

**Feasibility Study: Proposed Bicycle & Pedestrian Crossing over Hwy 101
City of Santa Rosa, Public Works Department**

First Community Meeting Notes

Date: Thursday, February 19, 2009

Time: 7:00pm

Location: Odd Fellows Hall, 545 Pacific Avenue, Santa Rosa

Speakers:

Mr. Otto Bertolero, City of Santa Rosa, Public Works Department
Mr. Gary Wysocky, City Council
Mr. Steven Grover, Steven Grover & Associates

Presentation Format:

- Attendees were asked to sign-in at the door and were furnished with a hand-out detailing the agenda for the evening. Site maps of the project area were posted around the meeting hall.
- At 7:00pm, Mr. Bertolero introduced Mr. Wysocky.
- Mr. Wysocky introduced members of boards and commissions in the audience: City officials, representatives from the Community Advisory Board, BPAB, Planning Commission, City Council, and Santa Rosa Junior College were present. Mr. Wysocky explained that no action would be taken at this meeting, and that the purpose of the meeting was to receive input from the public regarding the proposed project.
- Mr. Wysocky then turned it over to Mr. Bertolero, who introduced Mr. Grover.
- After the introductions, Mr. Grover took the floor and began a slide show that ran until approximately 8:30 pm.
- After the slide show, an additional handout was distributed to the attendees. This handout was a set of worksheets that attendees were asked to fill out and return either at the completion of the presentation or to the City by mail or email. This handout included several questions that will help ascertain key community concerns and issues related to the pedestrian bridge.
- Mr. Grover then opened the floor for questions. The Q&A session lasted until approximately 10:00 pm.
- Mr. Wysocky adjourned the meeting at 10:00 pm.

Discussion:

The slide show presented by Mr. Grover provided the public with an overview of the many varieties, types, and styles of pedestrian bridges that can be found around the United States and in other countries. The purpose of this overview was to engage the audience in thinking about what makes a bridge project like this successful, to demonstrate why a certain bridge

type is suitable for a specific site and to outline the myriad of criterion that play a role in selecting a bridge configuration.

Key design criteria items discussed by Mr. Grover included cost/benefit analyses, user-experiences, user-safety, context (site surroundings), viewer experiences, and structural needs. Some or all of these criteria were described for each of the example bridges shown in the slide show to allow the audience to understand how a certain bridge type was selected.

Mr. Grover then moved on to present project-specific considerations as they relate to planning, usage, physical, and internal contexts. Excerpts from various master plans and planning documents were shown, as were site maps illustrating land use constraints and opportunities, proposed and existing bike routes in the area, and alignment possibilities. Based on these guidelines, Mr. Grover described some of the site-specific issues including site topography, traffic flow patterns (vehicular, pedestrian, and bicyclist), and user safety.

At this point the community participation handout was distributed. After approximately 15 minutes, the question and answer session began.

For more details on Mr. Grover's general overview of bridge types and design criteria, please see Exhibit A.

For more details on the second part of Mr. Grover's presentation, on project-specific considerations, please see Exhibit B.

Comments and Q&A

- 1) One of the assumptions you made was that the bus stops are fixed. Bus stops can be moved much more easily. SMART plan has emphasized connectivity.
- 2) Several CityBus routes go to Coddington. There are plans to extend bus routes southwards.
- 3) It is difficult for me to imagine that walkers can feel safe without a separated space. Do you have experience with other modes or designs where pedestrians are as comfortable without some sort of separations?
 - a. There have been recent articles about conflicts between peds and bikes on multi-use pathways. The trend is clearly toward 12' wide standard. The idea of striping and mode separation is definitely not standard practice. Personally, I think it needs to be. How much do you think in 10 years will this bridge be used?
- 4) Prince Greenway bike path/walking path. I go over it twice a day. No separation between bikes and peds. I like your mode separation idea.
 - a. One of the things to keep in mind in terms of difference between an overpass and a multi-use trail is shy distance. On an overpass, you need to add at least a foot of width to the side so that pedestrians feel safe.
- 5) Do you plan for peds to walk in pairs? Have bikes go single file? I don't know if Santa Rosa is thinking of a lightrail – is it being taken into account?
 - a. Pedestrians will tend to walk in pairs unless you cue them to do otherwise. By creating an actual curb, peds like to stay up on the sidewalk because they don't like to be in "roadway". Does anyone know about lightrail?
- 6) I know of some talk about a possible shuttle. How wide is the bridge?
 - a. In Berkeley, the width is 15' – about 5'/5'/5'
- 7) Why not make it wider? Make it wide enough so peds feel safe.

