

## SPECIAL MEETING of the ROSS TOWN COUNCIL TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 10, 2009

**1. 6:35 P.M. Commencement.**

Present: Mayor Cahill; Mayor Pro Tempore Strauss; Council Member Hunter; Council Member Martin; Council Member Skall; and Town Manager Gary Broad.

**2. Posting of Agenda.**

Town Manager Gary Broad reported that the agenda was posted according to government code.

**3. A public hearing on the Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIR) for the Lagunitas Road Bridge Replacement Project. The Town of Ross proposes to replace the Lagunitas Road Bridge in Ross. The public review period for this DEIR is 45 days and extends through March 5, 2009.**

Town Manager Gary Broad introduced the item, stating that the Town had looked at replacing the Lagunitas Bridge because several years ago it was the subject of an investigation as part of the Army Corps project. Its seismic stability was reviewed and the bridge was found to have little or no rebar in it, and therefore, did not meet seismic standards. The Army Corps' conclusion was that in a moderate earthquake, the bridge was likely to suffer significant damage.

Subsequent, the Town Council made a determination that it did not make sense to develop an entire watershed project around a safety hazard. Therefore, staff moved ahead with planning for the replacement. The Town was able to receive federal funding of \$2 million which paid for 88.5% of the cost for replacing the bridge. The City interviewed consultants and URS Corporation was hired to do the environmental review and engineering for the bridge design. A step before it is built is to complete environmental review, or an EIR.

Town Manager Broad noted that representatives from URS Corporation were present, will explain the project and EIR process, and then present their findings in the Draft EIR. He introduced David Anderson, David Fee and Lynn McIntyre of URS Corporation, stating Mr. Anderson will first present the project. He then discussed hearing protocols, noting that the focus of the hearing was to take questions and not answer them tonight, but ensure they are documented in the record. The consultant will then provide written answers to those questions, which will be incorporated into the Final EIR for certification.

David Anderson, URS Corporation, provided an overview of their scope of work, noted that the bridge is eligible for federal funding which pays for a large part of the reconstruction. The bridge's main deficiency is its width between curb and the barrier which is 20 feet and given traffic demands, it should be wider. He said this was the driving force of the project, as it is deemed functionally obsolete. Other problems include hydraulic/hydrologic capacity.

Mr. Anderson said they designed a 28-foot bridge for vehicles, with one sidewalk on the south side which is widened to 8 feet for pedestrians. They found they could maintain the proper hydrologic capacity by lifting up the bridge and they also considered various lengths for the bridge, which does not necessarily increase the hydrologic capacity. They looked at shortening the bridge, which he said had no effect on backlog. He noted that the creek is

wider at the bridge which does not increase the capacity, and it is the downstream and upstream constrictions that govern the flow. They also looked at shortening the bridge, which allowed them to have a shorter, quicker build with less impact to community. It allowed for an acceptable turning radius into the parking lot, Sylvan Lane and the bridge ends up two feet higher for hydrologic capacity. He then presented an outline showing the old and proposed new bridge.

Mr. Anderson said another issue was historic character and aesthetics. From an elevation view, they do not have the same look and this was the sacrifice to improve the hydrologic capacity. The Historic Society has indicated its desire to maintain the lighting fixtures and barriers, and they are proposing a comparable new barrier railing. They propose to have the existing light fixtures replicated through molding existing ones in order to maintain their historic character.

The road stretched the limits of the project out to where they do not touch the intersection with Ross Common and just before the circular driveway in front of Town Hall. He said an ADA curb compliant curb cuts and sidewalk will be done to County standards, the lawn and Ross Common Park is getting bigger and will slope up to match the sidewalk, it will meet a 30 mph design speed and will be a nice, gradual hump in the road, but without danger.

Council Member Hunter referred to the entry to Sylvan Lane and questioned how this was different from the existing entry? Mr. Anderson said it is the same geometry and still a good 18 inches; they do not conform back to ground until about 30-40 feet down Sylvan Lane. It is essentially the same as the road there with improved site distance. He noted they are ramping down Sylvan and once they receive permission to the private drive, they are anticipating a smooth transition.

