



Department of Public Works

P.O. Box 4186, San Rafael, CA 94913-4186 • 415/499-7877 • Fax: 415/499-3724

Raul M. Rojas
DIRECTOR

San Antonio Road Bridge Replacement September 9, 2015 Community Meeting Summary



The County of Marin in cooperation with the County of Sonoma,
California Department of Transportation (Caltrans),
and Transportation Authority of Marin (TAM)

I. Project Background

Approved by Caltrans as part of the Marin Sonoma Narrows (MSN) HOV Widening Project Final Environmental Impact Report/ Environmental Impact Study (FEIR/EIS) which was adopted and cleared in October 2009. The San Antonio Road Bridge Replacement Project (Project) proposes to realign a portion of San Antonio Road including construction of a new bridge over San Antonio Creek. The project is needed to replace an existing aging and deficient bridge and provide safe bicycle accessibility along the shoulders to serve the local area. Sonoma County is a half owner of the bridge and a partner in the Project. County of Marin is the lead agency but has delegated the initial development responsibilities to the Transportation Authority of Marin (TAM). The Project is funded using Highway Bridge Program (HBP) funds which are administered through the Caltrans Local Assistance Program.

San Antonio Road Bridge is located at the border of Marin and Sonoma Counties where San Antonio Road crosses San Antonio Creek. San Antonio Road begins at Highway 101 at the Redwood Landfill interchange and proceeds north toward Petaluma. There is a tee-intersection on the north side of the existing bridge where the west leg continues toward the west side of Petaluma and the east leg currently extends toward a few private residences but formerly provided access to Highway 101.

The existing bridge was built in 1917 and is one of the earliest remaining standard reinforced concrete girder bridges to be designed by the California Highway Commission. As such, the bridge is eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places. The single span bridge is 100 feet long and has a 23 feet wide clear width for traffic with no shoulders. The bridge needs to be replaced for the following reasons:

- ❖ The existing structure is classified as structurally deficient and functionally obsolete
- ❖ The existing structure contains areas of concrete cracking and corrosion to the reinforcing steel.
- ❖ The elevation of the underside of the existing bridge is too low to accommodate flood events. San Antonio Creek frequently floods upstream of the bridge and roadway approaches frequently flood during extended periods of rainfall forcing the road to be closed to traffic. Current standards require the height of the bridge be raised to accommodate a 100-year flood event
- ❖ The existing bridge cannot be retrofitted due to its historical significance
- ❖ The existing narrow bridge deck does not have adequate width to accommodate vehicle, bicycle and pedestrian traffic
- ❖ Bridge railings do not meet current safety standards

The Project would realign San Antonio Road to the west of the existing bridge on a curved alignment and construct a new two-lane bridge with shoulders across San Antonio Creek. The shoulders would accommodate Class II bicycle lanes. The shoulder on the west side of the bridge would be wider to improve sight distance for southbound traffic. A new intersection would be constructed on the north side of the new bridge to provide access to private properties to the east. The existing bridge

would remain since it is deemed of historic importance and would be used for bicycle and pedestrian access. The new bridge would be elevated to accommodate the 100-year flood event.

The project improvements would extend approximately 200 feet south and 500 feet north of the new bridge on San Antonio Road. During construction, the existing bridge will remain open to traffic. Bridge construction is planned to be complete in a single season to minimize impacts to riparian areas of the creek. A separate phase of the MSN project would construct bicycle lanes each side of the old bridge to create a continuous trail between Novato and Petaluma.

