

Summary, Public Meeting on the Meadow Way Bridge Rehabilitation Project

November 20, 2013, 6:30 p.m. – 9:00 p.m. Fairfax Women's Club, Fairfax

The first public meeting of the Meadow Way Bridge Rehabilitation Project was held on November 20th, 2013. The purpose of the meeting was:

- Open a dialog with the public about their desires and concerns related to the proposed bridge repair/replacement project
- Present information about the current known condition of the bridge
- Present general options for repair or replacement based on information gathered to date.

The consulting team provided a presentation at the meeting which can be accessed from the Fairfax Bridges website Downloads page: <http://fairfaxbridges.com/downloads/>

Introduction

Garret Toy, Fairfax Town Manager, began the meeting with a brief overview of the need for the project and the selection of the project team. Mr. Toy introduced the members of the consulting team who were present at the meeting:

- Nader Tamannaie, California Infrastructure Consultancy (CIC), Chief Project Engineer and Project Manager
- Robert Sennett, MGE, Bridge Design Lead
- Geoff Reilly, WRA, Environmental Studies Lead
- David Parisi, Parisi Transportation Co., Traffic Engineer
- Will Henderson, Mac Donald Architects, Bridge Architect
- David Dudley, CIC, Lead Civil Engineer
- Bonnie Nelson, Valerie Taylor, and Ritu Garg, Nelson\Nygaard Consulting , Public Outreach

Presentation

The following summarizes the material presented at the meeting. The presentation can be found at <http://fairfaxbridges.com/downloads/>. An audio recording of the meeting will be available in mid-December on the Fairfax bridge website. The following summarizes the highlights of the presentation.

Meadow Way Bridge Design Process

- Project team explores both repair and replace options through additional assessments
- Second community meeting to get input
- Options, along with estimated capital and lifetime cost, are presented to Town Council Council decides which option(s) to submit to Caltrans
- Caltrans makes funding determination

Project Schedule



Technical Presentation

- Existing Bridge Condition
 - Constructed in mid-1950s
 - Spans a relatively wide section of San Anselmo Creek
 - Serves as the only egress and ingress point for almost two dozen homes
 - Has a Sufficiency Rating (SR) of 44 and is Functionally Obsolete – these criteria make the bridge eligible for replacement
 - Geometry of location has resulted in serious soil erosion and scour problems
 - Scour repair funding requests denied by Caltrans because bridge qualifies for replacement
- Replacement Options
 - Temporary bridge will be needed during repairs or replacement
 - New bridge can resemble the old or have new features
 - Examples of bridges made from different materials
 - Restoration of the natural creek bed
- Repair Option
 - May be denied by Caltrans for funding
 - If cost is too high (considering the bridge's remaining life and when compared to replacement)
 - If environmental risks are too high
 - If deemed not a viable option based upon structural integrity issues
- Repair vs. replace decision will consider:

- Upfront costs as well as lifecycle costs
- Disruption and loss of vegetation
- Remaining life of existing bridge
- Structural integrity of all bridge components
- Creosote and other toxic materials
- Bridge Funding
 - Design and environmental is 88.5% federally funded
 - Construction of a replacement is 100% federally funded
 - Funding for repairs only is uncertain, would have to be cleared through Caltrans
 - If available funding is not used, it will be lost
- Next steps
 - Complete topographical and property/Right of Way surveys
 - Prepare assessment report
 - develop both repair and replace concepts and costs
 - provide report to the public and to the Council

Questions from the Audience

The primary topic of discussion and, of great concern to the attendees, was the apparent disparity between the width of the public Right-of-Way taken from Marin Map (as seen in slide 6 of the presentation), and the location of property lines at either end of the bridge. The 40 feet wide public ROW was taken from Marin County's MarinMap system (www.MarinMap.org) and will be verified by independent surveying, which is being conducted in November, 2013. The results of final surveying will be made available to interested parties and will be posted on line as available.

Q: What lines or “benchmarks” do people survey from? How are they determined? Have “benchmarks” always been in the same place?

A: There are existing benchmarks throughout community. The coordinates and elevation of these benchmarks are used as references in surveying the area in question. Consultants for this project will conduct both aerial and on-the-ground topographic surveying, as well as record map searches at the County, which will document a wide area surrounding the bridge and will verify property lines and public right-of-way.

Q: What will happen if the public right-of-way is narrower than assumed in the current drawings? Will you “go back to the drawing board” so that the plan for the bridge can be accommodated in less space?

A: Yes. We must develop a design that will fit within the public right-of-way.

Q: What will be the implications of the changes to this bridge on nearby property?

A: Whether the bridge is repaired or replaced, there will be a need for a temporary bridge during construction. We will work closely with the Town and the neighbors to minimize any unnecessary disruption to the community and to ensure that all activities take place in the public right of way.

Q: Why not just use a “drop-in” bridge as a permanent bridge to save money and time?

A: All types of solutions are being considered, including prefabricated bridges. However, regardless of the types of bridge designs, work will need to be done on abutments, supporting walls, as well as the creek bed to ensure strong foundation for the bridge. All work will be completed in one construction season, regardless of the type of bridge selected.

Q: Why can't the Meadow Way Bridge be treated the same way as Canyon Bridge?

A: The major differences between the Meadow Way Bridge and Canyon Bridge are that Canyon Bridge has a much smaller span, and pre-cast members were used. The Canyon Bridge did not include replacement of the abutments and that bridge still requires significant maintenance. In addition, it was funded by the Town, not Caltrans or the federal government, and did not have to go through the same scrutiny.