- a. Cost of a spanning structure is roughly proportional to width. Foundation costs and construction costs for erection processes and mobilization costs are a very large part of budget. Sometimes this can be justified if there is enough projected usage.
- 8) I am concerned about children and kids on skateboards. Will there be separation for skateboards? We are always on the west side of 101 but we do a lot on the east side. I drive mostly now. I'm wimpy and would not feel safe riding.
 - a. At Homer Ave we put in skateboard deterrent things on edges, which is now a standard practice. On long downgrade ramps, people are going to use it for skateboarding. It would be a City policy question whether it is allowed. I think we need to design for skateboards even if they would not be used. Good design is always better than good signs.
- 9) I think we need a north-south pedestrian route in order for this to be used a lot.
 - a. SMART corridor is also going to be a bike/ped thoroughfare.
- 10) What is the projected cost for this? When will it happen? How is it going to be paid for?
 - a. Come to the 2nd meeting and you'll get better answers. This first meeting we will focus on where is the preferred location, then we will drill into details. There is roughly half a mile of possible area where we can put this thing. There are a lot of utilities. In order to plan this right, we need to know where everything is. Story: master plan for Berkeley called for putting nice landscape berms between water and freeway. Unfortunately, the people who put together the master plan failed to know that there was an existing old sewer line, which threw the whole master plan out the window. This first meeting is for info gathering, so that we can provide answers during 2nd meeting.
- 11) My wife won't use east-west Joe Rodota trail due to concerns about safety. Armory in south side is a local shelter (not anymore). Concerns about personal safety, homeless shelters.
- 12) I live in the JC neighborhood. I teach at the JC, at classes all around town. Whenever I'm asked to teach a new class, I look at map and bus schedules. I always try biking a few times, each time is harrowing. A year and a half ago, I was asked to take on a new class. I thought we're going get a bike/ped bridge. My vote is to connect Armory Road to Jennings, but just put one in anywhere.
 - a. You are talking about cycling specifically. If your primary mode is walking, would you feel the same? What about bike lanes on Steele/College?
- 13) Joe Rodota trail is safe. I take the bus and bring my bike on. The proposed location dumping people out onto JC campus is scary. Unless you have a contract or agreement with the JC, there'll be a problem. Cycling on JC campus is awful. We're not allowed to cycle on campus at all. We can cycle on Elliott. I think a touchdown on Scholars is fine. The two southern routes, proximity to downtown make sense.
- 14) Crossing the Steele Lane or College underpass: you literally take your life in your hands, it is a very scary experience. Bike lanes aren't going to make a difference. Because of on/off ramps, it is a convoluted situation. There is no direct way – you have to cross streets.
 - a. Police Dept gave us some up-to-date stats: about 1 accident per month in this region (bike and vehicle).
- 15) I am a student of the JC and a resident of the JC area. The campus is not designed for pedestrians and cyclists. Even without having overpass, it is insane there already. If more people cycling on campus are cutting towards Mendocino, that would be insane. Elliott would work best. Separation between vehicles and bike/peds needs to be studied.

