

GOLDEN GATE BRIDGE, HIGHWAY AND TRANSPORTATION DISTRICT

RESOLUTION NO. 2005-015

**APPROVE PROCEEDING WITH ENVIRONMENTAL STUDIES AND PRELIMINARY
DESIGN WORK RELATED TO DEVELOPMENT OF A PHYSICAL SUICIDE
DETERRENT SYSTEM ON THE GOLDEN GATE BRIDGE**

March 11, 2005

**THIS RESOLUTION IS ADOPTED WITH REFERENCE TO THE FOLLOWING
FACTS AND CIRCUMSTANCES, WHICH ARE FOUND AND DETERMINED BY THE
BOARD OF DIRECTORS:**

1. The concept of installing a suicide deterrent system on the Golden Gate Bridge has been explored at various intervals by District management and the Board of Directors during the past three decades. For a variety of reasons, however, the development of a physical suicide deterrent system suitable for installation on the Golden Gate Bridge has not been found to be feasible from various perspectives.

2. California law and judicial precedent establish that the absence of a physical suicide deterrent on the Golden Gate Bridge does not constitute a dangerous condition of public property within the meaning of Government Code Section 835, et seq. Notwithstanding that fact, as a result of renewed interest being expressed in revisiting the subject of a physical suicide deterrent system on the Golden Gate Bridge, on January 27, 2005, a presentation was made by District staff to the Building and Operating Committee of the Board of Directors regarding the history of District activities relevant to possible suicide deterrent systems. The report outlined

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criteria previously used in evaluating possible physical suicide deterrent systems and presented design alternatives previously considered.

3. On February 24, 2005, staff presented a report that outlined the environmental and design procedures necessary to undertake development of a physical suicide deterrent system on the Golden Gate Bridge. Specifically, the report identified the following actions that would have to be undertaken as a part of such consideration:

a. Adoption of criteria for the evaluation of alternatives for a physical suicide deterrent system, coupled with development of a "Purpose and Need" statement for the project pursuant to applicable environmental procedures;

b. Review of prior proposals for a physical suicide deterrent system on the Golden Gate Bridge and review of designs that have been implemented on other bridges;

c. Engagement of consultants to undertake preliminary engineering and environmental work;

d. Solicitation of input from various professional organizations with expertise in mental health regarding the adequacy of alternatives conceptualized as a potential physical suicide deterrent;

e. Undertaking wind tunnel tests to ensure the feasibility of the proposed design or improvements with respect to the wind stability of the Golden Gate Bridge;

f. Preparation of a Visual Analysis of the workable alternatives, including preparation of several still photographic simulations of each alternative;

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g. Preparation of an historical "106 Evaluation" in consultation with the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) and, if necessary, the Federal Advisory Council on Historic Preservation (ACHP) culminating in the preparation of a "Section 4f" report;

h. Solicitation of feedback from the San Francisco Bay Conservation and Development Commission's Design Review Board and Engineering Criteria Review Board regarding the alternatives; and

i. Preparation of environmental documents pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act and National Environmental Policy Act.

The District Engineer estimated that the cost to complete these various milestones to be \$2 million.

4. Notwithstanding the absence of any legal obligation to construct a physical suicide deterrent system on the Golden Gate Bridge, the Building and Operating Committee, following receipt of extensive public testimony and deliberations on the aforementioned report presented by staff, unanimously voted to recommend that the Board of Directors approve proceeding with environmental studies and preliminary design work for development of a physical suicide deterrent system on the Golden Gate Bridge with the understanding that a new set of assumptions and conditions are to be established to govern project development, including (a) the establishment of different design and engineering criteria calling for a physical suicide deterrent system to serve as a deterrent to suicides, recognizing the difficulty, if not impossibility, to devise any practical system that would make it physically impossible in all circumstances for suicides to occur; and, (b) the generation of financial support from external public and private sources to finance the project with the understanding that much of this work

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cannot begin until funds have been identified and appropriated; and, (c) with the further understanding that these initial actions are being authorized to enable the Board of Directors to ultimately determine whether to proceed with construction of a physical suicide deterrent system.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Board of Directors of the Golden Gate Bridge, Highway and Transportation District as follows:

1. The Board of Directors hereby approves proceeding with environmental studies and preliminary design work for development of a physical suicide deterrent system on the Golden Gate Bridge with the understanding that a new set of assumptions and conditions are to be established to govern project development, including (a) the establishment of different design and engineering criteria calling for a physical suicide deterrent system to serve as a deterrent to suicides, recognizing the difficulty, if not impossibility, to devise any practical system that would make it physically impossible in all circumstances for suicides to occur; and, (b) the generation of financial support from external public and private sources to finance the project with the understanding that much of this work cannot begin until funds have been identified and appropriated; and, (c) with the further understanding that these initial actions are being authorized to enable the Board of Directors to ultimately determine whether to proceed with construction of a physical suicide deterrent system.
2. Staff is directed to begin the project by developing proposed criteria for evaluation of alternatives for a physical suicide deterrent system for consideration and ultimate adoption by the Board of Directors.
3. Staff is directed to investigate and report on funding opportunities for the project from sources, including federal, state, regional and local governmental agencies, as well as from various private sector sources.

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4. Staff is directed that with regard to aerodynamic studies required to evaluate the feasibility of installing a physical suicide deterrent system on the Golden Gate Bridge, such studies are to analyze the physical suicide deterrent both with and without the installation of a moveable median barrier on the Golden Gate Bridge as to which the Board of Directors enacted legislation granting conceptual approval pursuant to resolution No. 98-116 on May 22, 1998.

5. The Board of Directors authorize the President of the Board to constitute a Bridge Barrier Projects Advisory Committee of the Board for purposes of working with staff and outside interested parties to identify and pursue funding for implementation of the studies associated with the Physical Suicide Deterrent System and the Movable Median Barrier System projects. Said Advisory Committee is to report on its activities to the standing Finance-Auditing Committee of the Board.

ADOPTED this 11th day of March, 2005, by the following vote of the Board:

AYES (17): Directors Ammiano, Brown, Cochran, Eddie, Hernández, Kerns, McGoldrick, Murray, Pahre, Reilly, Sandoval, Shahum, Smith and Stroeh; Second Vice President Boro; First Vice President Harrison; President Middlebrook
NOES (1): Director Martini
ABSENT (1): Director Dufty

Maureen Middlebrook
President of the Board of Directors

ATTEST: _____
Janet S. Tarantino
Secretary of the District