

***Contra Costa County
Pleasant Hill BART Station Bridge Overcrossing
Program
Community Meeting #1
June 12, 2000

Summary Report***

Prepared by:
Moore Iacofano Goltsman (MIG) Inc.
800 Hearst Avenue
Berkeley, CA 94710

June 2000

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

On June 12, 2000 Contra Costa County Redevelopment Agency held the first of two Community Meetings to discuss plans and options for the Pleasant Hill BART Station Bridge Overcrossing Program. The Specific Plan for the Pleasant Hill BART station area provides for overcrossings to facilitate pedestrian and bicycle access to the BART station, and to other facilities in the station area. The locations of the proposed overcrossings are on Treat Boulevard at the intersection of Oak Road, and along the Iron Horse Trail alignment in the vicinity of Jones Road. The overcrossing at Oak Road will be for pedestrians use only, while the one at Iron Horse Trail will be designed for pedestrian and bicycle use.

The Station Area Specific Plan provides for a community based design process for the overcrossings. This Community Meeting was the first meeting in a series of two community workshops as part of this process.

Approximately 30 members of the public attended this meeting, which was held at the Embassy Suites Hotel in Pleasant Hill. The meeting began with a welcome and introduction by Jim Kennedy, the Contra Costa County Redevelopment Director. John Eddy of Ove ARUP and Don MacDonald of MacDonald Associates gave a presentation, which identified options for the design of pedestrian bridges. After the presentation, there was a discussion of the major issues, opportunities and design elements related to the Pleasant Hill BART pedestrian bridges. Paul Tuttle of Moore, Iacofano Goltsman (MIG), Inc. facilitated the meeting, and Adena Friedman (also of MIG) recorded the discussion.

During the discussion, the presentation was shown again, and meeting participants responded to the examples.

This report summarizes the discussion at the Community Meeting and also captures the public input recorded during the meeting and from the Comment Cards. The summary is organized into the following sections, reflecting the discussion topics:

- Bridge overcrossing issues
- Opportunities
- Design Elements and Options
- Image and Character

Photoreductions of the wallgraphics from this meeting are included in an appendix at the end of the report.

BRIDGE OVERCROSSING ISSUES

Meeting participants identified issues related to the bridge overcrossing that should be addressed during the planning process and design of the facilities. Some prevalent themes emerged, including access to the bridges, safety and security, and the concerns of the neighboring residents and businesses. Additionally, meeting participants raised several questions related to the design of the bridges and the project schedule. Following is a summary of the major issues with the specific comments from the meeting participants:

One or Two Bridges?

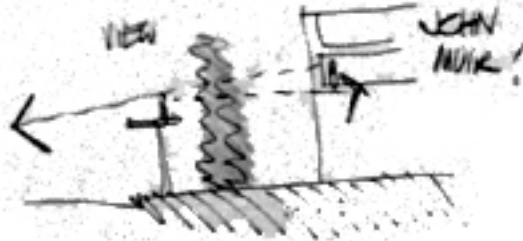
Many workshop participants commented on the necessity of two bridges. Several participants suggested that the functions of the two bridges might be combined into one bridge.

- Construct only one bridge, at Jones and Treat
- Investigate the Y-design idea for combining the two bridges
- One “great” bridge would be better for the community than two mediocre bridges
- Allocate resources to build one bridge, rather than two
- The bridge at Jones Road makes the most sense
- There should be other more necessary pedestrian bridges in the area, such as a bridge to link Geary Road and North Main (rather than the one at Oak Road)
- We are doing fine without any bridges

Effected Residents and Businesses

Nearby residents and businesses made several suggestions and comments regarding minimizing the impacts of the bridges on their property. A major issue is maintaining the privacy and views of adjoining residents and offices.

- The John Muir Center does not want direct access to the bridges
- Do not remove the trees near the John Muir Center
- Maintain the existing lawns, landscapes and sidewalks
- The John Muir Center is concerned with visibility and privacy
- Property owners are concerned with sightlines and potential views into their rear yards
- Safety and security are prime concerns



Accessibility

The purpose of the pedestrian bridge is to increase access to the Pleasant Hill BART station area. The second bridge is to provide safe bicycle access over Treat Boulevard along the Iron Horse Trail. Additionally, it is essential that everyone has comfortable, safe and easy access to the bridges.

