

Willow Glen Trestle

a presentation for
Santa Clara County
Supervisor Susan Ellenberg
District 4



by Larry Ames, April Halberstadt, & Ed Saum, June 26, 2019

Agenda

- Introductions & background
- Trails & connections
- Trestle history
- Political & Legal history
- Current Status & Plans forward

Introductions & Background

- Larry Ames
 - Appointed to County's Los Gatos Creek Streamside Park Cmte, 1984;
Co. Parks & Rec. Cmsn 1995;
Co.'s Nat'l Heritage Area Taskforce, 2016
 - led the County & SCVWD-cosponsored Urban Stream Restoration Proj., 1993
 - SCVWD Environmental Advisory Cmte, 2002
 - served 20 yrs on N'hood Assoc. board (WGNA),
+ numerous boards, cmtes, and taskforces
 - elected to SJ's N'hoods Cmsn, 2009;
currently on SJ Parks & Rec. Cmsn.
- April Halberstadt
 - County Historical Heritage Cmsn
 - Co.'s Nat'l Heritage Area Taskforce, 2016;
now chairing the County's follow-up cmte.
- Edward Saum
 - Chair, SJ Historic Landmarks Cmsn

Trails can provide easy access to Diridon Station

Diridon Station

Google's area

to Alviso

Downtown San Jose

WG Trestle

3 miles to Diridon

Three Creeks Trail

(newly opened trail)

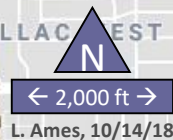
Possible alignment of future trail
LGC Urban Stream Restor'n Proj.

