Honorable Mayor Sam Liccardo and

Members of the Council, City of San José

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sent via email on <date>:

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re: the Three Creeks Trail Pedestrian Bridge Project, File No. PP13-085

Dear Mayor and Councilmembers,

Please preserve and restore the “Willow Glen Trestle” to be the pedestrian bridge that connects the Three Creeks Trail to the Los Gatos Creek Trail.

[write your own letter, in your own words]

[why do you want to see the trestle saved? how is it important to you?]

Words and phrases, and facts and details that might be included:

classic, “Old Wild West”, old-growth redwood, wooden railroad bridge, owned by the City, was built by Western Pacific during 1921 and completed in 1922, served some of the canneries that once thrived here, carried Del Monte fruit cocktail to the world!, strong & sturdy, carried freight trains until recently (about 2000), in use when San José was an agricultural town and this was “the Valley of Heart’s Delight”, evocative, iconic, historic, locally significant,, focal point, “place-making”, a gateway to Willow Glen, a unique feature on our trail network.

Council will be getting an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) that discusses the restoration of the trestle (called the “Retrofit Alternative”) and also plans for demolishing our trestle and replacing it with a new prefabricated steel-truss bridge (called the “Project Alternative”).

Council will be asked to select which alternative is to be pursued. We request that you vote for the Retrofit Alternative.

[Read the EIR. The “Executive Summary” is not representative of the analyses within.]

The EIR, in great technical detail, studies the trestle and finds:

Construction cost: Trestle: $959,000; prefab steel : $1,637,000

Estimated Maintenance Costs: Trestle: $4,000/year; prefab steel: not budgeted

Construction time: Trestle: 5 months; prefab steel: 7 months

Estimated lifetime: Trestle: 30-50 years; prefab steel: 75 years (even without any maintenance?)

Flooding: Trestle: not a problem; prefab steel: not a problem. (“not significant” – During 100-year flood-event, with trestle, water level is over 10 feet below bank; with trestle removed, it is 7 inches lower. Calculations show that if a tree trunk snags on the trestle, the water level rises only a couple inches.)

Creosote: not a problem to habitat if left alone, but could be a concern if pilings are removed.

the Draft EIR doesn’t discuss Fire thoroughly:

\* Fire should not be a problem for the trestle: it is made of old-growth redwood (which is naturally very fire resistant), and the restoration plans include a sprinkler system, alarms, and a fire-retardant treatment. Three fire stations are within 2 miles, and crews have easy access to full length of the trestle. Streambed maintenance to remove debris and trim back vegetation. The trestle has a “track record”: it’s still standing after 90+ years!

\* Fire impact on the prefab steel is not discussed. Steel doesn’t burn, but it is well-known to firefighters, structural engineers, and architects that steel loses much of its strength when heated to brushfire temperatures. Draft EIR did not discuss the structural integrity of the prefab steel single-span truss design in case of brushfires. While it could be made safe, the plans do not include any sprinklers to suppress such brushfires, and there are no plans for channel maintenance or the trimming of nearby vegetation.

History:

Draft EIR says the trestle is not worthy of National or State recognition, but that is not a reason for demolishing it. SJ Historic Landmarks Commission, at 3/4/15 meeting, said that historic analysis in DEIR is insufficient, and that trestle certainly appears to be historic: they’ve asked that a discussion of possible landmark status for the trestle be on the agenda for their next meeting. Regardless, trestle is significant to us in our community: it played an important role in the very founding of the Town of Willow Glen. The Draft EIR didn’t evaluate the structure by the criteria for local recognition. Where is the historic “score-card” or “check-list”?

Discussion on the prefab steel bridge notes that “[w]hile 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.” –sorry, but fake designs and “railroad themed signs” are not a substitute for the real thing.

[Write the letter in your own words. Mix things up, add some personal thoughts. We don’t want the Mayor and Councilmembers to discount your letter as “just another form-letter”.]

[Thank the Mayor and Councilmembers, and say you look forward to their support in your effort to save an important piece your local history.]

[sign your name]

<and thank you, for writing your letter! ~Larry Ames and the Friends of the Willow Glen Trestle>