II. Public Outreach Activities Report

A. Environmental Planning Phase

San Antonio Bridge Replacement is part of the MSN project and during the environmental planning phase extensive public outreach efforts were conducted by Caltrans beginning in 2001. A summary of those efforts is provided below:

- May 2, 2001: FHWA published a Notice of Intent (NOI) under NEPA to prepare an EIS in the Federal Register.
- April 23, 2001: Caltrans submitted a Notice of Preparation (NOP) to prepare an EIR under CEQA to the California State Clearinghouse.
- August 1 and August 22, 2001: Caltrans held public scoping meetings in Novato and Marin County, and in Petaluma and Sonoma County, following the NOI/NOP filings. These meetings were advertised in local newspapers and invitations were mailed to over 100 interested parties. They were attended by 103 people.
- November 18 and 19, 2002: Caltrans held additional public meetings in Novato and in Petaluma once the Central Segment alignment was determined. These meetings were advertised in local newspapers and invitations were mailed to over 250 interested parties. They were attended by 63 people.
- Multiple meetings with coalition of bicycle/ pedestrian interest groups and SMART to discuss replacement of bicycle access within Segment B.
- Public outreach specifically targeted towards residents in Petaluma who were concerned about noise, including the Payran/ McKinley Neighborhood Action Committee.
- Quarterly Policy Advisory Group (PAG) meetings alternating between the cities of San Rafael (Marin County) and Santa Rosa (Sonoma County) which consisted of the following elected officials from the cities and counties of Marin and Sonoma in 2006/ 2007:
 - PAG Chair: Supervisor Steve Kinsey – Marin County Board of Supervisors, District 4
 - PAG Vice Chair: Supervisor Mike Kerns – Sonoma County Board of Supervisors, District 2
 - Supervisor Judy Arnold – Marin County Board of Supervisors, District 5
 - The Honorable Bob Blanchard – Mayo, City of Santa Rosa
 - The Honorable Peter Breen, Mayor, Town of San Anselmo
 - Councilmember Carole Dillon-Knudson, City of Novato
 - The Honorable Jeanne MacLeamy – Mayor of Novato
 - Supervisor Paul Kelley – Sonoma County Board of Supervisors, District 4
 - The Honorable Pamela Torliatt – Mayor, City of Petaluma

- Alternate: Petaluma Councilmember – Samantha Freitas
 - Alternate: Novato Councilmember – Jim Leland
- Interchange and frontage road/ access configuration alternatives evaluation process reviewed by a team of Caltrans design, engineering, and environmental specialists, TAM, SCTA and the PAG. These included various combinations of interchanges and frontage road configurations. In total, 15 different packages were identified. In order to screen the wide array of options for the most viable candidates for further study, the team scored each of the options in terms of operational flexibility, access to private parcels, land acquisition, potential growth inducement, visual resource impacts, parkland impacts, biological resource impacts, cultural resource impacts, and costs. The combined scores were used to identify the four Access Options.
- June 15 and 16, 2005: Caltrans held additional public meetings in Novato and in Petaluma to preview the four Access Options within Segment B. These meetings were advertised in local newspapers and invitations were mailed to over 250 interested parties. They were attended by 35 people. It was explained that each of the options would be considered at an equal level of detail in this DEIR/S, and that one Access Option would be combined with one of the Build Alternatives as the preferred alternative.
- Multiple local constituency meetings throughout the process in Marin and Sonoma counties and with state, federal, and local agencies (see Table 6.1, Figure 6-9, 6-10, and 6-11 below).
- Caltrans also has a website at <http://www.dot.ca.gov/dist4/msn> which was used to provide the public with information on project alternatives, project schedule, public meetings, and PAG meetings. Visitors could also submit comments or questions through the website.

The Draft EIR/EIS was released on October 16, 2007; distribution of the document and a public comment period of 60 days followed (ending December 14, 2007). The Draft EIR/EIS was available for viewing at TAM, Sonoma County Transportation Authority (SCTA), the Community Center at Lucchesi Park, and several city and regional libraries throughout the area. Caltrans received over 700 comments during the comment period.

- Caltrans, TAM, and SCTA hosted two public meeting open houses to present the findings of the Draft EIR/EIS on the MSN Project. Pursuant to California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) guidelines, local residents, elected officials, interested property owners, local businesses, and other interested parties of the general public, were notified of the document release and the public meetings through local newspapers and letters of notification to people on the project mailing list. A Notice of Availability also appeared in the Federal Register on October 26, 2007. The two public meeting open houses were held on November 6, 2007 in Petaluma at the Beverly C. Wilson Hall located at the Sonoma-Marin Fairgrounds and November 14, 2007 in Novato at the Novato Unified School District Board Room. During the meetings, a presentation was given on the overview of the project and the project schedule information. Fifty five people signed in at the two meetings. A court reporter was also on hand to record comments and project staff was on hand to answer questions.”