future
Guadalupe River Trail

to Almaden

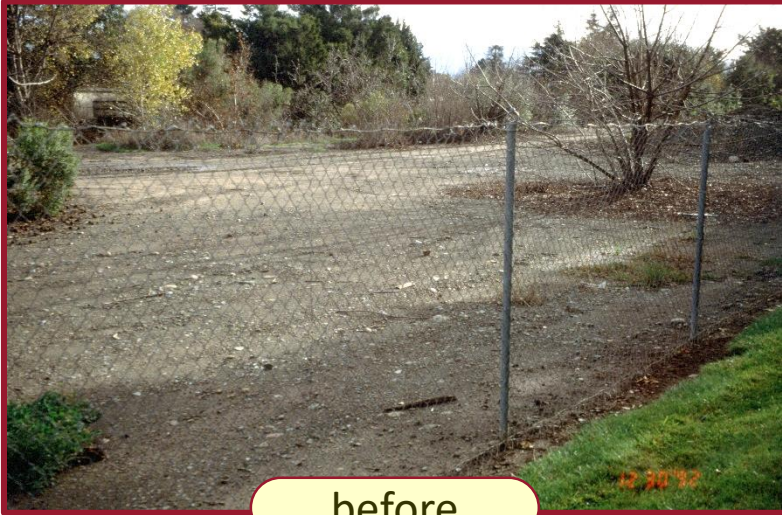
to Campbell & Los Gatos

Existing trail



Los Gatos Creek Urban Stream Restoration Project

a community-led, County
co-sponsored project, 1993-96



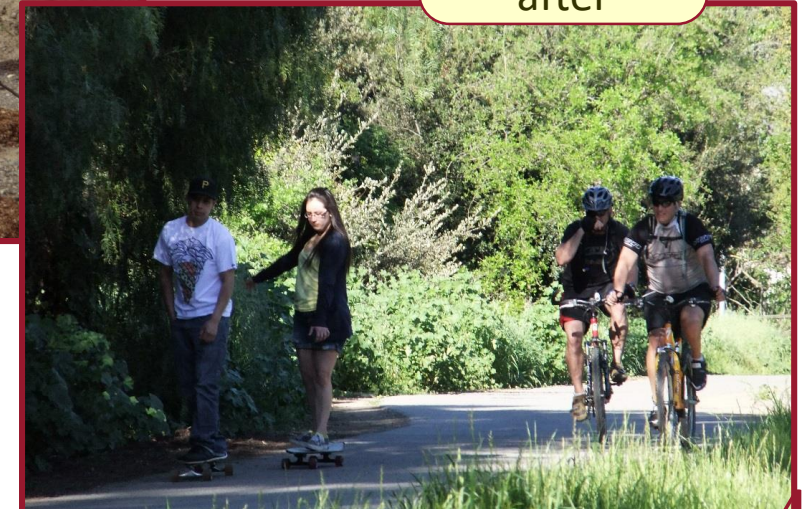
before



during



after



<http://wgbackfence.net/LGCUSRP.pdf>

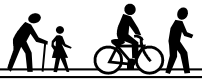
Community helped the City win funding

The Three-Creeks Trail

an update for
Jim Beall

L. Ames, March 15, 2012

Save Our Trails!



Promoting trails in Santa Clara County for the benefit and enjoyment of all

Taisia McMahon, President
Bill Rankin, Vice President
Bruce Tichinin, Counsel

from our presentation to
State Senator Jim Beall.

We also briefed
(and helped the city get funding from):
Santa Clara Co. Parks & Rec.,
Open Space Authority, and the SCVWD.

a “Historic Trail”

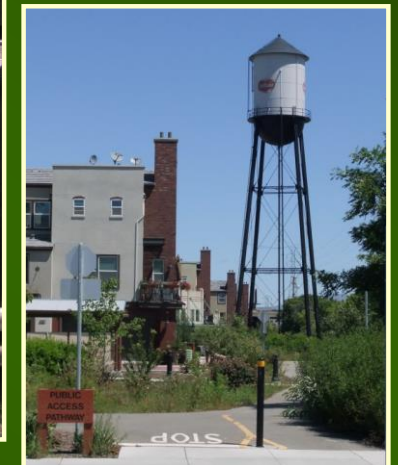
Connects the History Park...



