



Media Briefing #2 **Golden Gate Bridge Suicide Deterrent Study**

New Information Since Briefing #1

1) NEW STUDY WEBSITE: The Golden Gate Bridge (Bridge) Suicide Deterrent Study (Study) website is now live and available as a resource tool for the public and media to follow the Study as it progresses. The website address is www.ggbsuicidebarrier.org. The public is encouraged to visit the site and sign up to receive periodic Study updates via email. Both the public and media are encouraged to reference this website through the remainder of the Study to successfully access current and accurate information.

2) WIND FINDINGS: The Study has been divided into two phases. Phase 1 began in fall 2006 and concludes on May 24, 2007, when the wind tunnel testing findings will be presented in a report to the Golden Gate Bridge, Highway and Transportation District (District) Board of Directors (Board) at their regularly scheduled Building and Operating Committee meeting at 10 am. The report containing the wind tunnel findings will be posted on www.ggbsuicidebarrier.org by noon on May 24, 2007.

Phase 1 focused on performing wind tunnel testing of generic concepts for a potential suicide deterrent for the Bridge as the span is a long span suspension bridge that responds dynamically, and potentially dramatically, to wind. The wind tunnel testing was undertaken to determine which generic concepts do not create wind stability problems for the Bridge. Wind tunnel testing has focused on three types of generic concepts: (1) adding to the existing railing; (2) replacing the existing railing; and (3) utilizing nets that cantilever out horizontally. Concepts with various heights, component dimensions and wind appendages have been tested to determine which combinations of variables are acceptable for the Bridge, from a wind stability standpoint.

3) AGENCY CONSULTATION: Informal initial consultations with responsible state and federal agencies, such as Caltrans and the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), are underway. On Thursday, June 14, 2007, after agencies and the public have had a three-week period to access, review and assimilate the Phase 1 wind study findings, the environmental process will formally commence with the issuing of the Notice of Preparation (NOP) as required under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). The NOP is sent from the Golden Gate Bridge, Highway and Transportation District (District) to responsible agencies, including Caltrans and FHWA, as well as agencies such as the State Historic Preservation Office to inform them that the requisite environmental studies are underway for the Study. The purpose of the NOP is to solicit guidance from those agencies, over a 30-day period, as to the scope and content of the proposed environmental studies. This process assists in determining the scope, focus and

content of the environmental document that is prepared in Phase 2. The NOP will be posted at www.ggsuicidebarrier.org.

4) PHASE 2: PRELIMINARY ENGINEERING & ENVIRONMENTAL EVALUATION PROCESS

Phase 2 will formally commence on June 14, 2007, and will undertake the required federal and state environment studies and reviews by taking the Phase 1 generic concepts that passed the wind tunnel tests and developing potential alternatives for further engineering and environmental evaluation. A draft environmental document will be prepared that will:

- Consider and evaluate a “no-build” alternative as well as several “build” alternatives. “Build alternatives” will be developed utilizing the results from the wind tunnel testing.
- Provide information about the required federal and state environmental studies undertaken.
- Evaluate each alternative against the Study Criteria (listed below).
- Include evaluation of the existing environmental setting, potential impacts and mitigation measures to reduce or eliminate potential impacts of the alternatives.
- Provide information developed for each alternative including architectural renderings, visual impact analysis, historic preservation considerations and cost.

The environmental document containing this information is currently targeted to be released in fall 2007 and public comments will be solicited. As the Bridge is eligible for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places, it is afforded protection under both state and federal historic preservation laws. In accordance with these laws, the District, in addition to developing and releasing for public comment a draft environmental document, must consult with appropriate state and federal agencies throughout the process.

Following the required review and comment processes of the draft environmental document, a final environmental document will be prepared and made available to the public. The final document is currently targeted to be released in spring 2008. Following a 30-day public comment period on the final document, the environmental process will conclude and the District Board will decide the next step. Please note that no funding has been identified for any work beyond the conclusion of this Study.

Suicide Deterrent System – Study Criteria Adopted April 2005

- Must impede the ability of an individual to jump off the Golden Gate Bridge.
- Must not cause safety or nuisance hazards to sidewalk users including pedestrians, bicyclists, District staff, and District contractors/security partners.
- Must be able to be maintained as a routine part of the District’s on-going Bridge maintenance program and without undue risk of injury to District employees.
- Must not diminish ability to provide adequate security of the Golden Gate Bridge.
- Must continue to allow access to the underside of the Bridge for emergency response and maintenance activities.
- Must not have a negative impact on the wind stability of the Golden Gate Bridge.

- Must satisfy requirements of state and federal historic preservation laws.
- Must have minimal visual and aesthetic impacts on the Golden Gate Bridge.
- Must be cost effective to construct and maintain.
- Must not in and of itself create undue risk of injury to anyone who comes in contact with the suicide deterrent system.
- Must not prevent construction of a moveable median barrier on the Golden Gate Bridge.

Study Funding

The Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC) provided \$1,850,000. The City and County of San Francisco provided \$100,000, the County of Marin provided \$25,000, and the public and private citizen groups have provided \$28,700.

Information on Media Coverage of Suicide

Contact the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention, NY, NY, (212) 363-3500, or visit <http://www.afsp.org>.