Mayor Cahill said there has been some concern about drivers out of Sylvan Lane having a good site line to see oncoming traffic, and he asked for comment on this from Mr. Anderson. He questioned if the additional height would block site lines. Mr. Anderson said the current site distance is bad and will get mildly better with the new design. However, those walking and/or biking will be seen because they are higher than the railing and one should have full view from the stop sign.

Council Member Strauss requested an explanation on how the height of the bridge was determined, and he referred to specific criteria by Matt Smeltzer. Mr. Anderson said the height was a trade-off between impacts to the road and the ability to pass the hydrologic flows. The Army Corps, County, URS Corporation and WRECO, their hydrologic consultant, agreed to have an elevation at the bottom of the bridge to 25 feet. There is then a 3-foot deep structure, and touchdowns went far; the project is larger and there may have been retaining walls. He said Mr. Smeltzer did a sensitivity analysis on the bridge being 6 inches lower and found backwater flood effects would cause flooding and virtually had no effect. Therefore, they questioned lowering it 6 inches to save the impact to the profile. Hydrologically, other constrictions like the fish channel governed the opening of the bridge, which was not sensitive. They conveyed the maximum capacity the channel is supposed to have while keeping the road as low as possible.

Mayor Cahill said that he noticed on one plan that the parking in front of Town Hall was diminished a bit, and questioned if this was a requirement because of the grades or by choice. Mr. Anderson said it is to define the width of the defined roadway. By Ashfield

Allotments, Rules and Guidelines, the bridge should be no narrower than any approached roadway. They have a reasonable taper down to a somewhat narrower bridge, but on this approach the roadway is defined by setting the curb. He said the previous condition resulted in a narrowing to the bridge and the decision for design was that a certain distance was needed to define the approached roadway and this is it. He pointed out on the map the approach, and said one single parking spot is lost as a result. The other issue is the grade; once they rise to meet it, the sidewalk does not rise up with the road, and it starts to die down. If they were to take this transition further and make a sudden narrowing, they would have to carry the sidewalk up higher and it would be tougher to conform to the pathway, which would be steeper and extend much further back into Town Hall. He said this was a trade-off. He argued the matter with their designer who is much more comfortable with maintaining the curb and thereby channeling traffic for an adequate roadway width.

Council Member Strauss noted that the project is going forward in this configuration in order that a subsequent project would be looked at in the future. A gutter would also go around Town Hall which he said will be reviewed on Thursday night, along with another intersection area. He noted the process needs to be accelerated in order to complete the bridge project in the summer.

Council Member Martin referred to the Draft EIR and the mention of utility lines being removed and replaced, and noted that the PG&E 4-inch gas line will be removed prior to construction and replaced only after the new bridge is finished. He questioned whether or not people would lose service during that three-month duration. Mr. Anderson said PG&E indicated they do without the line due to redundancy in the system. They will shut it off and then incorporate the new line without temporarily relocating it.

Council Member Martin said the EIR has a bit of language about the conditional mass that will be under the high water mark. Some removal will occur of the existing retaining wall and a new wall will be attached; he questioned the hydraulics of it. He also said there seems to be a narrowing on both sides of the bridge, and although it is being raised two feet, he questioned capacity—by constricting with those two supports with more mass in the channel, he questioned whether there would be any loss of beneficial capacity as far as the flow of water. Mr. Anderson said this is what the sensitivity analysis performed; because of the restrictions up and downstream, the additional width at the bridge does not provide any more capacity. He agreed that the velocity increases in capacity through the new opening, but otherwise the capacity remains the same and apparently the extra area did not provide any more conveyance because it was governed by restrictions upstream and downstream.

Council Member Strauss said they are shooting for 5,400 cubic yards per second (CYS) and can deliver more water than the downstream, which is 4,400 cubic yards per second. He noted it was part of the whole regional flood control system, and the fish are actually slowing the water down which is a benefit.

