

Observations and comments on Trestle Replacement presentation by Yves Zsutty, July 17, 2013
Also present: Matt Cano, PRNS (Parks, Recreation & Neighborhood Services) Dept. Director.
Notes by L. Ames, 7/20/13. [With my personal commentary denoted by square brackets.]

Presentation was hosted by Willow Glen Neighborhood Association.
Ground rules were that questions could only be asked about the design choices presented.
Members of public objected, and other comments were given as well.

>> Note: while a city representative took some notes, this was not an official “public presentation” where all comments are noted for the official record.
Presentation was at Willow Glen (Sr.) Center, 2175 Lincoln Ave (at Curtner).
Event lasted an hour and a half (6:30 – 8 PM), and was attended by ~five-six dozen members of the public (plus Yves, Matt Cano and an assistant, and most of the WGNA Board.) [Thank you, all, for attending!]

The presentation itself was an exact rerun of the SOT talk last week (see [notes and observations](#)).
Yves said he had heard the comments from then and will incorporate them into upcoming presentation for the 3rd of three official public meetings on the Three Creeks Trail, to take place Wednesday July 24th, 6:30, also at the WG Center.

Yves stated that City Council directed Parks Recreation and Neighborhood Services (PRNS) to remove the existing historic train trestle and to replace it with a steel bridge, and so they are working [quickly!] on plans to do so. In order not to lose a grant, the trestle destruction and replacement bridge construction has to take place during the period June – Oct 2014.

This time, it was mentioned that an outside architect / consultant had made the [quick-and-simple hand-drawn] sketches (see [>link<](#)).

As before, Yves showed the bridge that’s been selected:

- * a basic steel structure, 220 feet long in a single span, 12 feet wide, with steel structure along the side: basically identical to the bridge over the Los Gatos Creek at Blackford Elementary (near Leigh).
- * Anything fancier was too expensive for our budget and we get only the base model.
- * Metal surface will be “weathered” (rusted) steel (a “patina”), decking will be concrete.
- * Bridge will be right down the middle of the right-of-way, with “gateway areas” at either end, and a rather awkward turn to connect to the planned extension of the Los Gatos Creek Trail at the northern end. (“don’t want to change the pattern of shading” [!])
- * Given the geometry of the truss structure, there is no possibility for a mid-stream for a viewing platform.
- * Stream is viewable only from the gateways at top-of-bank: little room to stop in the path on the bridge itself.

As before, Yves then presented the three alternative designs:

The audience generally was not at all impressed.

- * These aren't three choices, just three variants of the same one choice
- * Why can't we keep the trestle
- * We want something unique and representative of Willow Glen
- * Railroads were key in the forming of Willow Glen – part of its history and character
- * Questions were raised about costs. When told that topic was off-limits, crowd grew testy and said that this was public meeting and the public had a right to know. City staff then discussed grant funding, including SCVWD grant for bridge. [actually, the grant was to >restore< the existing trestle, but the grant didn't have enough "strings attached" and the city has "repurposed" it to demolish trestle instead.]
- * Question about SJ's "Green Vision", and how tearing down the trestle and hauling the wood to a landfill and then shipping in a steel bridge would minimize the carbon footprint. Answer: new bridge would provide bike path connection. [as if a restored trestle bridge wouldn't?]

There were a few supporters of the replacement bridge present.

- * ~Quote: Creosote is so dangerous that Washington state is actively removing all treated wood. [a subsequent data search reveals the full story: state is removing any treated driftwood: if it gets bounced around, the creosote can flake off; existing trestles are left untouched.]
- * ~Quote: the iconic arched gateway on the Lincoln Ave. bridge is ugly and needs maintenance. [and the point being is, what? arched bridges are bad? SJ doesn't deserve any icons?]

Overall, audience was informed and involved, and unimpressed with any of the trestle-replacement alternatives.

Yves promises that he's heard the comments, and that the charts next Wednesday will reflect changes.

End of meeting. Some of the comments were recorded by the City, some others weren't. Yves thanks the audience for participating.

Thank you, Richard and WGNA, for hosting this event.

Thank you, all, for attending. Come to the next meeting, the 3rd public workshop for the 3 Creeks Trail July 24th, and invite your friends!

Follow us on Facebook ("Friends of WG Trestle") and on the web (www.WGTrestle.org).

~Larry Ames

Friends of the WG Trestle

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