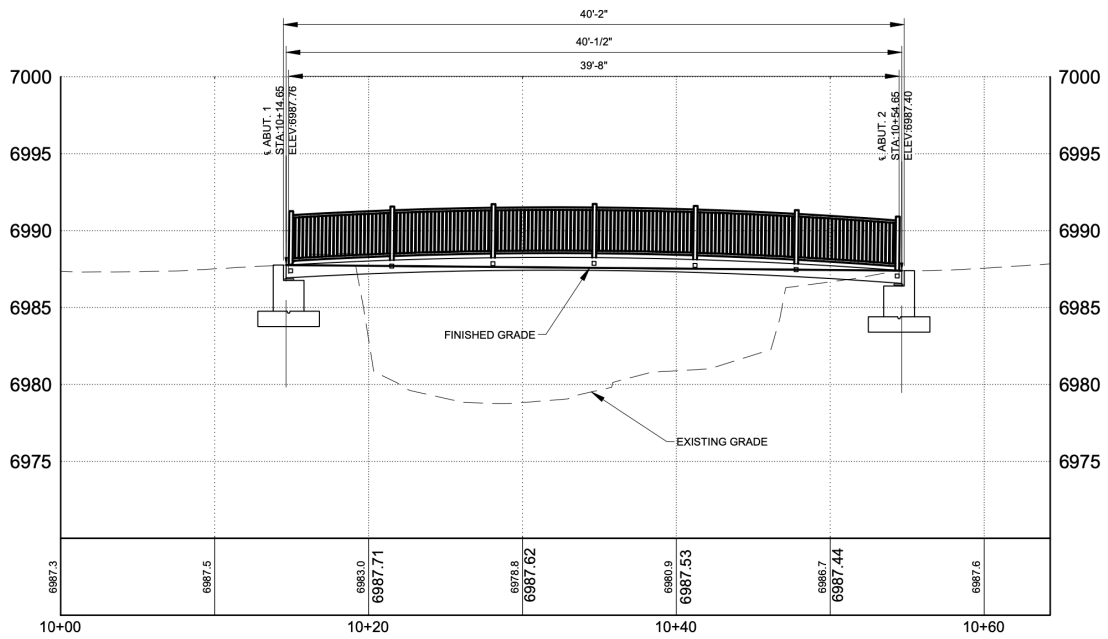


Figure 11. Proposed north and south profile elevation of the bridge.

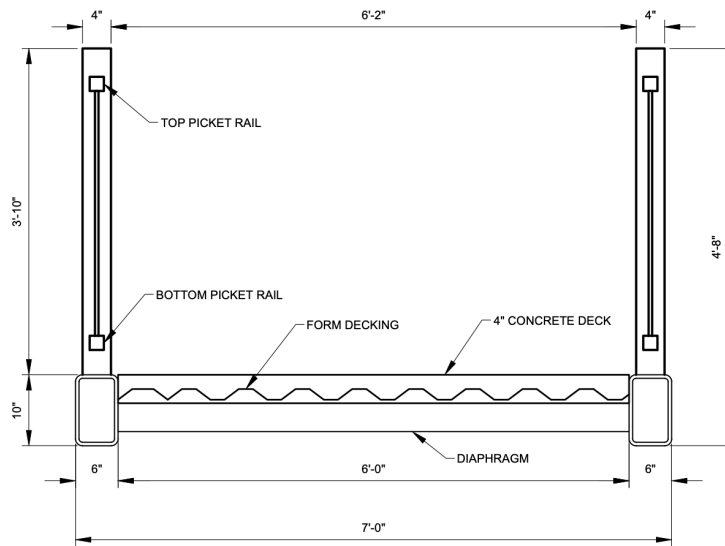


Figure 12. Proposed dimensions and details of the north and south ends of the bridge.



Figure 13. Rendering of a similar style of bridge as is proposed for Design 1.

**DESIGN 2**



*Figure 14. Rendering of a redesigned footbridge to replace the existing, looking southeast.*



*Figure 15. Rendering of a redesigned footbridge to replace the existing, looking south.*



Figure 14. Rendering of a redesigned footbridge to replace the existing, plan view.