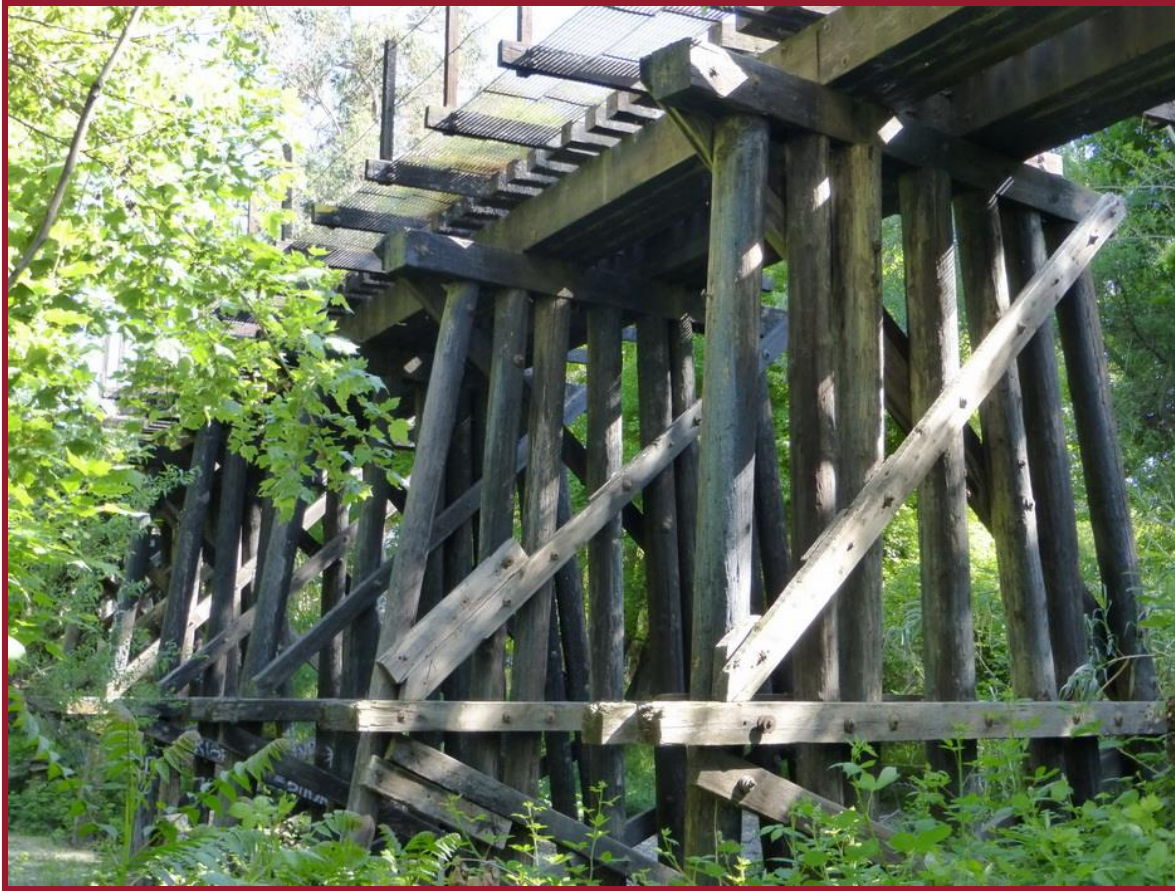
KELLEY PARK

... at Kelley Park ...

... by means of a historic train trestle ...



... to the historic cannery district in WG.



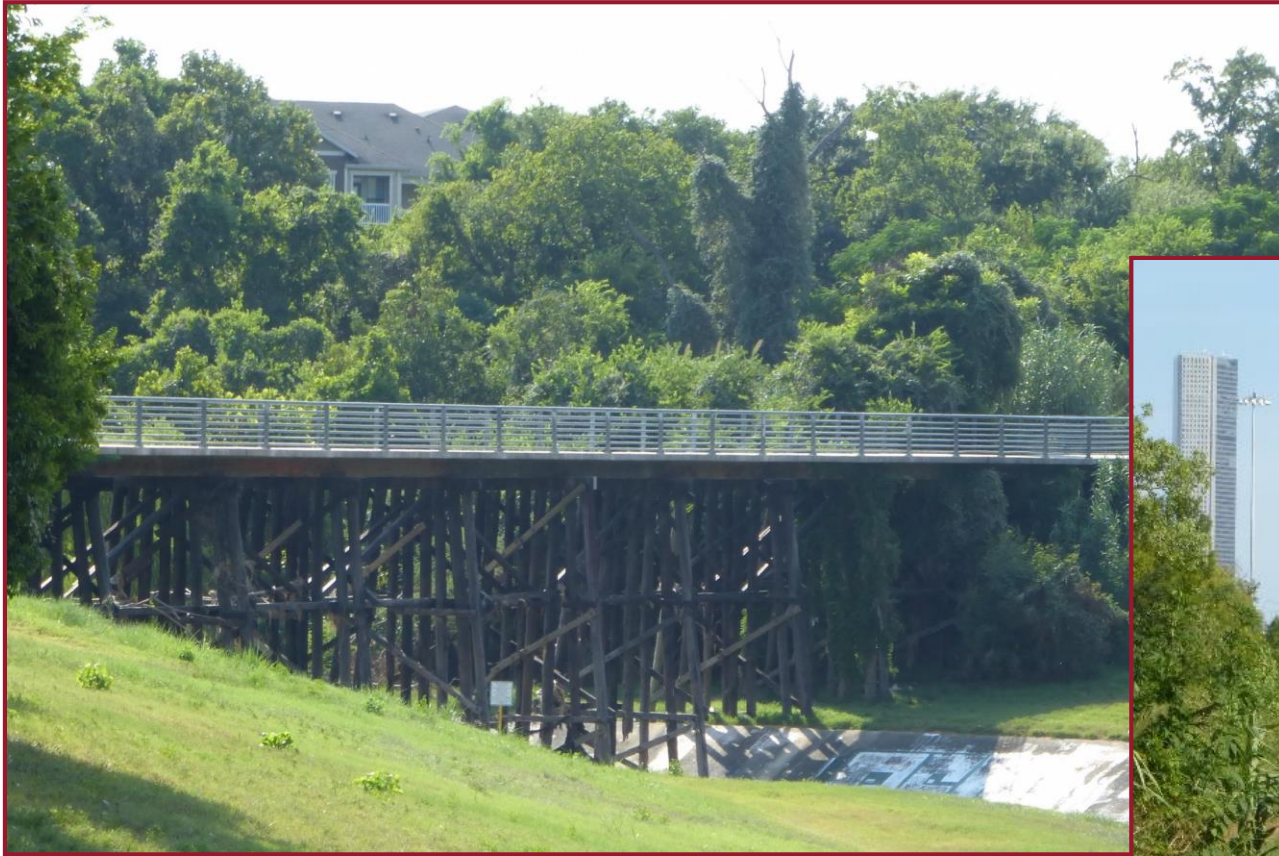
The Question: Restore or Replace?