- 16) If you are putting in a ped underpass under the tracks on Jennings, the Public Utilities Commission will be difficult to deal with. Maybe you could make it a vehicle underpass, too. I think the platform could be a little bit south of Jennings. To serve JC/Coddington area, a northern alignment is better.
 - a. If an underpass is going in, it should happen before other development.
- 17) I have worked around the JC in the past. Elliott is very crowded. When the light changes, people crossing don't cross at the crosswalk and don't wait for cars. Cars do the same thing. It would be a mistake to put it in on Elliott. No matter where it is, I want it, I don't care even if I have to battle a bunch of pedestrians. Steele and College are both horrendous. I'm concerned about graffiti, I know there are materials you can use to deter it. At Prince Greenway, so much money was spent to make it nice, but there needs to be so much upkeep. Use some kind of material against graffiti and skateboarding.
 - a. We'll address those topics during detailed design phase.
- 18) Does the landing have to be in vicinity of JC? Wouldn't it be helpful to enhance the crossing experience at College or Steele by putting the overcrossing right on College, for example? That would create a natural corridor which continues along College Ave, right in the middle of Santa Rosa. There would be greater utility so much beyond the JC that the bridge may have more utility overall.
 - a. Putting an overcrossing right at a major highway interchange like College is difficult – jumping over on/off ramp the thing gets so long, or coming down amidst of on/off ramps defeats the purpose in terms of safety.
- 19) Can you connect to a bike path? Connect to Sebastopol, for example?
 - a. Bear Cub vs. Elliott – show of hands?
- 20) I'm not sure how you'll deal with Bear Cub, but bike/ped facilities need to be separated from parking facilities. And do this project!
- 21) The atmosphere of competition on JC streets (Mendocino, for instance): it's like a "U of death". It's the source for all congestion, with people hurrying into classes. Parking structure right in the middle of Mendocino makes it worse. Take a bit of Coddington parking lot for JC use.
- 22) I live one block north of Elliott, and I walk to JC campus often. I don't think you want a landing on Elliott. Elliott is a very busy street, a lot of peds traveling between two sides of campus. Bear Cub is through street not heavily used except for parking, so it's not necessarily bad. When you're parking you're going slowly. Scholars goes into middle of campus and kind of dies, access to faculty parking. I would vote for Bear Cub. There's a turn lane on Elliott, but it's a very busy street. Close Elliott to cars? That had been discussed for years, it'll be interesting to see what the neighborhood reception is. I've been told that the JC is the biggest trip generator of Sonoma County. Traffic on Steele and College both quite bad. Steele & Administration/Armory is the intersection with heaviest traffic. This bridge has the potential to give Santa Rosa an identity, if done with architectural flair. I want this overcrossing. I want to reduce traffic. JC and SMART train are perfect for each other.
- 23) I like the Bear Cub alignment. Pacific to Bear Cub across Mendocino has stop light. Intersection at Elliott and Mendocino, Dexter St doesn't line up, there's a concrete median, and at the light to continue into the neighborhood you have to turn left – not a great intersection for cyclists. I am more scared to bicycle here than in San Francisco. Class 2 bike lanes probably not to be seen in the near future, there's just too much traffic.
- 24) Curt Groninga from the JC. I concur that Elliott Ave is most horrific location when you have cars, students crossing that street, trucks, so forth. When we looked at it in working with the City, it is our understanding that the point of connections are at

Mendocino and Bear Cub, and Bear Cub and Armory set out to be Class 3 bicycle route. Logically if one of the goals here is to benefit the students, and going back to discussions with SMART folks years ago on this, then it would seem like you'd want to make this closer to SMART, and use the Bear Cub/Armory Drive location. One other point you'd want to take into consideration: there are reasons why we don't want folks riding a bike on campus pedestrian paths, which will lead to conflicts between bicycles and pedestrians, and between bikes and disabled population. We have one of the largest disabled populations among community colleges. Also a large senior population. Mode separation will be important.

- 25) SMART does not own any location, they have not committed to where the station will be. It is misleading to show station location on you map. Coddington will in its future get use from high-density, so getting SMART to get closer to Coddington would have advantages. Synergy between SMART's need for parking and Coddington's need for parking, could be complementary. One way to see a lot of use on this bridge is to get a shuttle running on it. Back to getting it wider. Electric shuttle running across there. Aesthetic part, we have multiple icons/mascots around Santa Rosa and the Schultz museum, what design elements will this bridge have?
- 26) When I travel, I use my bicycle as often as I can. If going east to west, I'd want as direct a route as possible. Pacific to Bear Cub.
- 27) Matt Stevens, representing SMART district. SMART is actively pursuing Union Pacific property right now.
- 28) I think most of us are from Santa Rosa but there are a lot of students from all over who go to the JC, which is why there's so much traffic going to the JC. There are not a lot of options to get to the JC from Petaluma or Cloverdale, where are no colleges. I took the bus to the JC when I lived in Petaluma after I graduated from high school. If there was a SMART train, I would be trying to get from the station to the JC so it's way beyond Santa Rosa we have to think about in thinking about accommodating people.
- 29) I have a concern about landing in the JC during off hours. It's dark and spooky there.
- 30) I live in the Ridgeway District, and I work over at Dutton Ave and Tesconi Circle, and my concern is if I use the bridge to commute to work, everybody will be commuting to the JC, what's the possibility there will be a conflict when large pool of people coming off the train and JC people going opposite direction?