Robert Maccario, Public Works Superintendent, said the fish ladder slows, but he said his question would be whether the bridge opening overall is at 32 feet, and if you are taking out 6 feet and adding 14 columns, hydrologically the water will go faster. When there is a high water flood, everything stacks under the bridge. If you make it higher, you lose distance in volume. Mr. Anderson noted there is a much bigger area in looking at the slope girders and when doing the hydraulic/hydrologic analysis, you attach some value to debris that further obstructs.

Council Member Strauss said they also looked at a center support system, and Mr. Anderson said the problem with this was that you would have a longer bridge, thereby causing issues with being able to turn in the Post Office.

Council Member Martin said there has been concern on Sylvan Lane with water pooling and he questioned if the additional slope may aggravate it. He asked for an explanation of the drainage plan, and Mr. Anderson agreed that water overtops several places upstream. What the road does to some extent is present a dam. The higher area presents some obstruction which would normally go around and over the bridge. The back water that is caused is no different than before and he agreed it is true that water could get trapped that would normally run across. After the creek goes down, there would be pooling. However, at the corner of Sylvan Lane there is a drainage system that provides a dam-ing action and a new drain pipe. When the creek recedes, the water that may get trapped will drain back into the creek. He said they are not addressing the overall flooding problem; however, with the bridge project they should at least be able to drain the pocket.

Council Member Martin questioned if the drain size was calculated, and Mr. Anderson said they are trying to keep them small and noted that a 12-inch drain pipe was adequate.

Mayor Cahill said he noticed on some sections there are some retaining walls in the parking area by the park on the way to the Post Office, and said they look like they were 2'6" and proposed down to 1'6" He questioned whether or not they were sloped. Mr. Anderson said they follow the grade of the raised parking lot; they sloped down to conform and were 6 or 7 parking spaces down right at the point where Ross Commons intersects Lagunitas. He noted the bushes were somewhat below grade and because the parking lot is higher and sloping down, they need to retain the fill and slope down within 6 or 7 parking spots. He said there will be probably a 25 to 30 inch drop off, the bushes will still be there, and they did consider a railing but decided against it.

Mayor Cahill questioned and confirmed with Councilmember Strauss that the project is integrated with the Downtown Plan.

Mayor Cahill questioned if it was normal for the contours on the bridge to slightly slope upstream, and Mr. Anderson said there is a crown in the middle and then it slopes. Normally the sidewalk would slope, but they have it sloping the opposite way so water will drain into the curb and it will follow the drainage pattern into the creek.

Council Member Strauss clarified the bridge width was a total of 28 feet wide in traffic lanes, and with the sidewalk, barriers and fencing it totaled 39'2".

Mayor Cahill opened the public hearing and asked for public comments.

Cynthia Wollam, 8 Sylvan Lane, requested replacement of the crosswalk from Sylvan Lane across to the parking lot to the Post Office, which was taken away when Lagunitas was resurfaced. She said they were promised it would return and it never did. She believed the situation would be a lot safer for children, pedestrians, and those on bicycles.

Council Member Strauss noted that the crosswalk would also be discussed on Thursday night and reminded the public that their comments will be incorporated into the EIR.

Bob Dickenson believed aesthetics and site lines were extremely important, as the project would be the focal point entrance coming into the town. He questioned what the difference was in height from the road grade to the highest point of the proposed new bridge. Mr. Anderson said the old bridge is 2'7" in depth, and approximately 2'3" at its highest point. He said the curb comes down and meets the existing grade because it slopes up to Sir Francis Drake Boulevard, which is the highest point. He noted the bridge tapers down from 110 feet on one side and about 100 feet on the other side, and it is a 3.27% grade which is graduated.

Council Member Strauss noted that Sheet L.1 best described the difference in grade and said the landscape architect has indicated it would not be noticeable.

