

## MEADOW WAY BRIDGE STATUS UPDATE

August 20, 2019

Below is a status update of the environmental studies for Meadow Way Bridge replacement project.

- The project is in the final stages of federally and California-required environmental studies. Caltrans, as the steward of the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), is the lead agency for National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), and has been reviewing the studies and coordinating consultation with other regulatory agencies. For California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) the Town of Fairfax is the lead agency.

From the standpoint of national environmental regulations, two of the most important studies have been the Natural Environment Study (NES) and Cultural and Historical Resources studies for this site. The former is important because of the Endangered status of steelhead salmon, which uses San Anselmo Creek for spawning. We have received the Biological Opinion (BO) from National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA). In summary, this report (posted on the website) states the proposed project includes design and staging considerations that make it unlikely to jeopardize the continued existence of threatened steelhead or result in the destruction or adverse modification of its critical habitat.

The other set of important studies, Cultural and Historical Resources, have been concluded and sent to the State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO) for approval. No issues have been found associated with the site during the research and site explorations. Due to the riverine nature of the site, it is unlikely that any artifacts exist here. Should anything surface during the excavations for construction, the project will be halted and further actions will be taken.

With all of the other NEPA studies completed and submitted (Air Quality, Traffic, Noise, Water Quality, Land Use, Equipment Staging, etc.), and the final approvals pending, the NEPA review would appear to support a Categorical Exclusion (CE) determination from Caltrans. We anticipate a Caltrans determination by October 2019.

- To comply with the requirements of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), we have prepared the draft Initial Study/Mitigated Negative Declaration (IS/MND) of impacts. The purpose of an Initial Study is to provide the Lead Agency with information to use as the basis for deciding whether to prepare an Environmental Impact Report or a Negative Declaration for the proposed project. Many of the studies for CEQA use the similar NEPA studies, augmented specifically by the California issues and requirements

The draft version of the IS/MND has been submitted to the Town review and comment. After this review and addressing any comments, the document will be electronically published on this site and various other venues for a 30-day public review and comment. A hard copy will also be available at the Town Hall. These specific will be communicated as we get closer to circulation of the document.

- After completing and approvals of these documents, the project will enter the Right-of-Way (ROW) phase and Final Design. As part of the ROW process, the Town will be discussing the ROW with each affected property owner. The Town has submitted its

ROW impacts statement and request for the start of ROW phase to Caltrans and will begin discussions as soon as authorized.

- Final Design will proceed based on the presentation made at the two previous project workshops and to the Town Council. We plan on having the third and last neighborhood presentation / workshop during the final design to share the latest details and specifics and receive resident feedback. The date and details will be announced. We are also pursuing techniques that may reduce the construction period from two to one season. Construction may start in 2020, but the ROW phase authorization and discussions may delay this until 2021.