

Meeting Notes- Prepared by PMDubinsky- Unofficial

Subject: State Route 84, Niles Canyon Road, Stakeholder Meeting- Revised Plan for Bridge Replacement

Date/Time: Thursday 12/5/2013 10:00am to 12:00 noon

Location – Fremont City Offices, Liberty Street, Fremont

Participants: Participants included- Jack Siau (Caltrans); Jim O’Laughlin (SOS); Mike Dubinsky (SNC); Michelle Powell (SNC); Dave Campbell (East Bay Bicycle Coalition); Jim Pierson & Norm Hughes (Fremont City Govt.); Chris Miley (Dist 2 Supv. Valle Rep) Caltrans staffers [Complete sign up list was provided at end of meeting and will be posted separately]

Caltrans Meeting Chair- Jack Siau

Handouts – There was a one page agenda provided and a PPP shown during the meeting. A copy of the PPP was provided but will be posted separately. Caltrans stated they would also post the PPP on their Route 84 Niles Canyon Safety Improvements Project webpage-

<http://www.dot.ca.gov/dist4/nilescanyon/> . The lead topic of this meeting was the replacement of the Alameda Creek Bridge.

Jack Siau (JS), Caltrans, chaired the meeting. Gary Pursell (GP) of Caltrans presented the PPP on the Bridge design revision. The following points summarize the items discussed.

1. Caltrans was asked if they planned to update the Route 84 Webpage. It has not changed since December 2012. They stated that they would do so.
2. Caltrans is in the process of a tree survey covering the entire Route 84 between Niles and Sunol. They are surveying for needed trimming and removal. They were asked whether they intended to provide the public with details of any tree removals, which was the understanding from prior meetings. They said they would. Caltrans considers the tree removal a medium level project based on the FHA Safety Report.
3. Caltrans has been working on some alternative plans for the Sunol Route 84/Pleasanton Road 3 way stop intersection at the Water Temple. A roundabout is one possible alternative. This is also a medium level project. Medium level projects require environmental review.
4. Tree trimming, and elimination of passing lanes (low level- Short term -projects) has been occurring since June 2013.
5. An environmental review will be conducted for short term projects. Those reviews do not need public comment.
6. Coalition Letter - Stakeholders pointed out the 1/1/2013 letter signed by the Alameda Creek alliance and about 12 other organizations (Coalition Letter) which contains comments, points of view and suggestions concerning the full range of measures (Short, Medium & Long term) contained in the May 2012 FHA Safety Report. Stakeholders recommended that Caltrans staff refer to that letter relative to the public’s agreement or disagreement with most of the FHA suggestions made in their Safety Report from 2012.
7. Projected Timelines - Caltrans’ staff indicated that their current timelines are: Early 2014 – January - hold Scoping meeting (s) with the community. Summer of 2014 circulate the draft EIR for the public review of mid- term projects. Final EIR end of 2014. Summer of 2015 for performance of the short term projects. They expect bridge construction to begin in the spring of 2017. Again the point was raised about the Coalition letter of 1/1/2013 and how it addressed the community’s points of view.

8. Other Medium Term measures Caltrans will be pursuing are: Shoulder widening at selected sites for enforcement pull overs & rock draperies at cliff locations between Rosewanes and Farwell.
9. Bicycle user needs. There was considerable discussion about several aspects of accommodating bicyclists on Route 84. Items discussed included use of alert or notification systems on the bridge, shoulder improvements and retrofitting storm drains at the Sunol end of the road.
10. Bridge Design – Gary Pursell of Caltrans used a PPP (posted separately) to illustrate his explanation of a revised bridge design which the Caltrans staff feel is the best choice environmentally and engineering wise.
 - a. Existing Bridge facts:
 - i. Built in 1928- Life span should have been 50 years
 - ii. Narrow, no shoulder
 - iii. Top guard rail is obsolete and non-standard
 - iv. Exposed re-bar – spalling (deterioration)
 - v. Classified as functionally obsolete (last statewide bridge assessment program)
 - vi. Poor approach alignment
 - vii. Poor sight distance
 - b. Design Considerations
 - i. Build for 100 year service period
 - ii. Speed standard calls for 50-60 mph design however the posted speed on the Route is 45mph. Caltrans re-design is along the lines of a 40-45 mph design. They are designing for the lower speed. At the last Stakeholder meeting the stakeholders asked for a 35 mph design however that would not be possible for Caltrans to do. They must follow highway engineering design standards which California has adopted.
 - iii. The project initiation document for the bridge re-build was started in 2003 however that document was never shared with the public. There were several possible re-build options discussed in a 2010 Value analysis and one option – 3A- was previously the favored one. The current iteration is called 3B and is the one Caltrans staff favors.
 - iv. Caltrans staff looked at designing to a 35 mph speed limit but it is unacceptable from a highway standard and safety standpoints.
 - v. Option 3B involves a less demanding engineering and road work on the approach to the bridge from the east. The major work would be on the west end involving tree removal, road removal and relocation, etc. The eucalyptus tree grove close to road on the eastern side of the bridge would not be impacted.
11. Speed limit on the bridge – During the March 27 2013 Stakeholder meeting representatives from the public, environmental and advocacy organizations suggested to Caltrans that they modify their bridge re-build plan to have vehicles travel 35 mph. The objective being safety. Caltrans explained during this meeting why they could not plan the replacement bridge design at a speed limit lower than 45 mph with a bias towards 40 mph. There was considerable discussion about the matter with the bicycle organization's

- representation really calling for Caltrans to reconsider and design for the lower speed limit in part to add safety in for all vehicles which would use the bridge concurrently.
12. Hiker/Biker Trail – Sunol representatives pointed out that there was a long range plan for a hiker biker trail paralleling Route 84 from Niles to Sunol which was on the agenda of Alameda County Supervisor Richard Valle and that project offered the best answer to the cyclists’ travel needs through the canyon.
 13. Public notification of Caltrans projects – Caltrans will use all of the usual mechanisms such as local newspaper, and distribution to libraries. They will also use social media and their own webpage.
 14. Mitigation plans – Will be addressed in the Draft EIR.
 15. Suggestion to Caltrans staff – Build discussion of the hiker/biker trail into the draft EIR.
 16. Status of mitigation steps from civil lawsuit of 2010- The Caltrans staff did not have that information readily available but will check on it.
 17. Jim Pierson of the City of Fremont Dir. Dept. of Public Works thanked Caltrans for taking the concerns expressed by the Stakeholders earlier in the year and working with it to develop a revised bridge design (3B) that impacts the environment less and leans towards a lower speed limit thereby supporting the road’s historic and scenic characteristics as well as stakeholder concerns. His comment was seconded by several stakeholders.
 18. Sunol representatives reminded the Caltrans staff that the matter of traffic issues in downtown Sunol remain unresolved and could they move to speed up that needed fix? They noted that they have been advised that Alameda County Dist. 1. Supervisor Scott Haggerty says that there is money available to fix the intersection(s) and they would like to see something done prior to the currently planned 2017 fix.

Attachments –PPP Used to display bridge replacement concepts 3A and 3B
Agenda & Attendee list

Note: At the close of the meeting an attendee noted that the quarries which have been operating in the canyon will be shutting down. That should remove most if not all of the large tractor trailer rock haulers which have been using Route 84 as a necessary route to get to their place of business.

Notes prepared by pmdubinsky unofficial 12/10/2013