Mr. Dickenson spoke regarding aesthetics and said it was very important that the two bridges in town be extraordinarily consistent. He questioned the plans for the side railings and noted that in the report, it states window openings will visually relate, but it did not say they would be exact reproductions. Mr. Anderson said the two traffic barriers will be similar to what exists. They are somewhat taller and openings are somewhat different; it is the same style but not a replication. They found a standard rail that has been crash-tested, it meets traffic design speed and Caltrans is happy with it.

Council Member Strauss noted the Historic Society reviewed and agreed with the proposed railings and their only comment/concern was for the lights to match.

Neil King, 18 Sylvan Lane, questioned and confirmed with Mr. Anderson that the barriers will be a couple of inches higher. Mr. King highlighted the fact that the line of sight coming out of Sylvan Lane will be marginally better and asked if the utility pole would be shifted, stating many things impact line of sight. He also referred to the increased 30 mph speed of the bridge and believed that any kind of improvement may open the door for higher speeds. He said there is no traffic barrier and they have had problems with this in the past.

Mr. Anderson said the utility pole is being relocated and moved back; they will ensure this is negotiated with PG&E as it is a permanent location. He said eventually, there is an undergrounding program which will remove it altogether, and Mr. King suggested for it to be undergrounded now.

Council Member Strauss said his higher priority is underground. He said it is not a simple effort and WRECO and the traffic engineer will be present on Thursday night. They are looking at the entire entry into the Town; trees on either side and Sylvan Lane will be part of that.

Mr. King questioned and confirmed with Mr. Anderson that the wing walls that extend out further were open bollards.

Mr. King referred to the 12-inch drain pipe and questioned if it would go under the entire length of the bridge. Mr. Anderson said the drain pipe would cross Sylvan Lane. Mr. King questioned if there was modeling to look at the reverse drain flow from the Commons area during flood time, and Mr. Anderson briefly described the flow as a preventative backflow device.

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Mr. King questioned the amount of traffic generated from trucks, people turning around in driveways and he questioned if staging would be needed. Mr. Anderson said he did not believe there was a reason for trucks to enter the area and contractors will be negotiating staging plans prior to construction.

Council Member Strauss noted that the Town has not yet discussed the staging plan with the contractor, and many project pieces will be manufactured off-site such that they will be in and out of the creek quickly. He hoped for the school project to move forward quickly, and also hoped for the bridge to get under way quickly to cause less impact to the Town, citing the four month obstruction.

Mr. King questioned the amount of notice to be given for closure of Sylvan Lane. Mr. Anderson said part of the contract is to maintain access to and from; they will have two stages--the first is raising the bridge. During this time, traffic is prevented from crossing the bridge, but people can get in and out of Sylvan Lane. Then, 20 days afterwards, this work will be finished and conform down Sylvan Lane. He noted that the contractor will determine access routes, but there was no intent to close Sylvan Lane. Mr. King voiced concerns for emergency medical and fire vehicles access.

Mayor Cahill confirmed with Mr. King that his concern was advance notification and confirmed with Mr. Anderson that in emergency situations, the contractor must provide reasonable access and this will be discussed with the contractor. Council Member Strauss also noted that the Public Works Committee also discussed having a project construction manager on site and available as a point of contact.

Dean Popplewell, 8 Sylvan Lane, referred to utilities that he said currently hung underneath the bridge and questioned if they would cause blockage. Mr. Anderson pointed out the location of utilities on a map, said they will not be hanging down, but protected underneath the structure.

Brian Salmen questioned the difference in cubic feet per second of the new bridge versus the existing bridge. Mr. Anderson said he was unsure about how the curve on the underside of the bridge was modeled and could not answer the question, but said they are working with the Army Corps of Engineers and utilize their specifications.

Han-Bin Liange, WRECO; hydraulic engineering sub-consultant to URS Corporation, said he did not have the numbers for the current bridge, but the new bridge can pass the 25-year flood which is 5,400 CFS, and he confirmed it will pass 5,400 CFS with Mr. Salmen.