a restored trestle could
become a place-making
and iconic attraction

the replacement
bridge would look
like many others in SJ



Studied Restoring w/ Concrete Slabs & Metal Railing



similar to this trestle on the “Heights Hike & Bike Trail”
across the White Oak Bayou in Houston, TX

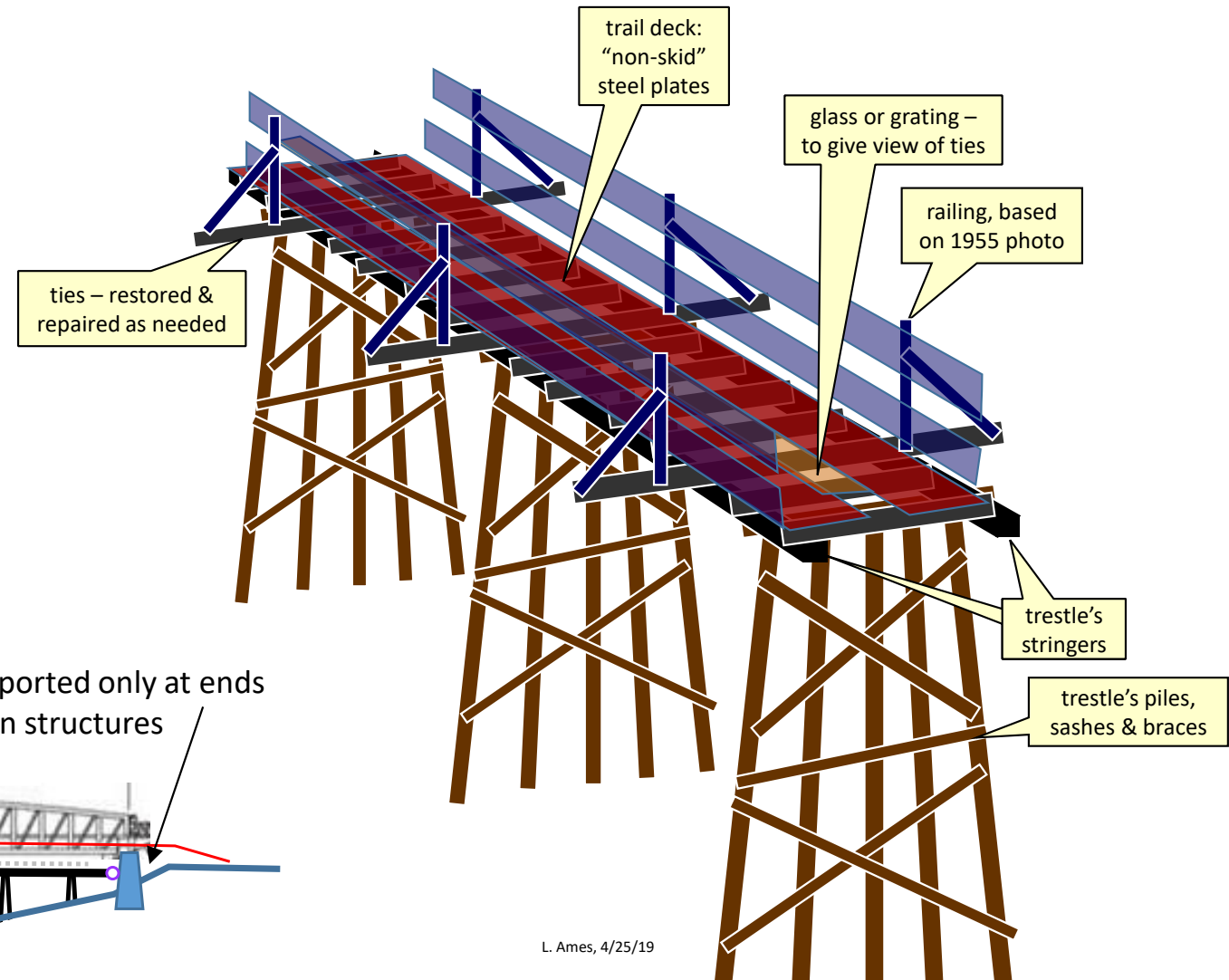
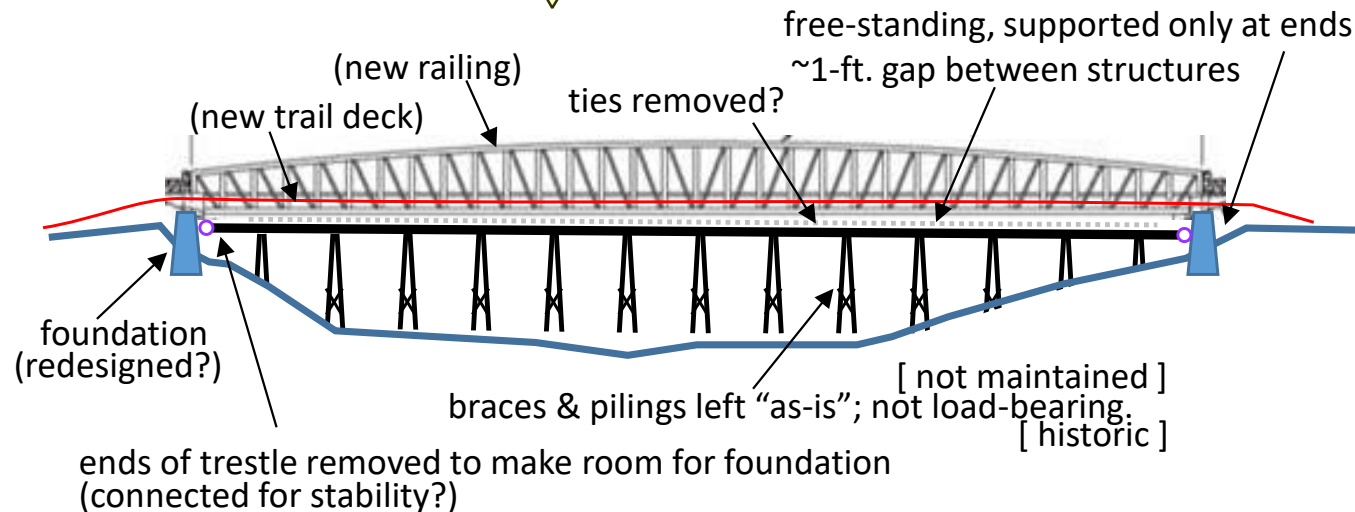


Consider Alternatives?

more realistic
restoration?

~or~

hybrid compromise?



L. Ames, 4/25/19

[All work is done outside of the creek channel → can work in the fall & winter.]

from the
city's EIR

during the
Feb '17 flood

	Trestle "Retrofit"	Prefab Steel Bridge "Project"
Construction cost	\$959,000	\$1,637,000
Est. Maintenance	\$4,000 / year	not budgeted
Est. Inspection	\$2,000 / year	\$500 / year
Construction time	5 months	7 months
Estimated Life	30 – 50 years (more if well-maintained?)	75 years (w/o maintenance?)
Flooding	not a problem	not a problem
Creosote	not a problem if left alone	a concern if disturbed
Fire	not a problem: fire-retardant coating; sprinklers, alarms and maintenance	no precautions are provided, and steel loses strength at brushfire temperatures
History	Listed on the State Register by the California State Historical Resources Commission	"While this does not salvage the trestle, aesthetics could be made pleasing. Staining the concrete deck to resemble the old track could be done. Also, railroad themed signs could be incorporated at the approaches."