Exception Requested to Remove Historic Material (14-5.2(D)(5)(b))

*i. Does not damage the character of the district.*

The Shelby Street bridge is one of several small bridges that crosses the Santa Fe River, connecting the north and south banks. Small foot bridges and vehicular bridges which have existed since the river began to channelize around 1893 with the construction of Two Mile Dam. Sanborn Fire Insurance maps and other historic maps indicate that the bridges crossing the river were stone, wood, and now concrete- changing materials over time to accommodate the modernizing and engineering needs for crossing a river channel. The nearest pedestrian bridge to the Shelby Street bridge is the Brother's Lane bridge. This bridge was last replaced around 2016 and is now a wooden bridge with wooden rails. Given that bridge materials change over time, removal of the stone bridge will not damage the character of the district.

To remove the bridge entirely would change the character of this location along the river park, but the bridge will be replaced. The current situation of having a closed and dangerous bridge along a main street in the downtown area is damaging to the district

despite being constructed of materials not of historical age. Demolishing and replacing the bridge is not.

The removal of the bridge will not affect the space that embodies the bridge, which is the river park. The river park, with other bridges crossing the river, will remain intact and the overall character and design of the river park property will continue with the bridge replacement. However, the request is to remove historic material, and this request is being made because of the structures condition and the inability to restore the structure. The historic material will be removed but the design presentation has demonstrated that a replacement bridge will maintain and contribute to the river park and the design of the bridge will be in keeping with the historic district standards. One of the proposed designs offers the potential of reusing the stone for a reconstructed stone façade if that is desired by the HDRB. The other design proposed to be non-intrusive visually and stylistically. A commemorative plaque is also proposed to mitigate removal of the historic material.

*ii. Are required to prevent a hardship to the applicant or injury to the public welfare.* As is demonstrated through photos and letters in the demolition case preceding this case the structure has failed, and the bridge is a public safety concern as it lacks structural integrity. The bridge is beyond repair. Removal of the historic material that composes the bridge is required to prevent injury to the public welfare, both bodily injury and liability to the City of Santa Fe.

*iii. Strengthens the unique heterogenous character of the City by providing a full range of design options to ensure residents can continue to reside in the historic districts.*

Several design options were considered and options 3 and 4 below have been chosen to present to the HDRB in the design review case. Both designs strengthen the unique heterogenous character of downtown Santa Fe and the river park area.

The design options considered were:

- 1) Leave the bridge and permanently close it.
- 2) Demolish the bridge and not replace it.
- 3) Demolish the bridge and replace it with a modern prefab pedestrian bridge as seen in other areas along the Santa Fe River.
- 4) Demolish the bridge and replace it with a modern prefab pedestrian bridge with non-structural rock girders to match closely the existing design.

