



Friday, February 10, 2012
 9:00 AM – 12:00 Noon
Infineon Raceway
29355 Arnold Drive
Sonoma CA 94954

Highway 37 Stewardship Study Meeting #6 Draft Agenda

<i>Meeting # 6 will focus on regional planning practices and the current scenario matrix</i>		
Time	Topic	Presented By
9:00	Welcome and Introductions	Mary Campbell UC Davis
9:15	Corridor Context	Fraser Shilling, UC Davis Road Ecology Center
9:45	Small groups: How do we design transportation systems so they are responsive to what people really want?	Fraser Shilling, UC Davis Road Ecology Center
10:30	Break	All
10:45	Plenary Discussion of Group Findings	All
11:30	Comments on Scenario Matrix	All
11:55	Next Steps	Fraser Shilling
12 noon	Adjourn	
Study Partners:		Study Contacts:
Sonoma Land Trust Wendy Eliot		UC Davis Road Ecology Center Fraser Shilling (530) 752-7859 fmshilling@ucdavis.edu
Sonoma Ecology Center Caitlin Cornwall		Caltrans District 4 Erik Alm Acting Office Chief, Office of System Planning (510) 286-6053 erik_alm@dot.ca.gov
Napa County Resource Conservation District Leigh Sharp		Rob Bregoff Associate Transportation Planner (510) 286-5503 Robert_bregoff@dot.ca.gov
Southern Sonoma County Resource Conservation District Susan Haydon		



Welcome and Introductions

The group introduced themselves and which organization, if any, they represented. All PowerPoint presentations referenced in these minutes are available on the website <http://hwy37.ucdavis.edu/> under the “meetings” tab.

Update on Corridor Context

Fraser provided an update on the current study. The PowerPoint presentation is available at: <http://hwy37.ucdavis.edu/>

- This is a Transportation Research Board (TRB) study working with Caltrans’ Corridor Management Planning Process to test recently developed tools to include environmental, community, and economic information sooner in decision-making. The data describes how the highway fits into the natural, community and economic systems.
- Study is collecting data that will assist TRB in developing better federal agency planning processes while also collecting data for stakeholders in this corridor management process.
- Goal is to develop model planning process.
- Data collected thus far:
 - Will be predominantly spatial data, which means some data does not lend itself as well to being presented this way (for example, economic data).
 - Will organize information and share it with stakeholders.
 - Organized into four themes: Transportation, Environment, Community and Economy.
 - Some of this is map-able and some is not, so some will be in tables, other info in narrative.
 - Transportation data includes: access, traffic, relative costs, modes.
 - Includes trails, main roads, highways, and rail.
 - Traffic demand projections – shows projections given different scenario.
 - Community: aesthetics, health, recreation, land use.
 - One expression of community on maps is population density, places of interest.
 - Environment: hydrology, sea level rise, land cover (includes ag).
 - One expression is inundation of areas given projected sea level rise and how this intersects with places of interest in next 50 years, using worst-case scenario projections.
 - Includes wetlands and agriculture. Some of the wetlands are not yet spatially updated.
 - Economy: agriculture, jobs commute, goods movement.
 - Data gaps:
 - Elevation of berms/levees throughout area not included in mapping, which affects the worst-case scenario projections for sea level rise. So inundation projections do not reflect vulnerability that includes existing berms/levees.
 - Would need new model run given updated information about levees/berms.
 - Wetland areas needs to be updated.



Questions/Discussion regarding Corridor Context Presentation:

- If current map does not include berms/levees regarding sea level rise inundation, isn't map inaccurate?
 - Map is accurate reflection of a worst-case scenario, which assumes no berms/levees.
 - Is entirely possible that there could be berm/levee maintenance that keeps the bay out.
- Do you mean "levees" when you say "berms"?
 - Thought these were different, but realize terms are interchangeable.
 - Army Corps recognizes farmers' berms as "levees."
- What is the assumption of sea level rise?
 - Assumes 1 meter sea level rise and no berms.
- Can you put those assumptions on the map because maps are being used by insurance companies to devalue lands.
 - Yes, in print form we can put a box that lays out some of these concerns.
- Wasn't there was an earlier effort to identify all levees?
 - The Sonoma Ecology Center is currently working to find this data. Department of Water Resources (DWR) did this effort, but we don't know where they are in the process yet.
 - At our Mare Island meeting, US Geological Survey said they had someone mapping berms and levee elevations as well.
 - Currently, marshes and mudflats are providing an erosion control, and when bay rises, may lose buffer to wave actions.
 - Private landowners have been helping to keep SR 37, but can't expect private partners to pay with increasing costs and sea level rise.
- Private levee failed and Army Corps fixed once, but not again. Land flooded and went back to the state because inundated over a year.
- Areas north of San Pablo Bay were called "camps" because those who farmed them lived there. Skaggs Island was Camp 6, taken back due to loan default. Was then taken by eminent domain.
- If allow landowners to maintain levee, can ride out sea level rise. But currently have multiple agencies that are not coordinated to finish keeping the levees maintained. And why aren't these projects coordinated to better accommodate wildlife instead of being piecemeal?
- High tide risks depend on multiplier effects, so simply having a king tide is not a concern; it depends on contextual conditions.
- At last meeting there was talk about catastrophic failure, but this is unlikely. It is more likely that a private levee will fail.