Salmon "redd" (egg nests)
in the Los Gatos Creek
by the Willow Glen Trestle

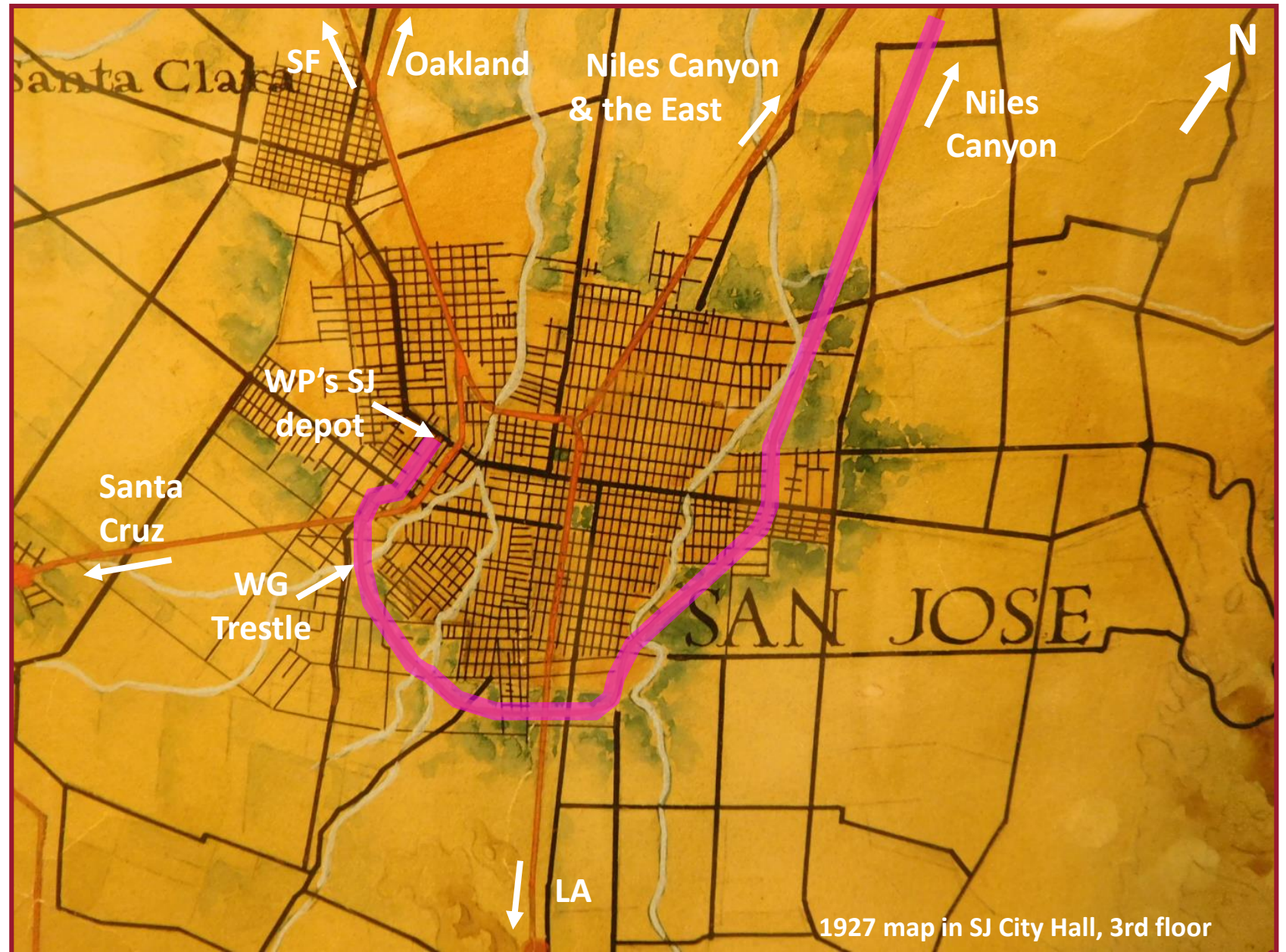
photo by Steve Holmes
December 18, 2017

Civic, Legal, & Historic Timeline



History of Trains in SJ

- 1864: First train, SJ – SF
- Early 1900's: well-connected with Southern Pacific tracks
- SP has a Monopoly
- ▶ Agricultural interests urge T.S.Montgomery to bring Western Pacific to San José
- ▶ 1922: WP's WG Trestle connects world to SJ, breaks SP's monopoly.



Historic Status:

- May 2015: SJ Hist Landm'rks Cmsn recommends listing
 - City Council votes to override HLC's recommendation.
- State Historical Resources Commission (SHRC) evaluated the Willow Glen Trestle at three hearings:
 - Apr. 2016: approved for National Register
 - City complained; Feds returned the application
 - May 2017: approved for State Register
 - City formally requested a "do-over"
 - Oct. 2017: Cmsn denied City's request for a "redetermination" and reaffirmed historic status
- City sued the State (Jan. 2018) saying SHRC didn't properly handle redetermination
 - May 2019: Court asks SHRC to rephrase their redetermination findings
 - SHRC reaffirms trestle's historic status for 4th time
 - June 2019: Court accepted SHRC's findings, ruled against the City and agreed the trestle is historic.



Legal Status:

- Feb 2014: Friends of WG Trestle sue City under CEQA for it to do an EIR
 - July 2014: Superior Court agrees, orders City to do EIR
- Oct. 2014: City appeals
 - Aug. 2016: Appellate Court cites “should” vs “shall” in CEQA law, says to reconsider case
 - Oct. 2016: State Supreme Court declines to hear case, refers case back to Superior Court
- Feb. 2017: Superior Court rehears case