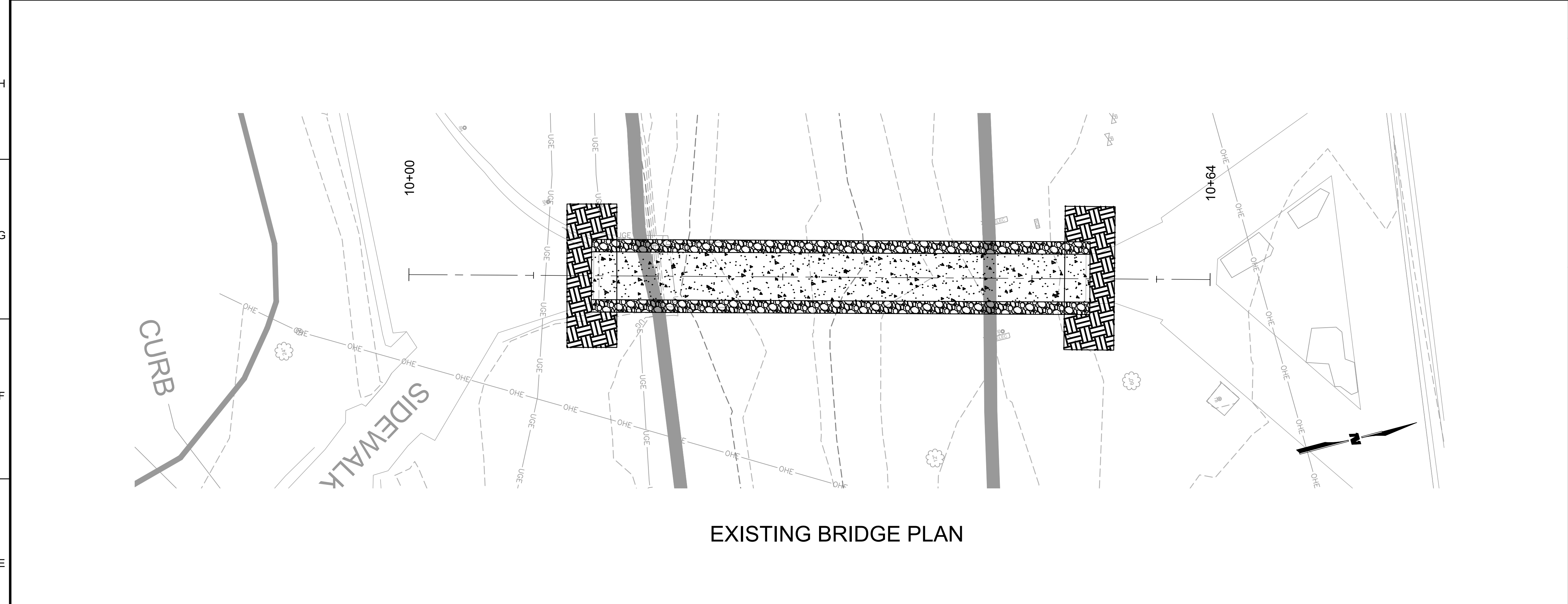
Thank you for your time and consideration of the designs and information presented.

Sincerely,

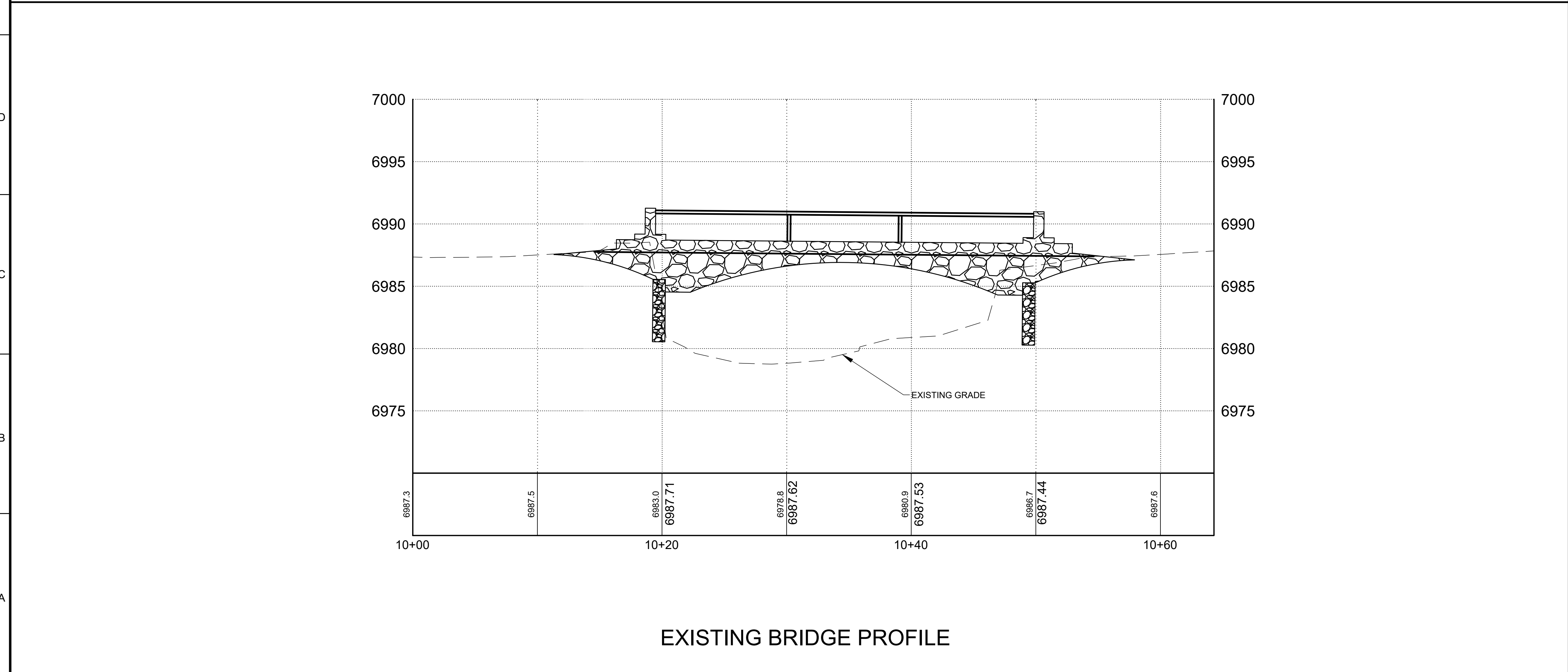
Nicole A. Ramirez Thomas  
Wonderstone LLC  
Principal/ Owner