UCD Online Survey

Fraser discussed the UC Davis on-line survey, which was sent both to the stakeholder group as well as to 20,000 random residents in the Novato/Vallejo region (via postcards with link to survey).

Survey is available at <http://tinyurl.com/894pel3>

Survey results are still pending, and compiled results will be part of the TRB report.



Questions/Discussion regarding Survey:

- How can we include commuter input?
 - Could do roadside survey when traffic is backed up.
- Did the survey include businesses (a couple are huge employers in the region)?
 - Survey was not directed but was random. It could be directed toward a specific large business as a future effort, but additional surveying is not part of this budget.
 - If don't have funding to sponsor additional input, then data is not useful because is too random.
- Could put signage along SR 37 to encourage survey responses and can also put a link on the wildlife refuge website.
- If sample group is self-selecting, then the result lacks statistical value. But when it is published, even with this disclaimer, people assume it is a fact.

Plenary Discussion after Small Groups met – How Do We Plan Better?:

The discussion opened with reminder that there is both a driving CD and a podcast about the wetlands along SR 37. It was developed by the San Francisco Bay Joint Venture (contact is Beth Huning) and is available at www.yourwetlands.org

- Need a model that assigns costs to the different elements (environment, transp, etc) to get a value regarding opening/closing the facility. You would have to make assumptions but would allow better understanding of choices.
- Make use of existing transit facilities such as rail/bus. Possibly could re-establish existing rail links.
- Bring the jobs to where there is affordable housing, or build affordable housing where there are jobs.
- Need to reach out better to bring in new faces.
 - Have evening meetings, for example.
 - Have some kind of media blitz to reach out better.
 - Develop a set of questions for participants such as “do you want to see this go back to a toll road?”
 - Go to other meetings, for example, at the Flyway Festival this weekend.
 - Need a more robust survey for the users of the highway.
 - Possible use of Facebook or social media like Twitter on Caltrans signs?
- Need to be careful to avoid paralysis by analysis. There is no perfect answer, and if there are too many stakeholders, harder to gain consensus.
- There are lots of transit options that get you from point A to point B, but need to incorporate choices into the design aspect. And need to consider environmental and economic impacts when considering them.
- We need to know more about whom the corridor serves, why and when people use it, and need to know this before we assume public transportation is the right option.
 - Need more data about goods movement.
- Do not underestimate power of people's choices about where we live, work and commute. Often there is a value for users to have a 2-lane highway.
- Stakeholder process has been overall a good thing to allow for a more collaborative conversation.



- Construction options should include evaluation of private sector funding and public/private participation (toll road).
 - Historically, SR 37 was a toll road.
- We need better identification of stakeholders early on, mainly business, ag and driving communities. Should approach from a regional perspective with cities, counties in the region.
- Need a diversity of methods to reach stakeholders, and this may not be a survey, but could be tabling at events, etc.
- Need to widen highway to accommodate emergency access and better support safety.
- Communication:
 - Do not use the survey response.
 - Consider license plate survey using video camera to photo drivers and get mailing info from DMV. Then could ask questions like what would you be willing to pay in tolls, etc.
- Sea level rise (SLR) should not be the focal point for doing something on SR 37. It is too long-term and there are near-term issues that need to be addressed. SLR can be consideration, but not focus, because we need fixes today within the context of longer-term issues. Also SLR as focus can be a lightning rod for conflict.
- Need to be aware that by not doing something, can be missing important opportunities. Currently doing tidal marsh restoration, but would not be doing this if railroad and highway are co-located. So might be wasting money now on inefficient projects if we wait too long to take action.
- Need to consider how to resolve conflicts when different users want different actions for SR 37.
- Need data on growth inducing impacts of widening the roadway.
- Funding: We need more data on co-benefits, because it is going to be hard to fund unless we can identify all the additional benefits (including environmental).
- Economics become the driver on any issue, so need to incorporate data on this.
- Any project/scenario will need many permits, because there will be impacts regardless.

