

June 2022

To: Meadow Way Residents

RE: Meadow Way Bridge

Dear Meadow Way Neighbors,

It has been a while since we communicated directly with you in this manner. Since our last communication, important changes have taken place and a new Town Manager and a new Interim Public Works Director have taken the helm. The project has always been under the jurisdiction of the Public Works Department and we have continued its coordination with the two interim directors during the transitions. CIC and its staff have remained steady through the life of the project, but the company and its staff have joined a larger, similarly specialized transportation engineering firm, MGE Engineering, continuing the work seamlessly. As the project manager, I remain personally committed to continuing my service until this project is in construction, and perhaps through that phase.

Our project team is working on several fronts, mainly right-of-way (ROW) and easements, utility relocations and final design. While final design is easily within the reach, ROW and utilities are complex and on the "critical path," controlling the timelines and milestones in the current schedule. Both ROW and utilities are proceeding well, but the site is complicated and multiple homeowners, entities and other stakeholders, such as Caltrans and the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), are involved.

The following general update provides a summary of the primary, current project events.

Public Right-of-Way, Private Land Ownership and Construction Easements

Last fall, CIC finished defining the permanent and temporary details and limits of the areas affected by the project. These included areas in the Town ROW, as well as the properties of five adjacent neighbors. Our surveyors and ROW engineers had updated the property lines after reviews of the earlier work by our previous subconsultant for these tasks. By overlaying the limits of our total construction area on the latest ROW and property map, we came up with a preliminary package of the temporary and permanent land impacts and the easement areas needed for the project. We began feeding the preliminary ROW and easements package to another specialty subconsultant, a real estate brokerage firm certified by Caltrans/FHWA for this specific type of work, for land appraisals and to determine the values of permanent and temporary easement areas. We also began to ready ourselves to meet with the affected residents to brief them, to be followed by the details and easement agreement documents.

In reality, there have been disconnected, and sometimes erroneous and ambiguous records of, public and private land ownerships at this locale. The history of this particular stretch of Meadow Way is fascinating and complex at the same time. The real estate records have not always been entirely accurate, as some of you may have witnessed personally and some of the property descriptions in the individual title documents are in conflict with other recorded information. Because of the decades-long disconnects in the property records, no surveying company has been able to "close" perfectly on land surveys and computations in this area. Both of our surveying subconsultants experienced the same issues. However, even though the records are not perfect, no one's rightful ownership of any part of their property is even remotely in jeopardy.

For the above reasons, and since accuracy is demanded of us by the funding and oversight bodies and yourselves, we halted the process temporarily and sought permission from the Town to clarify the records further through the unique task of "Chain of Title." The goal was to determine the complete, historic and legal property transactions and ownerships on Meadow Way since the subdivision's inception, from Cascade Dr. to the T-intersection down the street, in the middle of which the bridge is located. The Town agreed with adding Randy Fry of Marin Land Title Consulting to our team for this

purpose. Randy is an industry veteran who specializes in putting together the correct mosaic of records by going back to an area's earliest history, in this case the early 1900s. We interrupted the easements process until this part of the land jigsaw puzzle is completely solved.

We received the results of Randy's work a short while back, which successfully deciphered the ambiguities in the site's property lines. In summary, in 1914, Fairfax Villa sold about 800 acres of land, including what Meadow Way occupies today, to Cascade Land Co., a now-defunct corporation. In 1921, Cascade Co. offered a 40-foot-wide strip of the land, from Cascade to the west end of the bridge, to Marin County as public travel way (which the County did not accept). There was probably no bridge in existence then, only the creek bifurcating the land owned by Cascade. In 1924, on the east side of the creek, where Meadow Way continues today, Cascade sold 10 acres of the land to George Hollister. As a result, the town has "prescriptive" rights to the land from Cascade Dr. to the bridge. The stretch where the bridge is located still belongs to Cascade Co. and where the road continues east of the bridge is owned by the presumed Hollister heirs. There are also strips of permanent easements given to PG&E, RVSD and MMWD in each segment, dating back as early as 1922. On the Hollister parcel, a 30-foot-wide utility easement within the road is also in existence. I have included the letters by Randy Fry and one of our lead ROW engineers, explaining the details of the Chain of Title findings. We now have a complete picture of all property lines, traced to these past transactions.

Furthermore, the Town has hired a specialized attorney to help us navigate through the legal and official proceeding of the public ROW and private real estate process here. Given the final status of the ROW map, it suffices to say that the Town will likely go through an eminent domain and/or a "Quiet Title" process to change its prescriptive rights to ownership in the areas of Meadow Way where the bridge is located (Cascade Co.), as well as the portion of the road east of the bridge (Hollister). West of the bridge, where the land was offered by Cascade for public use, the Town will continue its use on the current prescriptive rights basis. We have been negotiating with PG&E, MMWD and RVSD amicably regarding their easement rights in the area. These matters have slowed us down but have not impeded our work and we will shortly resume the preparation of the appraisals and easement agreements.

The federally funded ROW and easements process demands such precision and formality, and implements the rules with fairness to the historical and current property owners. Each easement agreement will be specific and customized for the current owners. We will soon continue with specific introductions to the five impacted property owners, Notices of Appraisal, face to face meetings, negotiations and other tasks, which also involve the Town and its legal team. Ultimately, Caltrans will need to certify the final outcome on behalf of FHWA, both of which are involved in the funding process.

