

## Community Voice Concerns Over Caltrain Plans for Bayview/Hunter's Point

SAN FRANCISCO (11/2)- Local residents and community leaders voiced their concerns over proposals made by Caltrain and the San Francisco Municipal Transit Authority (SFMTA). According to the transportation agencies, "The Caltrain bridge over Quint Street is more than 100 years old and at the end of its useful life. Caltrain has \$25 million available to replace the bridge... The San Francisco 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..."

In a invitation provided by Caltrain, local residents were told, "Join Caltrain and the San Francisco County Transportation Authority (SFCTA) for an update on the Quint Street Bridge Replacement project. Authority staff will share the analysis we have completed following the May round of outreach and our recommendation to the Authority Board regarding the choice of a bridge replacement option. Caltrain and other city staff will be on hand to answer questions..." In terms of prior community outreach, Caltrain and members of the San Francisco County Transportation Authority stated, "The Authority, Caltrain, and partner agencies conducted two rounds of community outreach, the first in November-December 2011 and the second after additional planning work was completed in April-May 2012. Each included a public open house noticed in Chinese, Spanish and English, meetings with community groups, and discussions with stakeholders about the options..."

At the meeting three proposals were discussed:

\* 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]

If Caltrain or the San Francisco Municipal County Authority (SFCTA) leaders thought the meeting would be a quiet local event, circumstances and opinions proved otherwise. Karen Pierce stated for the record, "The MUNI buses can barely make it through the area. These projects are going to have a very real effect on the lives of the people of this area. If you are looking at the Quint Street Project, no one has talked about the effect on Phelps Street or Third Street. Apparently it doesn't seem to matter to some parties what happens, simply because this is the Bayview/Hunter's Point..." Local resident Oscar James, who lives on Maddox, near the site of proposed construction stated, "I don't want that bridge closed down. If they close that bridge what's to prevent people from dumping their stuff down there. There are people dumping all sorts of things in that area right now..." Local contractor and resident Michael Hamman stated, "The two proposed projects that we have seen need to be seen as being part of a larger project, and need to consider the effect on the residents of this neighborhood. We need details, assurances, and we need to assured that these are not projects which will be halted once a source of funding runs out... Until that happens you will see that a lot of people are going to be anxious over this issue..."

This was certainly different from the results presented by Caltrain and the San Francisco Municipal Transit Authority which stated as its initial conclusions, "Feedback has called for:

\* Additional due diligence to evaluate the designs and cost estimates of each bridge replacement option and to explore other possible design alternatives as well as funding opportunities;

\* A comprehensive look at area plans and projects and stronger coordination among project sponsors; Confirmation of the operational and funding feasibility of the proposed Connector Road and minimization in Option 1 of the loss of vehicular access between construction of the two projects; and

\* Further development of plans for a future Caltrain station at Oakdale Avenue., November 1, 6 p.m.  
Southeast Community Facility, Alex J. Pitcher Room  
1800 Oakdale Avenue

Furthermore, in terms of recommendations, Caltrains and the San Francisco County Transportation Authority states, " After conducting the additional review of the bridge replacement options and working with partner agencies to coordinate area plans, we recommend selection of Option 1: Berm Design, as well as construction of a Connector Road, subject to the ability of the respective project sponsors to deliver the projects while minimizing any loss of vehicular access through the area. Furthermore, city agencies propose that Option 1 also include vacation of Quint Street northeast of the Caltrain tracks to support parallel staging of the berm and local road projects. Vacating this portion of Quint Street is compatible with adjacent future uses including the Master Planning efforts at the SFPUC's Southeast Water Pollution Control Plant... The recommended Option is compatible with the planned initiatives in the area including the expansion of the Produce Market, Port of San Francisco Quint Street lead track replacement project, and the proposed Oakdale Caltrain station. We do not recommend further consideration of Option 2: Replace In-Kind because it would not accommodate a potential future station. While Option 3: Wider Bridge would meet our objectives in terms of supporting a future station and maintaining local through access, viable funding sources for the significant additional cost are not currently available. Option 1 could accommodate a future station, meets most local access needs via the Connector Road, is compatible with future master planning for the Water Pollution Control Plant, and can be constructed with available funding sources..."

LeBlanc And Associates was hired to do outreach in the community and the feedback has been around small business contracting opportunities for 94124 businesses that have been in the community and jobs for residents who currently live in 94124. The estimated project start time is 2014, with a budget of \$25million. Brigitte LeBlanc The question that many residents are asking is how much of the project is based on consultant fees and how much will be allocated on jobs for local residents who truly live in the district and not just using the address. Residents want to know how this project affects them and their lives...." LeBlanc And Associates have been a critical component in bringing the community concerns to the project and made sure that through their outreach efforts the communities concerns were shared. Lastly, LeBlanc stated the community's concern around seismic stability of the project. A question was raised if an earthquake were to happen soon, would the 100+ year bridge be able to sustain the damage and activity?

As local resident Angelique Mahan stated,"You will have to forgive us if we seem skeptical about these proposals. The Bayview and Hunters' Point have traditionally been either ignored or forgotten when it comes to action from City Hall. Based on the presentations that were made it seems that we have been invited to come to these community meetings and voice our concerns, but for some reason our concerns are either ignored or forgotten. We need more than a few assurances that our opinions count and that they are actually being taken into consideration regarding this project and this neighborhood...." Linda Richardson said of the event,"Every transportation project certainly has its adverse effects on the community, this is no exception. Time is of the essence and we have to know what our options are...." Only time will tell is what option, if any will actually be used for the district. Karen Pierce voiced her concern stating,"The people of this community have every right to be concerned. We live in this neighborhood. We will continue to live in this area, and whatever happens, we are the ones who will live with the consequences..."

- Jose Ricardo G. Bondoc

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