Plenary Discussion on Scenario Matrix:

- SR 37 needs to stay in place, but parts need to be widened.
- Be more realistic with the matrix. Drop out the unrealistic ones and focus on combination of elevated causeway in some areas and building up the road in other areas.
 - Look for public/private partnerships to fund this.
- The matrix is not a CEQA process, so do not have to limit options or include only viable ones. This is a broader collection of possible choices.
- Where is the tunnel proposed?
 - Proposed for the shortest distance between points under the Bay.
 - Construction options can vary for the tunnel, and there will be impacts from staging areas.
- Limit the causeway option to places that were tidally influenced before.
- What does TRB do with this info? Can they help us with info about other efforts nationwide?
 - California is leading others, so this effort informs TRB, but there is not data coming back.
 - Information from this study will contribute to reauthorizations of transportation acts, and assist the feds with future conditions of funding for future projects.



- West Virginia is using a different approach.
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- Community impacts trend east-west, while wildlife impacts trend north-south. Agriculture also trends north south.
- Removing the highway should be off the matrix. This is a deal-killer for bringing in additional stakeholders.
- Add a column for economic impacts (can include eco-tourism).
- We need other transit options and HOV lanes if there is widening, and we need to include freight as a component.
- Capacity issues need to address and link different modes to environmental outcomes – show the cost/benefits, and recognize what needs are being met by the existing footprint.
- What is the timeline for action?
 - Realistically, 15-25 years. A project study report (which takes 18 mos) would be needed initially. Would also need to build political support.
 - Projects first need to be included in Regional Transportation Plans, which are proposed by the regional transportation agencies.
 - Timeline could be adjusted if there is an immediate risk that needs to be addressed.
 - The private funding option discussed at the last meeting referred to a project on the east coast, which was a bridge. Perhaps bridge is something that can be built sooner than other kinds of projects.

Next Steps:

- Caltrans will continue with this effort after the study is completed.
 - Transition should be smooth since Caltrans has been a partner throughout this study.
- Next stakeholder meeting will be at same location (Infineon Raceway) and be in early/mid April.

Meeting Attendees are listed on next page



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Meeting Attendees		
Joseph	Aguilar	Caltrans
Erik	Alm	Caltrans
Hank	Barner	Black Point Improvement Club
Tom	Bartee	Michael Allen, Assemblymember, 7th District
John	Bly	E. C.A.
Al	Brayton	Paradise Vineyard
Robert	Bregoff	Caltrans
Don	Brubaker	USFWS Refuges
Mary	Campbell	UC Davis
Steve	Carroll	Ducks Unlimited
Dan	Cherrier	Transportation Authority of Marin
Caitlin	Cornwall	Sonoma Ecology Center
Wendy	Eliot	Sonoma Land Trust
Nicolas	Endrawos	Caltrans
Maureen	Gaffney	ABAG
Tom	Gandesbery	Coastal Conservancy
Jim	Haire	NBAA
Susan	Haydon	Southern Sonoma County RCD
Dave	Jones	CHP
Bernhard	Krevet	Friends of the Napa River
Andrea	Krout	Sonoma County
Robin	Leong	Napa Sonoma Audubon Society
Mary	McEachron	Buck Foundation
Linda	Meckel	SMART
Abby	Monroe	UC Davis
Chuck	Morton	Caltrans District 4
Cynthia	Murray	North Bay Leadership Council
Rolf	Ohlemutz	City of Vallejo Sanitation District
Steve	Page	Infineon Raceway
Barbara	Salzman	Marin Audubon
Tito	Sasaki	North Bay Agricultural Alliance
Leigh	Sharp	Napa County RCD
Fraser	Shilling	UC Davis
Jere	Starks	Infineon Raceway
Joseph	Terry	USFWS
Brendan	Thompson	San Francisco Estuary Project/Water Board
J.T.	Wick	Port Sonoma
Laurie	Williams	Marin County Public Works
Norm	Yenni	Landowner