Mr. Salmen said he attended a Ross Valley Flood Control meeting where Mr. Smeltzer presented information that the new bridge would not substantially increase capacity; that it was currently at 5,100 CFS and the new bridge would approximately be 5,100 CFS, which he said was disturbing to him. He spent years on the Ross Town's Design Advisory Committee and Flood Board establishing a 5,400 CFS factor as a goal, and he wanted to be assured that the bridge will pass 5,400 CFS. He also said he hoped that Jack Curley of the County would be involved with the project because he knows of the numerous constrictions of the entire watershed, and who is expecting that the new bridge will reduce the constriction. He understands above and below the flow, but did not want to have a bridge built at 5,100 CFS. Mr. Anderson said Mr. Smeltzer looked at the backwater effects, and what he may be talking about is a clear conveyance of 5,100 without touching the soffits.

Mr. Salmen questioned if the 7 feet at the edges is concrete, and Mr. Anderson noted that the abutments were concrete and they created a rectangular opening. Mr. Salmen said he would prefer a thinner material less than 7 feet in order to retain some width, and suggested steel be considered. Mr. Anderson described the wing wall and girders and Mr. Salmen questioned if the current supports at the edges were 3 feet.

Mr. Maccario said there are two center supports at 3 feet wide each, which will be removed. The 7 feet is what supports the bridge and what Mr. Salmen is asking for is a narrower support. However, the longer the bridge must be, the higher the arch, and they want to achieve 5,400 CFS.

Sandy Guldman echoed Mr. Salmen's comments regarding the need to review supports for the bridge.

Laura Kulhanjian, said she crosses the bridge 4 to 6 times a day, echoed Mr. Dickensen's comments regarding aesthetics and the bridge being the gateway to the Town, and asked to see the bridge railings reproduced and light fixtures exactly the way they are. She noted that the light posts are being reproduced, but voiced concern about the rails perhaps not looking exactly like the rails currently, stating their height would be different. She requested additional information on how much higher the railings will be and the difference in the size of the widths of the openings. She asked if there were any photographs available of the existing rails and asked that the Town reproduce the rails exactly to keep consistent with other bridges in Town.

Town Manager Broad reiterated the need for the public to pose questions which he said will be addressed and incorporated in the final EIR. Mayor Cahill assured Ms. Kulhanjian that nothing was final, questions would be included in the record, and the EIR consultants would respond.

Council Member Strauss addressed Ms. Kulhanjian's question and said the Historical Society wanted to retain as much as possible, and they can keep it as narrow to make it safe, they can replicate the lights exactly as well as the base of the lights, but due to crash tests, the forms tested will be used, which is most similar to what is there. He believed what is proposed does a good job in preserving the historical nature.

Ms. Kulhanjian noted that her husband had to leave, but provided written comments, which she wanted to read into the record. Mr. Broad suggested having Mr. Fee present the environmental review presentation.

David Fee, URS Corporation, said the purpose of the hearing is to receive public input. The Town embarked on the EIR process in August 2008 when they did an Initial Study, Notice of Preparation and on January 20, 2009 the Draft EIR was issued, with a 45-day public review and comment period ending March 5, 2009. The Town requests comments be submitted in writing which is preferred; however, he said they can be provided orally. Town Manager Broad also noted the full Draft EIR was on the Town's website and interested parties can visit Town Hall and check out a printed copy of the Draft EIR.

Mr. Fee said they will be responding to all comments in the Final EIR, and anticipating completion by the end of March. He said the Draft EIR analyzed the impacts associated

with the demolition of the existing bridge and construction of the new bridge, it identified two impact areas they feel are significant impacts that cannot be reduced to a less than significant level: 1) The bridge is a historic resource. It is eligible for the National Historic Register and under an EIR, if you demolish a resource eligible for the National Register, it cannot be less than significant. The proposed mitigation is to make the bridge as compatible as possible to the existing bridge. A historic documentation will be performed, with displays of the bridge nearby and information provided on the Town's website, plus a number of mitigation measures. The other impact shown as significant which cannot be mitigated to a less than significant level are short-term traffic impacts. The road will be closed for four months, which is a slightly larger impact for emergency access purposes. This is not to say the regular impact will be arduous, but additional traffic will be diverted to Shady Lane, Bolinas, and down to the College Avenue on the opposite side.