Q: Why weren't the surveys completed before this design work?

A: We have not done any design work to this date. The drawings that have been presented to date are conceptual drawings used to begin discussing and understanding the basic project needs. These drawings were completed as part of the consultant selection process, are not products of the study, and were done at no cost to the project or Town. No design work will be performed before surveying has been completed, and the Town provides authorization to proceed with the desired option.

Q: If the community wants a narrower bridge, why can't we seek a variance at the beginning of this process, before spending all the additional money to try to develop a compliant design?

A: As a single lane bridge, the Meadow Way Bridge already has one significant design variance. The current standard requires two lanes for all bridges. As a single lane bridge, the current standard mandates a minimum width of 19.5 feet, which includes a 12 foot travel lane, a 5 foot sidewalk, and a railing on both sides.

Caltrans will grant additional design exceptions only after it is demonstrated that standard designs cannot be accommodated on site. Therefore, we must continue with current studies to determine the configuration that will best fit on site. The design team and town staff will keep an open mind to accommodate reasonable design exceptions.

Q: How wide does the sidewalk need to be on the bridge? There appears to be some inconsistency in drawings we have seen.

A: A standard sidewalk is 5 feet wide. The sidewalk dimension includes a 5 foot sidewalk plus a 1 foot allowance for a railing, bringing the total width of the proposed sidewalk to 6 feet.

Q: Is access to the creek planned? Maintaining creek access is important to the neighbors.

A: Creek access can be accommodated as part of the project.

Q: How does the permit process work? How will you know in advance if they will allow permits for a retrofit? Who decides?

A: Caltrans is the gatekeeper of the permit process. The project description and preliminary designs must be approved by Caltrans before the permit-seeking process begins. A Caltrans field review will also be done during the initial phase of the project to assess the general environmental impact of the bridge project.

Group exercise: Preferences, Concerns, Design Options

Attendees were asked to identify the characteristics of the current bridge that were seen as desirable as well as things that the community would like to see changed in a repaired or replaced bridge. To assist with this discussion, photos of existing wood, steel, and concrete bridges were distributed (provided at the end of this summary).

Community feedback is paraphrased below.

Positive Attributes of the Current Bridge

- The wood bridge is warm and inviting
- It is the entry to a haven, and has a “country” feel
- The narrow width has a traffic-calming effect, creating a safer neighborhood
- The bridge serves a community-building function, because neighbors interact with each other as they approach the bridge, since only one can pass at a time
- Access to the creek bed. Neighbors interact on the banks, harvesting blackberries or taking their children down to the creek. The bridge is a part of the history of the neighborhood.

Less Positive Attributes of the Current Bridge – Things that could be changed

- The bridge surface is bumpy which makes biking difficult
- The bridge surface is noisy; if it is going to be replaced, it should be quiet

Considerations for a Repaired or Replaced Bridge:

- We should recognize that this is a very low traffic bridge and we should find a least cost solution. We do not want to spend money unnecessarily to replace this bridge.
- The new bridge should have a similar feeling to the current bridge, and honor the history of the bridge. A plain concrete bridge would be out of character in this neighborhood and should not be considered.
- The roadbed should be smooth to better accommodate bikes and reduce noise.
- The smallest profile bridge possible is best.
- Continued access to the creek makes the neighborhood a much better place to live.
- The bridge should continue to slow cars and have a traffic calming effect. We want to maximize safety for children who play on and near the bridge.
- A bridge should be safe and solid to withstand the tests of time.
- Avoid a temporary bridge if possible, or use a temporary pedestrian-only bridge for the shortest period possible. There is not enough room for a temporary bridge alongside the current bridge.
- (Comment emailed after the meeting) “Our interest is in having a structurally sound bridge. We have no particular love for the existing wooden bridge. I would like to see the wooden bridge removed and new concrete abutments built with a single span bridge built across the creek. The work should include all creek work/enhancements necessary. The bridge may be one lane if necessary, but should include a pedestrian walkway. “

Next Steps

Garrett Toy, Fairfax City Manager, outlined the next steps for this project.

- An assessment report for the Meadow Way Bridge will be produced by the project engineering team.
 - The report will draw from the feedback received during this meeting.
 - Through closer inspection, the report will identify design alternatives that can be pursued for the bridge.
- In early 2014, the project team will hold another community workshop to seek further input from the public based on new insights from the completed assessment report.
- The Town Council will make a final recommendation to Caltrans for replacing or repairing the bridge after studies have been completed.

The project website will continue to keep residents updated on ongoing activity and serve as platform for addressing any concerns.

Attachments

- Meeting Agenda
- Photos of Example Bridges
- Workshop Community Feedback



AGENDA

Public Workshop – Meadow Way Bridge Rehabilitation Project

Wednesday, November 20, 6:30 p.m.

Fairfax Women's Club, 46 Park Road, Fairfax

6:30	Sign in	
6:45	Introduction	Bonnie Nelson, Nelson\Nygaard Garrett Toy, Town Manager, Fairfax
7:00	Presentation, Current state of the Meadow Way Bridge	Nader Tamannaie, California Infrastructure Corporation
7:20	Q & A	All
7:40	Group exercise: Preferences, Concerns, Design Options	All
8:10	Summary	Bonnie Nelson
8:15	Next Steps	Garrett Toy

You are welcome to remain and speak with the project team about any aspect of the project.

Please fill out and leave behind a short survey/comment card (on the handout table).

THANK YOU FOR COMING!

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EXAMPLES OF BRIDGES



11/20/2013 WORKSHOP INPUT

