



October 16, 2007

Status Update on the Golden Gate Bridge Suicide Barrier Study

The following provides an update on the Golden Gate Bridge Suicide Deterrent System Study (Study).

Phase 1 of the Study concluded on May 24, 2007, when the wind tunnel testing findings were presented to the Golden Gate Bridge, Highway and Transportation District (District) Board of Directors (Board). Phase 1 focused on performing wind tunnel testing of generic potential suicide deterrent concepts as the Bridge 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 and focused on three 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. The full report and associated sketches of potential suicide barriers concepts passing the wind test are posted on www.ggsuicidebarrier.org.

Phase 2 of the Study encompasses evaluating the Phase 1 generic concepts that passed the wind tunnel tests in accordance with required federal and state environmental laws and reviews. 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.

The draft environmental document provides information about the required federal and state environmental studies undertaken and evaluates each alternative against the established Study Criteria (as posted on the Study website). It also includes a description of the environmental setting, evaluation of potential environmental impacts and mitigation measures to reduce or eliminate potential impacts of the alternatives. The document provides information developed for each alternative including architectural renderings, visual impact analysis, historic preservation considerations and cost. 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, will be consulting with appropriate state and federal agencies throughout the process.

Study Schedule Update: The original Study schedule was ambitious. With Phase 2 starting in June 2007, the original schedule called for the release of the draft environmental document just four months later. The District will not be able to keep to this timeline and wanted to bring you up to date as to why.

The original aggressive schedule did not anticipate a change in the environmental review process. On July 1, 2007, there was a change in the way that the federal government, through the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), participates in the review of environmental documents prepared in California that require federal review, as our environmental document does. This review responsibility was delegated to the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) from the FHWA.

The District is working closely with Caltrans, FHWA along with Historic Preservation agencies as this new review process has evolved. The Study environmental document schedule is delayed due, in part, to the “growing pains” of this transition which are to be expected in a transition of this magnitude. We cannot side-step this process and will continue to work as hard as we possibly can to move this project through the environmental process successfully.

We appreciate the support of our partner agencies, FHWA and Caltrans, in moving this project forward.

The draft environmental document is now scheduled to be released for public comment in mid-2008, with a final document anticipated in late 2008.

We appreciate your understanding during this transition.

Study Website: Visit the Suicide Barrier Study website at www.ggbsuicidebarrier.org to learn more as the Study advances. Please direct all interested parties to the Study website.