Dear Mayor Reed and San José Councilmembers,

We are looking forward to attending the August 13th Council meeting at which you will be able to pull item 2.3(a), the minutes from the May 15th Rules Committee, from the Consent Calendar for possible discussion. This would provide an opportunity for you on the Council to reopen the discussion on the direction recently given to the Department of Parks, Recreation and Neighborhood Services (PRNS) and the Department of Public Works regarding the application of a $1.88 Million “Proposition 40” Grant from the State and the fate of the iconic 92-year-old wooden train trestle in Willow Glen.

The trestle has received a considerable amount of attention since the Council vote of March 26th:

\* The public has been [introduced to this “hidden gem”](http://www.wgtrestle.org) through public meetings by PRNS staff, site tours, and three editorials in the San José Mercury News ([5/8/13](http://www.mercurynews.com/opinion/ci_23190688/historic-trestle-san-jose-is-railroading-plan-tear), [5/10/13](http://www.mercurynews.com/opinion/ci_23209059/mercury-news-editorial-willow-glen-trestle-deserves-another), and [7/16/13](http://www.mercurynews.com/opinion/ci_23671895/mercury-news-editorial-willow-glen-trestle-replacement-needs)).

\* The PRNS staff has presented, at neighborhood meetings, various [alternative designs](http://ca-sanjose.civicplus.com/DocumentCenter/View/18935) for a replacement bridge. (And, when the audience was then polled on their preference, “none of the above” won handily.)

\* Numerous groups and organizations – [historic preservation](http://www.wgtrestle.org/VPA_support.docx), [environmental](http://us4.forward-to-friend.com/forward/show?u=e461bef4dd8f81538c816552b&id=02a8bdee29), [train enthusiasts](http://www.wgtrestle.org/Diridon&Ginsborg_letter-to-council_trestle.pdf), the local [North Willow Glen Neighborhood Association](http://www.wgtrestle.org/RevisittheTrestleproject.pdf), and over a [hundred individuals](http://www.wgtrestle.org/DearElectedOfficials.htm) in the neighborhood – have all become aware of the trestle and have endorsed its preservation.

The premise that the trestle can be removed and replaced – in a sensitive riparian habitat – in just a three month period starting next June seems very problematic. (There likely is not enough time to use this grant for trestle restoration, either – it will have to await future funding.) We’ve talked to Amy Young, environmental staff member at the Calif. Dept. of Water Resources, and she estimates that, at the very quickest, it might take 6 months to prepare the required environmental studies and evaluations, and then another 6 months to get the required Streambed Modification Permit from the Calif. Dept. of Fish and Wildlife, if there are no delays. We know for sure several groups do intend to monitor the City’s environmental application process carefully, so there could well be delays.

As you know, the city risks losing a $1.88 Million Prop. 40 grant from the State if the project is delayed. We’ve checked with State Senator Jim Beall (who is quite supportive of preserving the trestle), and we have learned that, while the overall deadline can not be extended (we tried!), the grant money can be directed to some other project.

On Tuesday, you could agendize a discussion to direct PRNS and Public Works staff to cease their current work on the trestle and instead to look for possible alternative uses for the grant money, to look for places to further the Mayor’s Green Vision with benefits to residents for years to come.  As an example, one possible candidate is the [missing bridge](http://www.wgtrestle.org/Confluence_Pt.pdf) over the Guadalupe River at Confluence Point, which (per the Master Plan) would connect the Los Gatos Creek Trail to the Guadalupe River Trail, and would also connect the SAP Arena (the “Shark Tank”) over to the Old River Street “Little Italy” entertainment district. (We’ve checked with various interested parties and are finding great interest and support. About the only concern is that this would take a project from D6 and move it to D3, to which we’d answer that this is all State Money and intended for all trail users in the city – and besides, the grant was originally intended for use in D7!)

We in the community are working to help identify alternative funding sources for the trestle restoration, both from public and private sources. (Restoration and maintenance is less costly than replacement, and the San José Parks Foundation has already set up a [trust fund](http://www.sanjoseparks.org/donate_-_3_easy_ways/donate_directly_to_programs__services)!) However, we will not be able to help secure funding if the trestle is to be demolished.

Please, this Tuesday, reopen the subject and then agendize a discussion so that PRNS and Public Works can be directed to cease the trestle demolition and to instead identify other more suitable candidates for the Prop. 40 grant funding.

Save the trestle, save our local history, save the streamside habitat, save the grant, and save the taxpayers’ money.

And please let us know how we can help!

We look forward to attending the Council meeting this Tuesday!

Dr. Larry Ames

Friends of the Willow Glen Trestle

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Aug. 8, 2013

cc: PRNS: Dir. Julie Edmonds-Mares, Matt Cano, Yves Zsutty, and Suzanne Wolf

Dept. of Public Works: Jan Palajac

Committee for Green Foothills: Alice Kaufman

California Trolley and Rail Corp: Dir. Rod Diridon Sr., David Ginsborg

San José Parks Foundation: Exec. Dir. Jim Reber

San José Parks Commission: Bob Levy, chair

North Willow Glen Neighborhood Association: Mary Pizzo

SCVWD: Dir. Barbara Keegan, Sue Tippets, Sarah Young

Guadalupe River Conservancy: Exec. Dir. Leslee Hamilton

Calif. Dept. of Water Resources: Amy Young

Open Space Authority: Dorsey Moore, Mike Potter

Santa Clara County Board of Supervisors

State Senator Jim Beall; aide Frances Herbert

US Congressmember Zoe Lofgren, c/o Ali Ramezanzadeh

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