

Emotions Run High Over Quint/Jerrold Street Bridge Plans

SAN FRANCISCO, CA (6/18) - Local residents gathered at the Southeast Campus of City College of San Francisco (CCSF) to discuss the fate of the bridge that could potentially affect the entire Bayview/ Hunter's Point area. In an invitation by organizers, staffer from Caltrain, the SF County Transportation Authority, and the SF Department of Public Works shared their results for an update on the Quint Street Bridge Replacement project and Quint-Jerrold Connector Road. Planning and design work that has been completed following two community outreach meetings last fall.

LeBlanc and Associates, LLC has performed community outreach over the last year and the community as come out in various numbers to voice their recommendations regarding the best choice for the bridge replacement option. "It is key that the community's recommendations are not taken lightly." LeBlanc and Associates is solely responsible for getting the word out when specified by SFCTA and we have worked very hard at making sure people participate at the meetings and encourage the community to ALWAYS follow up." Said Brigitte LeBlanc

The San Francisco County Transit Authority describes the project as, "Located in the Bayview, the proposed Quint-Jerrold Connector Road would link Quint Street just north of Oakdale Avenue to Jerrold Avenue via a new road along the west side of the Caltrain tracks... If Caltrain replaces its bridge over Quint Street with a berm, closing through access on the existing Quint Street, the Connector Road would provide alternate access across the tracks via Jerrold Avenue. The road is also intended to support a potential new Caltrain station at Oakdale Avenue and provide access to other nearby land uses. The project is currently in the planning and conceptual design phase, and the project team is working to incorporate community feedback and coordinate with the Quint Street Bridge Replacement and other nearby projects...."

The Caltrain bridge over Quint Street in the Bayview is more than 100 years old and at the end of its useful life. Caltrain has \$25 million available to replace the bridge, and developed three replacement options. The San Francisco County Transportation Authority has considered the alternatives, which present trade-offs in terms of cost, ability to support a future potential Caltrain Station at Oakdale Avenue, compatibility with adjacent land uses, and vehicular access.

* Option 1: Berm Design and Connector Road: Replace the existing bridge with a berm (a raised earthen bank the height of the current bridge, across which the Caltrain tracks would run) for \$20 million, facilitating a station but closing through access on Quint Street. The City also proposes to construct a new Quint-Jerrold Connector Road providing alternate access across the tracks, as well as vacation of Quint Street northeast of the Caltrain tracks to facilitate construction staging of both projects. Vacation of Quint Street, a feature of the Connector Road Project, is compatible with adjacent future uses including the Master Planning efforts at the SFPUC's Southeast Water Pollution Control Plant. This is the most cost-effective option. It not only maintains vehicular access, but also provides the greatest opportunity for the development of other key projects, such as the Caltrain station at Oakdale Avenue and the Southeast Water Pollution Control Plant. [recommended]

* Option 2: Replace In-Kind: Replace the existing bridge in-kind for \$25 million with a structure that maintains vehicle access under the tracks but would need to be rebuilt to accommodate a future station. [not recommended]

* Option 3: Wider Bridge: Replace the existing bridge with a wider one designed to accommodate future station platforms for \$32 to 35 million, requiring \$7 to 10 million in additional local funds. [not recommended]

Option 1: The Berm Design would replace the existing bridge with an embankment, facilitating a station but closing through access on the existing Quint Street. The City also proposes to construct a new Quint-Jerrold Connector Road along the west side of the Caltrain tracks, providing alternate access across the tracks and to nearby land uses via Jerrold Avenue. The road would be constructed on Union Pacific Railroad right-of-way.

According to Design Staffers, Option 1: Berm Design and City's proposed Connector Road appear to best meet the goals for the area in terms of providing a safe facility using available resources, maintaining local access, facilitating a future station, and ensuring land use compatibility, but some community questions remained to be resolved. In December 2012, the Authority Board recommended that Caltrain proceed with design for Option 1 to replace the bridge with a berm and provided funding to SFDPW, the Authority, and other city agencies for the next phase of planning, design, and environmental review for the Connector Road. The agencies have worked to incorporate feedback on key issues the community raised and are now presenting the results of that work in community meetings. Patrick Kitto of Caltrain, pointed out the necessity of the project by pointing out, "The current Quint Street Bridge is 105 years old, and it contains serious existing structural conditions that are growing and will continue to get worse unless they are addressed..."

Community leader Tony Kelly expressed his suspicion regarding the project stating, "It looks convenient of the PUC which happens to own the land on both sides of the Quint/Jerrold Street Bridge... I find it convenient that the PUC and the SFCTA is no longer talking about the price or value of the land. Furthermore, they are not talking about what this costing to the neighborhood and the businesses that reside in this area. I am all for fewer streets and for more public transportation, but we need to have a plan that actually works for the neighborhood..." One part of the plan to transform the Quint/Jerrold intersection into a closed off dead-end street, the design met with great opposition.

When the issue of local hiring came up many local residents were outraged. Although members of the SFCTA promised that they would make local hiring a priority, they couldn't cite any specific numbers or contracts. According to SFCTA members, federal laws and funding limit the ability to conduct local hiring for contracts. SFCTA members stated that the best they could do would be to use disadvantaged and small business goals, along with outreach to the community, including town hall meetings in an effort to get as much local involvement as possible.

But community opposition ran high during the meeting. Karen Pierce summed up the situation by saying, "One thing that comes to mind is that on the surface, they have taken the community comments more seriously than in the past. But the design still doesn't take what the community has expressed as desires and concerns. The new plan actually seems worse than the last plan..." Another set of concerns was how garbage dumping was not addressed in regards to the closed streets or how 18-wheeler trucks would be relocated to neighborhood streets. Michael Hamman, a general contractor told members of the SFCTA, "You say that you are the victims of a timeline, but the bottom line is that we will have to ultimately live with whatever project is approved, even if it serves as a blight to the community..."

Agency staff will present a recommended policy action to select a bridge replacement option and move forward with the Connector Road project to the Authority Citizens Advisory Committee in June and to the Authority Board in July.

- Transportation Authority Board, Plans and Programs Committee: Tuesday, July 16, 10:30 AM, City Hall, Room 263.
- Transportation Authority Board: Tuesday, July 23, 11 AM, City Hall, Room 250.

For more information on the project website at www.sfcta.org/quint for an update and upcoming presentations, or contact Colin Dentel-Post at: info@sfcta.org or (415) 522-4800

- Jose Ricardo G. Bondoc

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