B. Meeting Purpose and Objectives

Due to the passage of time, the counties of Marin and Sonoma initiated further public outreach efforts in Spring 2015 to present design refinements to the proposed bridge improvements prior to commencing detailed design. To better understand the community's interests and concerns around the project, a public work shop meeting was held on September 9, 2015 at the Margaret Todd Senior Center. The public workshop meeting provided an opportunity for the public to learn about the bridge replacement project, ask questions, and provide input.

C. Outreach and Noticing

The team conducted the following outreach and noticing activities to promote the public outreach meeting:

- ❖ Public Meeting Notice sent out to stakeholder list on July 29, 2015, which included over 75 local residents along San Antonio Road effected by the bridge, local stakeholder groups, and elected officials
- ❖ Sent out press release on July 27, 2015 to all of the local media resources

D. Public Outreach Meeting

The meeting was held on September 9, 2015 and approximately 20 members of the public, as well as, staff from County of Marin, TAM, County of Marin, Sonoma County Transportation Authority and design consultant (WMH Corporation) attended. Supervisors Arnold and Rabbit were also in attendance. Only 13 attendees signed in to the meeting. Many of the attendees arrived early at 5:00PM and the meeting ended at 7:30pm. The meeting was advertised as an open house format, however, the supervisors and several members of the public stated that a formal presentation needed to be made by staff with the opportunity for the attendees to ask follow-up questions.

The project team outlined the purpose of the project and relationship to the overall MSN Project, the scope of the improvements, range of technical studies performed, preliminary project schedule, and current project status. The remainder of the meeting was an open discussion where community members were able to ask the project team detailed questions about the project and provide feedback. A summary of the Frequently Asked Questions related to the project are listed in the next section or can be viewed on the project webpage: <http://www.marincounty.org/depts/pw/current-projects>. A detailed description of all comments received and project team responses are available by contacting Nick Nguyen at NNguyen@tam.ca.gov or 415-226-0831.

III. Summary of Meeting Comments and Questions

A. Comment Summary

Bridge Design

- ❖ The current bridge design is too wide.
- ❖ The bridge profile is too high and could affect the visual and rural character of the area.
- ❖ Concerns about flooding in the creek area. Will new bridge make it worse
- ❖ The intention of this project seems to be to encourage drivers to take San Antonio Road, I Street Extension, or D Street Extension anytime that the freeway is backed up.

Safety

- ❖ There is a perceived increase in traffic volumes and speeds along San Antonio Road in the area. Concern that freeway traffic is diverting to San Antonio Road
- ❖ Speeding vehicles observed on San Antonio Road. With a wider road and a new alignment, speeding problem could get worse. The current bridge configuration requires you to slow down and come to a stop at the existing tee intersection.

Other

- ❖ Multiple comments were made on traffic concerns outside of the project limits, including need for improvements on D and I Streets.
- ❖ This project should be delayed until the overall MSN project is complete so that studies reflect actual conditions.
- ❖ Conditions have changed and additional studies are needed for the project. Is a Supplemental EIR required?
- ❖ In favor of bridge replacement. Project is long overdue and needs to move ahead as rapidly as possible.

B. Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

Q: Why is the new bridge needed?

A: The existing bridge is at the end of its service life. There are numerous structural deficiencies including cracking and corrosion of the reinforcing steel. The existing structure also has bridge railings that do not meet current safety standards and there is no road shoulder. The new bridge will increase safety and reliability through updated design standards which will safeguard the motoring public, as well as the residents who live in the area. The existing bridge will remain because of its historical relevance and will be repurposed for bicyclists and pedestrians.

Q: How is the project being funded?

A: The project is being funded through the Highway Bridge Program (HBP), a federal program that provides funding to local agencies to improve the condition of their bridges through replacement, rehabilitation and preventive maintenance. San Antonio Road Bridge has been identified for replacement, and because it is on a local road, the project is eligible for 100% federal funding.