- Ensure that the bridges are handicap accessible, including an elevator
- Provide a pedestrian access diagram of the BART station
- Recognize that the Iron Horse Trail does not just provide access to BART; it is also a regional trail
- Provide essential pedestrian access points from the street level
- Consider the number of stairs and the rise of the bridge in terms of accessibility

Questions Raised

- Do different bridge materials affect noise levels?
 - *Not for pedestrians and bicycles*
- What is the timeline and construction schedule for the bridges?
 - *A contract for construction will be in place in 2001, and construction will take place during 2002*
- Will the existing pedestrian crossing be closed?
 - *It is not yet decided, but if it does close hopefully the closing will positively alter pedestrian and bike movement*
- Where is the access to the bridge from Treat?
- Is there a need for a signalized intersection at Jones Road?

Additional Comments

- Existing lighting will have to be moved to accommodate the bridges
- The existing Treat/Jones crossing is dangerous
- Not enough time has been allowed to design a bridge

OPPORTUNITIES

The bridge overcrossings in the Pleasant Hill BART station area present opportunities for creating a safe and accessible environment. Meeting participants discussed several ways to take advantage of these opportunities, such as utilizing existing rights-of-way on Jones, and considering using similar designs of other bridges on the Iron Horse Trail. Following are specific comments regarding bridge overcrossing opportunities:

- Consider combining the functions of both bridges into one bridge
- Pedestrian access on Treat Boulevard will encourage walking and BART usage
- Utilize the right turn lane on Jones Road onto Treat for the bridge; this will take care of the concerns of views and privacy of the John Muir Center
- Take advantage of existing rights-of-way on Jones; this will allow trees to remain
- Provide ramps for access from Treat Boulevard
- Consider using the design of the Iron Horse Bridge over Ygnacio Valley Road, rather than “reinventing the wheel” with a new design

DESIGN CHARACTER

After discussing issues and opportunities for the bridge overcrossings, meeting participants discussed potential design elements for the bridges. Several themes emerged from this discussion. Many meeting participants emphasized a simple, clean, elegant design that can be integrated into the existing character of the area. Meeting participants also suggested the idea of a design that reflects a railroad image, which will help to make the bridges unique to this area of Pleasant Hill.

The design team, John Eddy and Don MacDonald presented examples of pedestrian bridges that have been designed around the world. The design elements of some of these bridges can be applied to the designs for the Pleasant Hill BART station area overcrossings. Meeting participants responded to these examples, and identified the designs and design elements that are most appropriate to Pleasant Hill.

Following are specific comments and suggestions related to design:

Bridge Types

Meeting participants discussed various bridge types, and their possible applications to Pleasant Hill. Many participants felt that a bridge type that would create a thinner deck and more simplified bridge was most appropriate, such as a single column cable stayed bridge, a simple span, or a truss.

- Arch
- Truss
- Cable stayed
- Box beam
- Dodecahedron
- Suspension



Character

Community members discussed the importance of creating a bridge that would fit in with the character of the community, and be suitable for the surrounding area.

- Incorporate the railroad image with a steel or wood truss
- Consider using the same design as other bridges in the area
- Employ red brick tones to ensure continuity in color with the neighboring buildings

- The bridge should blend in to the environment, rather than call attention
- A subtle, basic design is less expensive
- Design a bridge that says something great about the area, but without being outlandish
- Follow the design similar to the bridge near Monument Boulevard; it's an "Iron Horse Bridge", and we should stay with that concept
- In the Bay Area, there is a tradition of bridges that don't blend in, such as the Bay Bridge and the Golden Gate Bridge

Design Elements and Materials

Meeting participants discussed the types of design elements and materials that would help to create a bridge with simple, clean lines that would fit in with the character of the community.

- Use a middle support to reduce structure depth
- Single cable support with simple lines is a good design
- If there is support along the span, the bridge can have a thinner deck
- Use textured and colored concrete
- Include architectural embellishments, but with a basic design
- Use materials that will reduce the possibility of graffiti
- Avoid heavy concrete
- Do not use chain-link fencing
- Consider cantilevered planters
- Large concrete walls allow for a potential graffiti problem
- Integrate lighting into the design of the bridge

Site Design Elements and Options

The following are comments specifically related to the site design of the bridges in the Pleasant Hill BART station area.

- Provide access closer to the street corner, with a ramp rather than stairs
- Do not have staircases at street level
- Ensure a safe design with adequate lighting and no places to hide
- A bridge at Treat Boulevard and Jones Road will allow more pedestrian access

NEXT STEPS

This meeting was the first in a series of the community based design process for the Pleasant Hill BART station area bridge overcrossing program. The public input gathered at this meeting will be used to help develop alternatives for the design of the bridge overcrossings. The next community meeting will be on July 17, 2000. At that time, there will be a discussion with the community members about the design alternatives.