APPENDIX A  
Drawings and Renderings

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 6/5/2025 EXIST.dwg



EXISTING BRIDGE PLAN



EXISTING BRIDGE PROFILE

**GENERAL SHEET NOTES**

KEYNOTES

**LEGEND**

- 6690 EXISTING CONTOURS
- ROCK FROM EXISTING BRIDGE
- CONCRETE BRIDGE DECK
- EARTH/SOIL

**CONSULTANTS**

**SEAL**

30% SUBMITTAL  
NOT FOR  
CONSTRUCTION

**PROJECT NAME**

**SHELBY ST.  
PEDESTRIAN BRIDGE**

REV.	DATE	DESCRIPTION	BY

PROJECT NO: 23-600-030-17  
 DESIGNED BY: CVA  
 DRAWN BY: AWP  
 CHECKED BY: TA  
 DATE: JUN 2025

SHEET TITLE

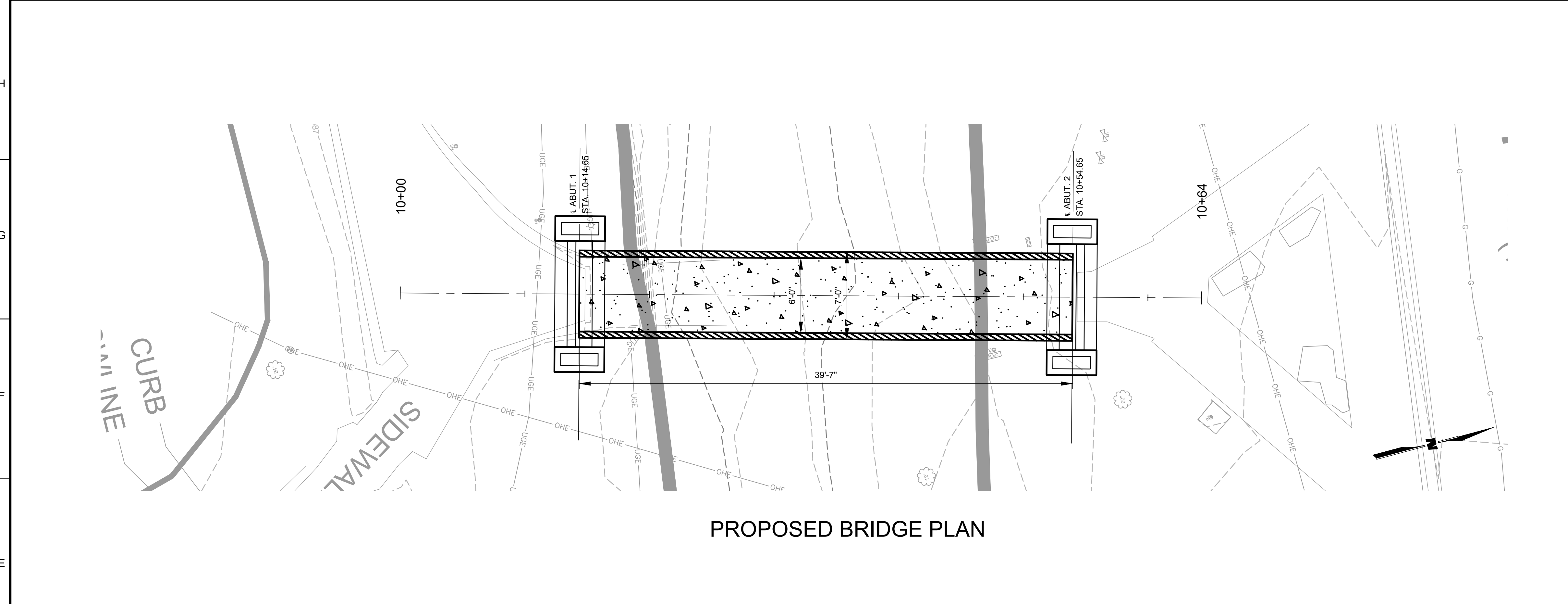
**EXISTING PLAN &  
PROFILE**

SHEET NO:

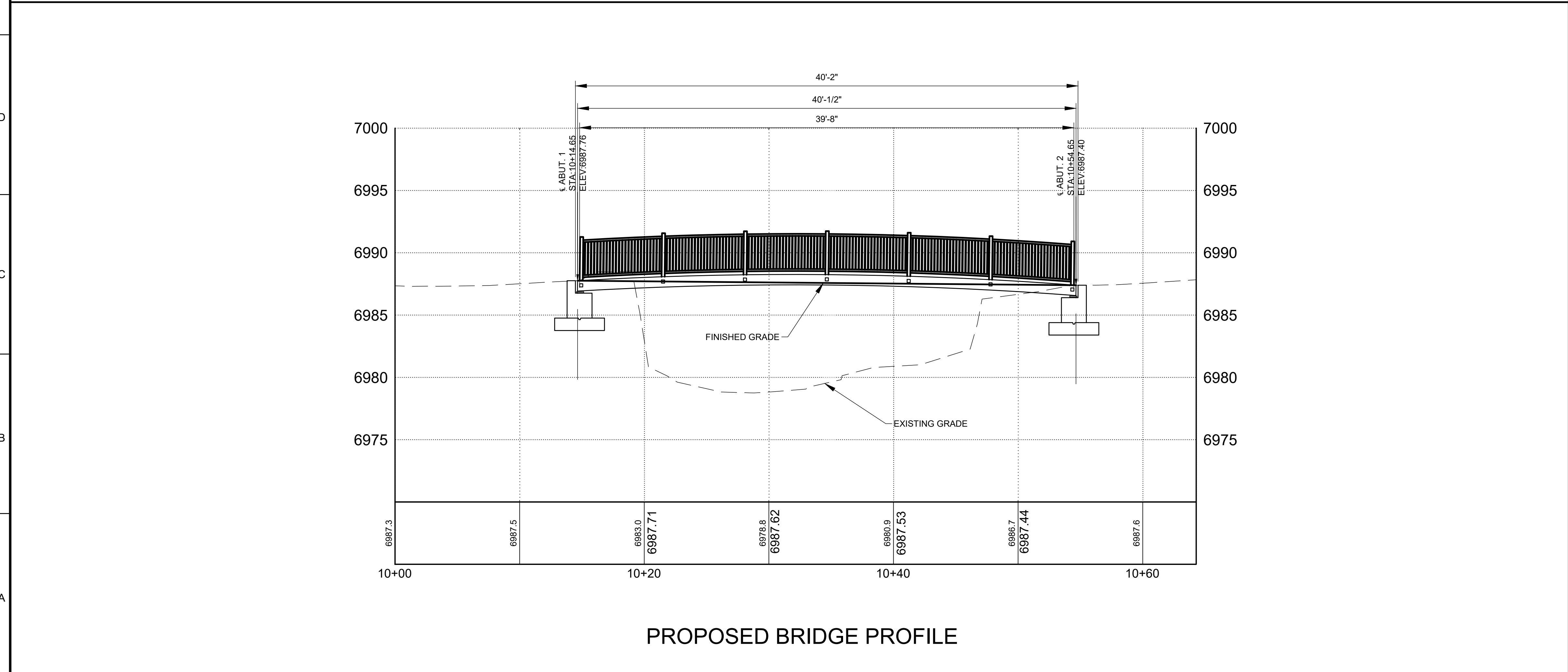
**XX**

**WILSON & COMPANY**  
 4401 MASTHEAD ST. NE, SUITE 150  
 ALBUQUERQUE, NM 87109  
 PHONE: 505-348-4000  
 FAX: 505-348-4055  
 www.wilsonco.com