Q: What are the project limits?

A: The project includes the proposed bridge structure and its required conforms spanning from approximately 200 feet south and 500 feet north of the bridge on San Antonio Road. Improvements outside of these limits are not eligible for the federal bridge program funding.

Q: What design standards need to be met?

A: The roadway portion of the project is being designed in accordance with Marin County Standards, the Caltrans Highway Design Manual, and the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO) A Policy on Geometric Design of Highways and Streets. The bridge element is being designed in accordance with the AASHTO Load and Resistance Factor Design Bridge Design Specifications with California Amendments and the latest Caltrans Bridge Design Manuals.

Q: What is Sonoma County's role in the project?

A: Sonoma is a partner in the project and a half owner of the bridge, however, Marin County is the sponsor (lead) agency.

Q: What is Caltrans' role in the project?

A: Caltrans is the environmental compliance lead agency for the project. Also, their Local Assistance Division administers the funding and ensures that the HBP requirements are met and that projects are delivered in accordance with the Federal and State requirements.

Q: What environmental studies have been completed for the project and where can official project environmental documents be found?

A: Caltrans has completed an environmental revalidation of the Final Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Impact Statement (FEIR/EIS) to address proposed refinements to the original bridge design and to verify that conditions have not changed since the original technical studies were performed. Supplemental biological, cultural and hydraulics studies have been performed to support the environmental revalidation document. So far, there appears to have been no changes to the original findings in the approved FEIR/EIS or new information that warrants preparation of a supplemental Environmental Impact Report (EIR)/EIS. No additional studies are expected to be prepared as part of the environmental process. A copy of the approved FEIR/EIS and supporting technical studies are available upon request or online at http://www.dot.ca.gov/dist4/msn/msn_feir_s/msn_feir.htm.

Q: How will the project take into account the riparian habitat of the creek?

A: Although the existing bridge supports will remain, the new bridge has been designed to span the riparian area of the creek. There will be no bridge supports in the waterway. The proposed bridge span has been reduced since the FEIR/EIS was approved from 220 feet to 200 feet and the bridge width has been reduced from 40 feet to 33 feet. The difference in the footprint of the modified bridge layout is approximately one acre. Trees removed by the project would be

replaced adjacent to the roadway approaches and screen views of the new bridge from surrounding properties.

Q: Will the new bridge be higher than the existing bridge?

A: The existing bridge soffit (bottommost member) is 9.5 feet below the elevation of the 100-year storm event. The new bridge will be constructed at a higher elevation to accommodate a 100-year storm event. Note that a 100-year storm event is not a storm that is expected to occur every 100 years. Rather it is a storm event that has a 1% probability of occurring in any given year.

Q: If the existing bridge is to remain, why does it matter that the new bridge is raised to accommodate increased flood events?

A: Although the existing bridge will remain, as part of this project it will be modified to handle a 100 year flood event by installing a large culvert in the southerly bridge approach.

Q: How is traffic affected by the new bridge?

A: The project will not increase traffic capacity and will continue to have one lane in each direction on San Antonio Road.

Q: How will traffic speeding be affected by the new bridge?

A: Speed along San Antonio Road within the project limits has been analyzed and the average speeds match closely with the speed associated with a rural road of this kind (55 mph). However, within the project limits, opportunities for traffic calming measures will be analyzed by the design team during the Final Design phase of the project.

Q: Can the new bridge be built on the same alignment?

A: The existing bridge has historical significance which makes it infeasible to replace it on its current alignment. Constructing a new bridge parallel to the existing bridge was considered and withdrawn since it would confuse motorists by maintaining a "tee" intersection where the primary through movement only provides access to a few private properties.

Q: When will this project be built?

A: The current schedule for the project proposes construction starts in 2019 and ends in 2020.

IV. Next Steps

The project team will consider community input as detailed bridge design moves forward. The County of Marin will hold a second public outreach meeting in September 2016 and will provide a project update to the community in advance of construction.