

LARA WEISIGER

From: Lucy Gigli <lucy@bikewalkalameda.org>
Sent: Thursday, October 13, 2016 9:51 AM
To: City Manager; Tony Daysog; Frank Matarrese; LARA WEISIGER; Jim Oddie; Trish Spencer; Marilyn Ezzy Ashcraft
Cc: Rochelle Wheeler; Jennifer Ott
Subject: City council agenda item 5-F draft project list for Alameda CTC

Dear Council members,

We have reviewed the draft project list recommendations and understand that staff does not feel an estuary crossing bridge study is appropriate at this time. However, we do feel that the next step is to pick up where the 2009 Estuary Crossing feasibility study left off.

We appreciate the City of Alameda's attention on Alameda's top priority bike issue — improving bicycle and pedestrian access between Alameda's west end and Oakland, and especially its renewed interest in making headway with what the 2009 Feasibility recommended as the preferred long-term alternative: the bicycle and pedestrian bridge.

Despite the complexity of the bridge, it was listed over other alternatives because it would best address the problem, and most impactfully. It would get thousands of people biking or walking across the estuary daily; it would transform travel patterns in and around Alameda and Oakland/

While the study was complete in identifying alternatives, it also identified constraints that would need to be addressed to make a bridge feasible. One of the key constraints was the horizontal clearance needed for Coast Guard cutters. This constraint is pivotal — if addressed, it would mitigate the other constraints. For example, a drawbridge might become possible, which would completely eliminate the vertical clearance constraint. Cost would likely come down. Opening and closing might be quicker, easing potential commute hour complications.

This horizontal clearance constraint is essentially what makes the bridge infeasible. The study noted, however, that this constraint was not set in stone, that further investigation was needed — namely, that *if the channel were too shallow to navigate, the Coast Guard would consider reducing the clearance (page 69)*.

To answer this question among others, the City and other regional stakeholders should engage the Coast Guard in a productive conversation that moves us forward.

To that end, we ask council to direct City staff to create a clear resolution of support for the bicycle and pedestrian bridge project that demonstrates proactive commitment to its success. Language should include the following near-term specific actions:

1. This being a regional issue that is especially important to Alameda, the city should actively seek a partnership with federal, state, county, and local partners to effectively move this important project along — connect with these stakeholders and tell them of our plans, and invite them to collaborate in this project as key partners; establish regular lines of communication and keep moving ahead
2. Write to Caltrans, noting that Caltrans has goals to triple bike trips and double pedestrian trips by 2020, and:

- let them know that while City of Alameda didn't take the lead on the proposed study in the CIP, they are very interested in the project, and ask that Caltrans take the lead on it, perhaps seek funding where it can (ATP has been suggested, and the City might offer some funding through the Broadway Jackson project)
- invite Caltrans to join the partnership on this transformational long-term project, and to sit at the table when bridge constraints are discussed with the Coast Guard, as they will have more leverage than local jurisdictions, and this may be critical to negotiating workable constraints

3. As already proposed by staff, hire a maritime engineer to get more information. We propose they continue where the 2009 Feasibility Study left off, and answer pivotal questions left outstanding in the study, like channel depths and other real world conditions in the estuary, which in turn might impact minimum horizontal clearances

4. When (and only when) we have this information, as well as a coalition of federal, state, county, and local partners in place, engage the Coast Guard to revisit constraints and also become a true partner in working towards a bridge; anticipate multiple discussions, as there will likely be considerations that we aren't yet aware of.

We are very excited about the progress we've already made and look forward to more of it!

L. Gigli (pronounced "jeel-yee")
President, Bike Walk Alameda
<http://www.bikewalkalameda.org>
510-595-4690

[Bridge the Gap!](#)

Sign the petition to build a bicycle and pedestrian bridge connecting West Alameda and Oakland.

Preserving the Planet for Future Generations by Creating a safe and enjoyable place to walk and bike.

Shoreline Cycletrack, Cross Alameda Trail, better ferry access.