 - Oct. 2017: since trestle was not listed as historic in 2014, City has the discretion to decide. City says “not historic” and uses MND to okay demolition. But the required Dept. Fish & Wildlife “Streambed Alteration” permit has expired and can’t be renewed.
- Mar. 2018: City applies for a new DFW permit
 - New CEQA process? Trestle is now officially listed as historic: can DFW still grant permit?
 - Oct. 2018: DFW grants permit; Friends of WG Trestle file suit & gets TRO.
 - **June 27, 2019:** Superior Court to hear the case to determine whether historic status affects granting of demolition permit.

Current Status and Path Forward?

- Court will rule; City or we likely will appeal: can it be demolished?
 - Will the City ever accept the trestle, or will it sit there and rot?
- County has a Historic Grant Program
 - Should WGT Conservancy apply for grants for engineering study of alternatives, and to fund incremental cost of restoration plan?
 - Requires City approval.
 - Should WGT Conservancy apply for grants to host a major “event”?
 - No City approval required
 - Raise public’s awareness of trestle
 - Show the City trestle is able to bring in tourist dollars: will this change minds?
- County helped pay for trestle in the first place:
if the City doesn’t want it, can the County take it back?
 - Topic brought to HLUET, May 2015. Part of LGCT — a Co. “regional trail”?

Update 6/24/19...



THREE CREEKS TRAIL PEDESTRIAN BRIDGE PROJECT

CONSTRUCTION ACTIVITY

BEGINS

Monday, June 24th, 2019



PROJECT FEATURES:

- 210' Clear-Span Pedestrian Bridge
- Interpretive Features
- Viewing Platform
- Creek Bank Restoration

SCHEDULE:

- June 2019 – November 2019

Demolition of the trestle is subject to court order to proceed.