Utility Coordination, Relocations and Upgrades

As noted earlier, the other critical path item in the schedule is the utilities. There are six utilities through here with five owners: MMWD, RVSD, PG&E (gas and electrical), Comcast and AT&T. We have met with these entities in the field and on line multiple times. Few neighbors were also present at the first two field meetings. We are pressing forward with the utility owners well, in parallel with the ROW activities. The utility entities are being responsive in spite of countless other projects and priorities of their own.

Relocating six utilities twice, once temporarily and again permanently, while maintaining service, is complicated. We have designed a 70-foot-long, 3' x 4' single-span concrete box girder span, to be placed just downstream of the existing bridge to house the utilities temporarily. This slim utility bridge will sit on elastomeric pads and concrete pads on top and near the back of each creek bank. We have buy-off from the five utilities to get all six utilities out of the way during construction and place them in and on this temporary span. Water, sewer, Comcast and AT&T will be carried inside the enclosed span and gas and power will be on top of it. We've named this the Temporary Utility Bridge, or the TUB. Once the permanent vehicular/pedestrian bridge is completed, the six utilities will return to their permanent locations, suspended under the bridge.

We are also aiming to permanently underground the power, Comcast and AT&T wires on this block, an outcome that will do away with unsightly overhead lines (and few poles) and one which the neighbors have told us to view highly desirable. We are working to have full federal participation in the utilities process, including the undergrounding of the overhead wires.

Construction Season and Year

We heard you loud and clear about your desire for a single season construction. In 2021, we conducted a study of the project for a single, contiguous construction season, as opposed to an anticipated double-season work. We were able to do several things unconventionally to bring a viable concept to fruition at the conclusion of our study. In this concept, all six utilities will be first relocated to the TUB before the construction season in the creek is permitted (June 1st). Next, a layout of temporary shoring elements for future use will be driven and built into the street a short distance away from the ends of the existing bridge. Then, in a two-day operation, the wooden deck and girders of the existing bridge will be stripped off from the top and a temporary steel truss bridge erected over the footprint of the previous deck. This structure is dubbed the Temporary Vehicular Bridge (TVB) and will sit a few feet upstream of, and parallel with, the TUB. The single-span TVB will be an above-deck steel truss bridge and will not depend on the supports of the current bridge, but only on a precast footing placed and buried in the street at each end. This bridge and the first utility relocations are planned for the pre-season period of March-May 2023.

Once the June 1st Dry Season arrives, the contractor will move in the creek, take out the timber bridge's wood pile supports and mine out the failing creek banks under the temporary bridge on both sides, exposing the vertical ground shoring systems buried in the street earlier. This will open up the entire width of the waterway in the bridge area, from bank to bank, allowing construction of the future bridge's two abutments and their connected wingwalls and retaining walls. These activities would consume the 4.5-month-long Dry Season. (The contractor will have to be out by October 15th.) However, the contractor will have installed steel I-beams across the creek and attached them to the new abutments, supporting a temporary platform above the 100-year flood plain, without placing anything in the creek, to finish the bridge superstructure without construction time interruption after mid-October. The design is modified for the concrete to be precast or cast in place, whichever fetches faster and less expensive construction. The superstructure will be built temporarily adjacent to the TVB and away from its permanent location. The entire concept is novel, has many moving parts and has made the project truly one of a kind!

As noted, the overall construction of the project will begin before the Dry Season around the beginning of March 2023 (maybe even sooner). It will start with the TUB and temporary utility relocations, followed by installation of the TVB, construction of the permanent bridge adjacent to the TVB, removal of the TVB, lateral relocation of the bridge to its permanent location, and reinstallation of the utilities on the new bridge. We anticipate the entire construction will take about 12-14 months to finish.

Next Design-Period Neighborhood Workshop

There is one more design-period workshop planned for the project. (Similar meetings will also be planned for the construction period.) To devote exclusive time to discussions of the bridge itself, the next neighborhood workshop will be held after the introductions of the easement documents to the five property owners and tentative agreements with them. The neighborhood workshop will show the project's features, the step-by-step construction process, work hours, work days, timings of the road closures and the overall construction schedule. We will seek input on features of the project, aesthetics, lighting, landscaping, etc. We believe we should probably wait until the summer vacation season is over to have the most number of neighbors attending the workshop in early fall.

What has been described above is only a summary of the complex future events. We acknowledge that, during the period of construction, there will be inconveniences caused by short-burst road closures,

when the TUB is being erected, when the road will be closed for two days to have the TVB installed, and when the permanent bridge will be shifted laterally a little over six feet to its final location. Noise and dust will inevitably be present, but minimized. Road closures will be announced in advance, signed and coordinated with the neighborhood. During the one or two overnight closures, the Town emergency crews will be on standby at both project ends. We have designed the TUB and made it safe for emergency pedestrian and crew crossings.

This letter, as well as the other two attachments contained in the email notification to you all, will also be posted on the project's web site. We will continue to simplify the process to speed up construction and present an optimal outcome for a truly signature crossing for the neighborhood to enjoy for the next 100+ years.

Regards,

Nader Tamannaie, PE
Project Manager

Cc: Hamid Shamsapour, PE – Interim Public Works Director
Heather Abrams – Fairfax Town Manager