

Dear Ms. Polanco:

Along with many local residents, I have great affection for the Willow Glen train trestle now under consideration for demolition. My property runs down to the Los Gatos Creek to within 30 feet of the trestle. For fifty years, I have walked my dogs under its pilings, enjoyed looking at it from my yard, listened with pleasure to the toots and whistles of the trains as they announced their arrival and departure from nearby canneries. The trestle beautiful, unique and historic. What a loss for our community if it were to be replaced by yet another generic steel structure that looks like the other five bridges that already span the Los Gatos Creek. Yes, they are sturdy, and they provide an efficient way to cross the creek, but there is nothing unusual about them. People love trains and anything to do with trains. There are so many things that could be done to make the trestle a family destination. I guarantee you, no parents will take their children on outings to stand in awe of a pre-fab steel bridge!

The arguments used to justify destroying the trestle don't hold water.

The city says that a replacement bridge has already been purchased. True, but that was done prematurely without input from the community. What's more, the replacement bridge will not languish in a warehouse – there are plenty of places on other creeks that need to be spanned.

Critics say that the trestle is vulnerable to fire, yet they don't mention the measures that have been designed into its restoration to protect it from fire. Indeed, the trestle has resisted fire numerous times with nothing more than cosmetic damage.

Another argument claims that the pillars catch debris which could cause blockage and erosion. I walked the trestle this morning. Despite this season's torrential rain, high water, downed trees and collected debris, the trestle is standing as firm as ever.

The city claims that creosote contamination from the pillars destroys salmon habitat. The pillars have been there for nearly a century, and guess what? Ever since the South Bay Clean Creeks Coalition has taken responsibility for cleaning up the pollution caused by homeless encampments, the salmon are thriving. After a clean-up last year, I had the thrill of seeing one in the act of spawning!

Lastly, the city denies the historic justification for preserving the trestle. Not historic! It has been a Willow Glen landmark for 94 years. Nearly a century ago, San Franciscans would travel to their San Jose cottages to spend time picnicking and fishing in its shadow while trains rumbled overhead hauling fruit back and forth from local canneries. It played a vital role in the agrarian economy of the region. As more and more historic structures are razed to be replaced by generic mega-structures, we need a reminder of that long ago era. Wouldn't it be a shame if some day a steel bridge bears a plaque describing the history of the trestle that once spanned the Willow Glen Creek?

Sincerely, Kathy Pimentel