For more information, please email us at Yoshifumi.Yano@sanjoseca.gov



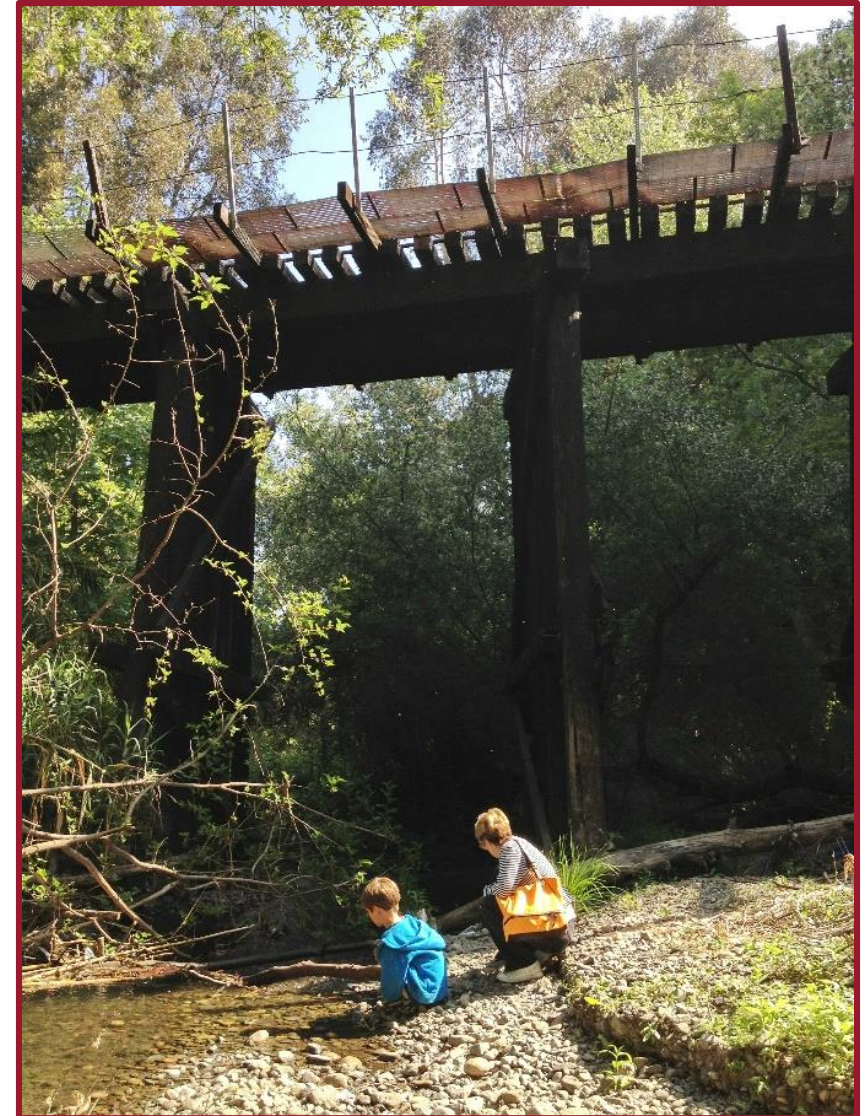
The City is busy at preparatory work: clearing debris, creating a roadway, and dewatering the creek. Management says they won't touch the trestle until they get the court's go-ahead.

Some of this work is good (removing the fallen trees from the 2017 flood); some seems like "trash talk" to distract us from Thursday's court case; and some appears intended to influence the judge ("look, your honor: we've already spent this much money getting ready — we can't stop now!")

There likely will be court delays, and the equipment will once again need to be removed: it is a waste of taxpayers' money!

“[The Willow Glen Trestle] has a visual quality. It is not something that would be built today, ... technology has evolved and it would be entirely different. However, it has an aesthetical uniqueness to the area, ...[and] having trails going through is actually quite appealing: instead of going through concrete or steel that has very little thing to do with the touch of the human person, this is something that represents something of the time when it was done – it represents that particular period, [that particular area] there.”

-- Commissioner Alberto Bertoli, State Hist. Resources Cmsn



Thank you!



WG Trestle in 1955