Exhibit A – Detailed summary of Mr. Grover’s presentation (Part 1)

- **Introduction**
 - Key questions:
 - Why do a project like this in thick of economic downturn?
 - How does a project like this happen? What are the sequence of steps?
 - When is it going to happen?
 - Where is it going to go?
 - Some of these questions addressed tonight, others at next public meeting.
 - The question most interested in for this meeting is “what”
 - Interested in defining the problem.
 - The clearer we define the problem, the smoother the process will be.
 - From experience: importance of upfront work to avoid surprises later, value of community’s input.
 - San Lorenzo bridge project: at the 2nd or 3rd public meeting, we learned from a member of audience that there was a major bird migratory path right down river bed. All design work with cable-supported structures went out the window.
 - Public is one of best resources there is at this stage.
 - Unique about bike/ped projects: we don’t have the data to work with the way traffic engineers do, therefore public input on how heavily something might be used, potential mode split, key origins-destinations, etc. is very important.
 - Each project is quite different from the last.
 - Bridge in Durham, NC, is very “happy”: no ramping structures required, raised embankment on both sides of freeway, no need to fit ramping into urban and landscape context.
 - Bridge in Berkeley: we had to work very hard to find a way to weave ramping structures into existing roadscape and landscapes.
 - Bridge in Cupertino: there were existing vehicular ramps originally planned for an overpass that were then abandoned.
 - This bridge, if built, will be about 1000 ft long, but only 10-20% will be the bridge, which means 80%-90% needs to fit within existing streetscape.
 - We’ve done background work and have some handle on what your goals, issues, concerns are, but this is a project which requires spending taxpayer money, a project to be seen by many people.
 - Agenda tonight: Presentation (focusing on what makes a project like this successful), findings on planning context and urban design context, input sheets, Q&A’s.
 - We’ll try to keep agenda for tonight as tight as possible: we will not get into specific geometry of bridges, structure types, how they would appear from motorists’ point of view, no details on process involved, environmental/Caltrans review. We will be focusing on your overall goals, constraints, concerns.
- **What makes a project like this successful? One which makes the community proud, and the press excited?**
 - Is it money? Is it about putting a ton of money into it?
 - Bow Bridge in Central Park: tried to save money by using cast iron instead of stone, by working within their constraints.
 - Conventional design sometimes more expensive.
 - Innovation?
 - Sometimes inappropriate, sometimes not.
 - Sundial Bridge: \$20M

- Michigan “Tridge”: \$2.8M in today’s dollars
 - N-Judah roof structure: \$300/square foot. El Cerrito roof structure: \$70/sq ft
- About design, not necessarily about dollars.
- Good design is about proportions, relationship to context.
- Longest, oldest, tallest?
 - Golden Gate Bridge is still very successful even though no longer longest suspension bridge.
- Mimetic design?
 - Designing buildings to make it look like something, e.g. a building which looks like a basket.
 - Sundial: successful because it looks like a sundial?
 - Fish/bird bridge: successful because it was inspired by fish, not because it looks one.
 - DNA bridge
 - Native American-inspired theme in Arizona
 - Rattlesnake bridge (where?)
- Shape, form, relationship to context
 - Maillart, Bridge in Switzerland
- Relation of form to structural function
 - Bow Bridge
- Experience of user
 - POC in Jack London Square vs. POC over Emeryville rail crossings
 - Look similar, but vastly different user experience
 - Use of materials, sense of openness
- Fencing: keeps people from throwing stuff over the freeway.
- Stripe down the middle: an innovation which makes a big difference.
 - Reminds you of when you’re driving
- Cage structure: low cost, but very open feeling
- Dramatic:
 - Santiago Calatrava in Chile
- Bridge can be just a roadway, a conduit of travel. But if it is a pedestrian bridge, the pace is much slower, roadway becomes an architectural space.
 - Needs to breathe differently.
 - Pausing points, acknowledgement of good view.
 - If width of pathway varies, it makes the experience feel like an architectural space.
- Inherent coherence of design
 - Internal coherence
- Brooklyn Bridge: almost cathedral-like
- Jurgen Schliach: crossing suspenders, fencing is a simple chain-link but relates to overall structure.
- Approaches
- Innovation at Berkeley Bridge: sidewalk, traditional way people understand separation of modes.
 - On freeway, ratio of fastest vehicle to slowest vehicle is about 2:1, but on a bike/ped bridge the ratio can be as much as 10:1.
 - Separate slow from fast on high volume use becomes important as usage increases.
 - Mode separation is one major reason why Berkeley Bridge is so successful.