Mr. Fee also referred to the aesthetic resource which has been discussed; it is a beautiful entryway into Town and a lot of consideration went into this. He noted that other issues analyzed included biological, hydrological, and land use, and they feel they all can be mitigated to a less than significant level.

Ms. Kulhanjian said the bridge deck will be widened by 11 feet to meet current design standards, and she questioned if this was required by law. Mr. Fee said the deck is widened by 8 feet between traffic barriers. The available traffic width is 8 feet between the edge of the sidewalk and curb, and it will be 28 feet from the sidewalk behind the curb. He noted that the position of the new barriers is not that much wider than it is now, but the sidewalk will be on the south barrier. The relative narrowness of the bridge is still maintained; it is a design guidelines based on speed, traffic, maintenance of lane width and shoulder width. He said they have taken those guidelines to the bare minimum to keep the bridge as narrow as possible, while still providing a shoulder and also get as close to federal standards for funding criteria purposes.

Ms. Kulhanjian questioned if this was the narrowest it could be made, and Mr. Fee said it is narrower and the Town is considering an exception to the rule in this case due to abnormal circumstances.

Council Member Strauss said they tried to push it down to the absolute minimum and he confirmed that if narrower, it would jeopardize federal funding.

Ms. Kulhanjian questioned if the sidewalk could be any narrower than proposed. She also referred to the sloping down of the sidewalk going toward the Commons grass area and questioned if the large redwood tree would be affected by the sloping and raising. She also questioned the height of the bridge and requested confirmation on the determination for a 5,400 CFS.

Council Member Strauss said the sidewalk was determined to typically have more than two people pass one another on it. For purposes of safe-routes-to-school, the Town was trying to accommodate pedestrians and bicyclists or others traveling on the sidewalk. The minimum sidewalk is 5 feet, but in areas where old light fixtures are being installed, their new base is 2 feet wide, so it is 7 feet at the corners. He said it cannot be defined as a multi-use path, but he agreed it is a generous sidewalk.

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Council Member Strauss referred to the redwood tree and said this has been considered in the landscape plan. They also made the outside railing to replicate the actual width of the bridge. The outside dimension of the concrete bollards is 28 feet and the inside dimension will be 28 feet. So it is as closest they can get while meeting the criteria for federal funding.

Ms. Kulhanjian confirmed the location of the redwood tree and questioned any impact. Mr. Fee noted there was no impact at all to the tree.

Bob Dickensen questioned and confirmed the sidewalk is proposed on the south side of the bridge.

Cynthia Wollam, 8 Sylvan Lane, questioned what seismic load the bridge could withstand, given an earthquake, and Mr. Fee said the bridge has a rigid frame, is tied into supports, it is about as stable as one can get and its seismic analysis was nominal because it is two abutments tall with soil on either end. He noted they do not subject it to seismic loads; the whole configuration is about as stable as they can get.

Mayor Cahill closed the public portion of the meeting, and thanked everyone for their participation and input.

Council Member Martin requested the following amendments/corrections:

- Section 4, page 46, regarding fire services. The section describes Kentfield Fire Department being located in their original station. If construction starts, he questioned if they would remain there.
- Section 5, page 3 talks about completion of Ross School in December 2009 and he asked that this date be checked.

Mr. Broad reminded everyone that written comments could be turned in through March 5, 2009.

Council Member Strauss requested a discussion of the proposed project schedule. Mr. Fee said they are trying their best to make construction start June 15, 2009, which is the preferred date. However, the schedule looks more like a July start date. They are hoping on receipt of the biological opinion which triggers the Army Corps' permit very early in order to make the summer schedule.

**4. Adjournment.**

By order of Mayor Cahill, the meeting adjourned at 8:20 pm.

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William R. Cahill, Mayor

ATTEST:

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Gary Broad, Town Manager