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PROPOSED BRIDGE PLAN



PROPOSED BRIDGE PROFILE

GENERAL SHEET NOTES

- DIMENSIONS SHOW ARE FOR INFORMATIONAL USE ONLY. VALUES MAY VARY SLIGHTLY DEPENDING ON TRUSS MANUFACTURER
- CONTRACTOR TO SUBMIT TRUSS DESIGN TO ENGINEER, STAMPED BY A NM PE, PRIOR TO ANY WORK PERFORMED ON ABUTMENTS.

KEYNOTES

LEGEND

- CONCRETE BRIDGE DECK
- BRIDGE RAILING

**WILSON & COMPANY**  
 4401 WASTHEAD ST. NE, SUITE 150  
 ALBUQUERQUE, NM 87109  
 PHONE: 505-348-4000  
 FAX: 505-348-4055  
 www.wilsonco.com

CONSULTANTS

SEAL  
 30% SUBMITTAL  
 NOT FOR  
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PROJECT NAME  
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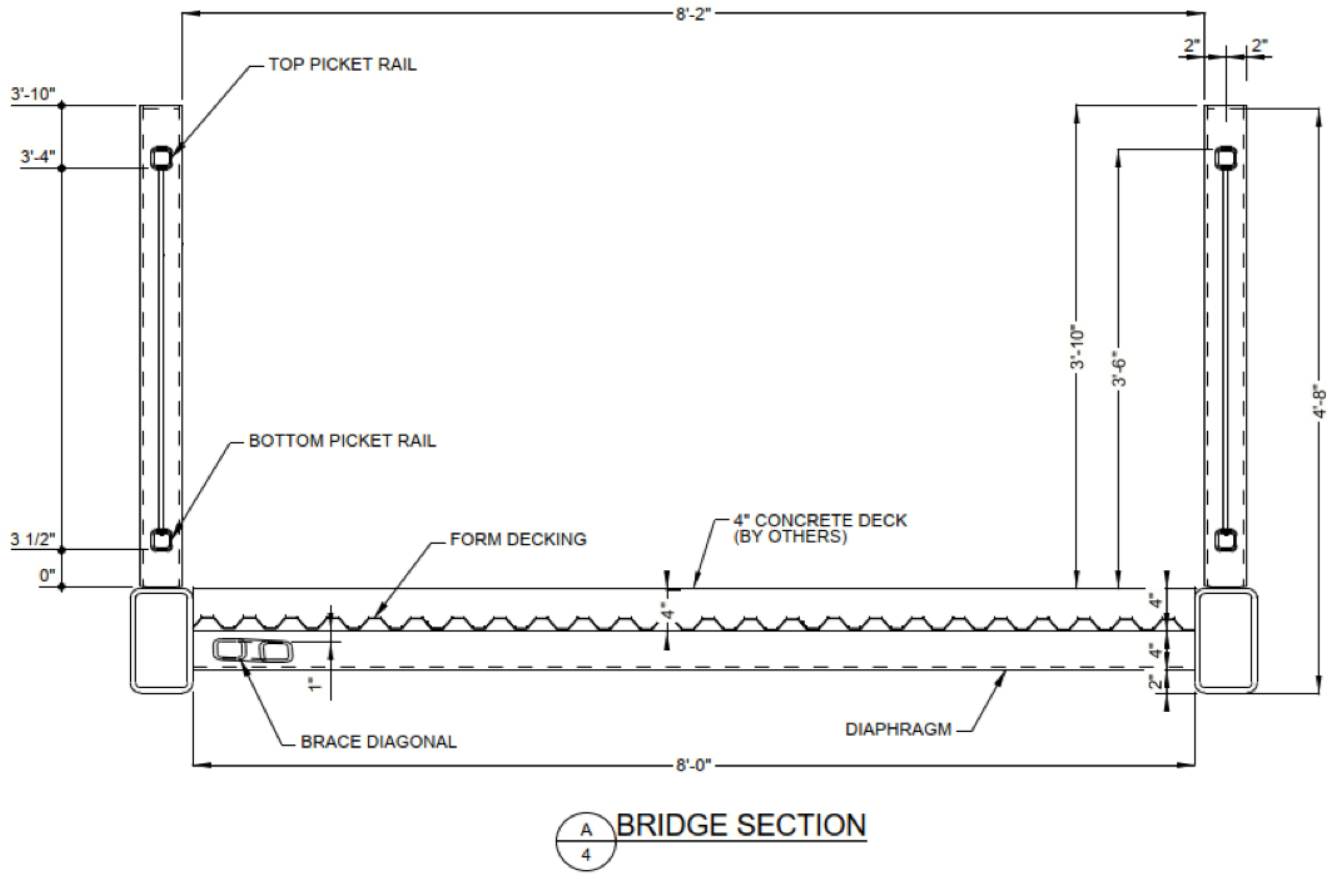
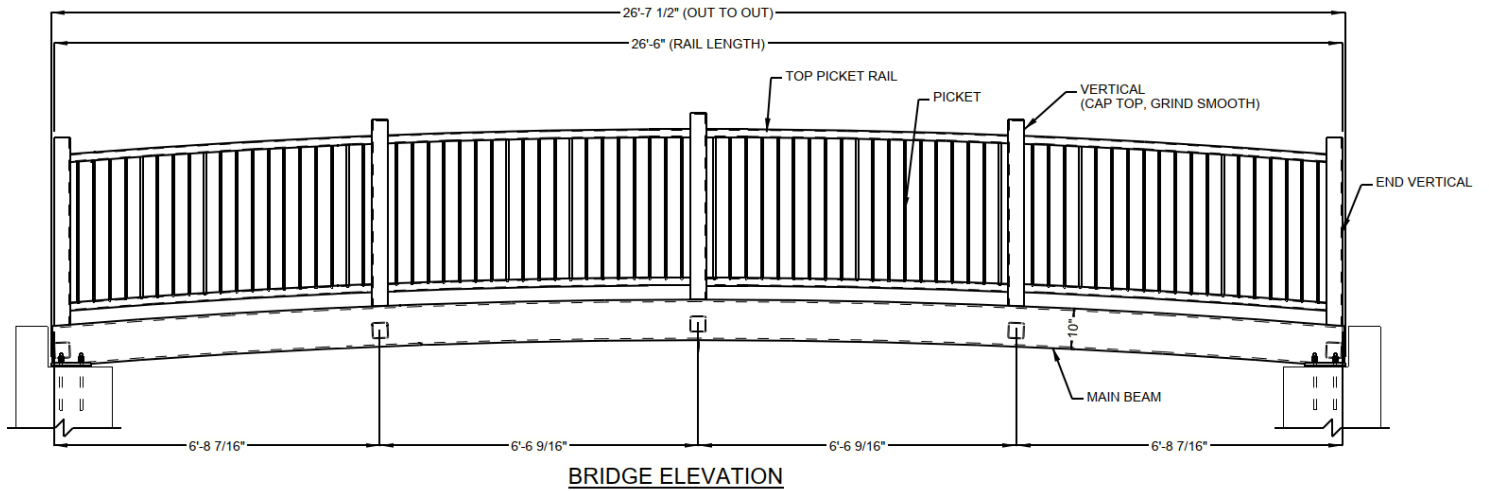
REV.	DATE	DESCRIPTION	BY

PROJECT NO:	23-600-030-17
DESIGNED BY:	CVA
DRAWN BY:	AWP
CHECKED BY:	TA
DATE:	JUN 2025

SHEET TITLE  
**PLAN & PROFILE**

SHEET NO:  
**XX**

Shelby St. Bridge – Santa Fe, NM



Shelby St. Bridge – Santa Fe, NM

Proposed Style