- Also in Homer Ave underpass.
- Pedestrians need to feel safe
 - Crime
 - Bridge can become a catch point, throttle point, a place where you can get mugged.
- Bridge is a place where you look from, not just a thing you see.
 - Viewing points, a place for people to stop: GG Bridge, Berkeley bridge (swept out over water), Tridge
- Bridge needs to relate to context
 - Venice
 - Cupertino: suspension bridge
- Respecting existing land uses, integrate urban design plans
 - Cupertino: Landscaping, retaining walls, pointy plants to keep zone completely separate from residential zone
- Grab something from local context
 - Emeryville
- Internal coherence:
 - North Carolina bridge example: truss conflicts with missile proof fence
 - Or, structure can be so much bigger than fence it recedes
- ADA/ramp structures
 - Not necessarily good enough for cyclists
 - Usually have to exceed minimum requirements
 - Ramp structures
 - Keep ramping at gentler slope so ADA provisions don't kick in
- Pedestrian experience
 - Homer Ave: break down vertical walls with terraced landscaping
 - Use of materials
 - Graphic themes from context

Exhibit A – Detailed summary of Mr. Grover’s presentation (Part 2)

- Goals and Constraints for a project like this
 - Planning Context
 - Land use and transportation plans
 - Usage Context
 - Stakeholders’ needs
 - Maintenance issues
 - Physical Context
 - Topography, existing land uses
 - Internal Context
 - Fencing, ADA
- This is a feasibility study
 - We are here to assess benefits, impacts, complexity, costs, opportunities, functional and economic quality of life benefits.
- Planning Context
 - Santa Rosa Bike/Ped Master Plan calls this a “high priority project”.
 - Also proposes crossing of some kind over SMART rail, at Jennings.
 - Steele and College getting bike lanes, but it is still dangerous to ride through underpasses.
 - SCTA Countywide Bike/Ped Plan:
 - Crossings over 101
 - Bicycle boulevards
 - General Plan: strengthen east-west linkages
 - Jennings: bike boulevard
 - SCTA Comprehensive Transportation Plan: listed project
 - Measure M Project 14: access over 101
 - SRJC Transportation Plan
 - SMART
- Where?
 - Need to think about big planning point of view, not worrying about ramping and structures.
 - If we could magically connect two points across 101, which ones?
 - Scholars and Jennings
 - Edwards and Elliott
 - Foley and Bear Cub Way
 - Pedestrian comfortably and easily walks ¼ mile
 - ¼ mile from SRJC core pedestrian zone: into Coddington on west side, much of Mendocino Ave on east side.
 - Existing or planned bike routes
 - Land use: two campuses
 - About 60% of SRJC students commute from outside zip code.
 - Low numbers of students commuting to school by bike.
 - On west side, south of Coddington Mall, there has been an application for development of high-density housing, including postage stamp park.
 - Coddington Mall
 - Employment/Industrial
 - Residential
 - Potential SMART Station

- Bus routes: bus transit station on Range, west side of Mall
 - Some people have advocated for pushing SMART station northwards
 - More important to connect to train station or bus center?
- Origins and Destinations scenarios
 - Pacific Ave to SR Business Park
 - JC to Coddington
 - Walkable Mendocino Ave
 - But intersection at Mendocino & Pacific challenging
 - Exactly one mile between College and Steele
 - Dump bicycle traffic onto Elliott Ave?
 - More room southwards, Foley/Bear Cub Way
- Urban design
 - North of Jennings, land is pretty developed, more constraints, but greater opportunities to make connections to existing development.
 - Ramping structures
 - Loop-de-loop: like a building, and it obstructs views like a building would.
 - Run ramping along roadway: impact views for adjacent buildings, acts like a street
 - Thread between existing buildings: pick buildings with blind facades, weave through parking areas.
 - South of Jennings, wider and less developed
 - Fewer conflicts, opportunity for simpler structures, straighter runs, opportunity to contribute to urban design goals (e.g. ped pathway down from axis of Coddington?)
 - Can split difference between train station and bus transit center, going through developed area.
 - Underpass?
 - Quite difficult to do
 - Freeway at about same grade as land surrounding it
 - At College Ave: Freeway is higher, so easier to do an underpass.
 - At this section of freeway, very long to get across and would require a deep tunnel.
 - Methods: cut and cover, trenchless methods.