ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT (EIR) SCOPING MEETING FOR THE NEWELL ROAD/SAN FRANCISQUITO CREEK BRIDGE REPLACEMENT PROJECT

Scoping Meeting

The City of Palo Alto (City) and the City of East Palo Alto invite residents to attend the Scoping Meeting for the **Newell Road/San Francisquito Creek Bridge Replacement Project** (Project). The City is initiating an environmental study for the proposed replacement of the Newell Road Bridge over San Francisquito Creek. The environmental study will be performed in compliance with the federal National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and state California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) environmental process and culminate with the publication of a combined Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment (EIR/EA). At this Scoping Meeting, interested members of the public are encouraged to provide input on the scope of the environmental analysis to be performed and the focus and content of the EIR/EA document being prepared for the Project. Comments received at the Scoping Meeting will be incorporated into the joint environmental document (EIR/EA). The Scoping Meeting will be held at:

Palo Alto City Hall
City Council Chambers
250 Hamilton Avenue, Palo Alto
Thursday, September 3, 2015 at 6:30 pm

Project Background

The City of Palo Alto (City), in coordination with the City of East Palo Alto and the San Francisquito Creek Joint Powers Authority (SFCJPA), proposes to replace the Newell Road Bridge (herein referred to as the "bridge") over San Francisquito Creek in order to prevent flooding and to enhance the safety of motorists, bicyclists, and pedestrians. The proposed Project would also incorporate channel improvements to widen a bottleneck segment of San Francisquito Creek along the northern bank that stretches approximately 900 feet downstream of the bridge. The current bridge obstructs the flow of San Francisquito Creek during high flow events, posing a flooding hazard once replacement of the upstream bridge at Pope Street/Chaucer Street (the Pope-Chaucer Street Bridge) is completed.

Preliminary designs to replace the bridge began in 2012, and residents have shared their concerns with the design concepts at a series of community meetings. At the last community meeting held on February 27, 2014, the City identified the following five project alternatives to be analyzed in the environmental document, based on public input and the results of a technical alternatives analysis:

- Build Alternatives (all presume construction of a new bridge)
  - Alternative 1: A one (1)-lane bridge with two (2)-way traffic (under signal control) on the existing alignment of Newell Road
  - Alternative 2: A two (2)-lane bridge on the existing alignment of Newell Road
  - Alternative 3: A two (2)-lane bridge on a partial realignment of Newell Road
  - Alternative 4: A two (2)-lane bridge on a full realignment of Newell Road
- No-Build/No Action Alternative (keep existing bridge) proposes to leave the facility as it currently exists

Based on a preliminary review of the Project site and in consideration of the proposed Project activities, the City has determined that potential direct and indirect impacts related to aesthetics; biological resources; cultural resources; hydrology and water quality; land use and planning; community impacts; traffic and transportation; and cumulative impacts as a result of planned, programmed, and reasonably foreseeable growth in the area and including capital improvement projects in the San Francisquito Creek corridor, may occur as a result of

Project implementation. The City will prepare a Draft EIR pursuant to Section 15060(d) of the State CEQA Guidelines. An EA will be prepared as a joint document with the EIR (an EIR/EA), in accordance with NEPA.

Project Purpose and Need:

The purpose of the proposed Project is to:

- Protect adjacent communities from flood hazards by accommodating the 1% flow rate of San Francisquito Creek at Newell Road.
- Maintain connections for vehicular, bicycle, and pedestrian transportation across San Francisquito Creek at Newell Road while avoiding the following:
  - diversion of a significant number of vehicles to adjacent streets;
  - a significant increase in the number of vehicles using Newell Road; and,
  - an increase in average vehicle speed on Newell Road.
- Improve pedestrian and bicycle access across San Francisquito Creek at Newell Road.
- Improve safety for all modes of transportation across San Francisquito Creek at Newell Road.

The Project need is demonstrated by the following deficient conditions:

- The existing bridge is hydraulically deficient and results in flooding at high-flow levels.
- The existing bridge is classified as Functionally Obsolete (FO) because:
  - it does not safely accommodate two (2)-way vehicular traffic;
  - it does not provide safe access for pedestrians or bicyclists; and,
  - it provides poor drivability for vehicular traffic due to substandard sight distances and vertical profile.

Next Steps

Members of the public may provide EIR/EA scoping comments at the community meeting on September 3, 2015. In addition, written comments will be accepted until **Monday, September 14, 2015** and may be submitted via mail to:

City of Palo Alto
Public Works Department
Attention: Joe Teresi, Senior Engineer
RE: Newell Road Bridge
250 Hamilton Avenue
Palo Alto, California 94301

The Notice of Preparation for the Project and additional information regarding the Project may be viewed at: www.cityofpaloalto.org/newell. Comments received at the Scoping Meeting and written comments submitted to the City prior to the stated deadline will be posted to the Project website for public review by Monday, September 28th.

Project Contacts

City of Palo Alto, Public Works Department − Engineering Services Division
Email: pwecips@cityofpaloalto.org
Project Manager: Joe Teresi (650) 329-2129
Project Engineer: Rajeev Hada (650) 329-2469

ADA. Persons with disabilities who require auxiliary aids or services in using City facilities, services or programs or who would like information on the City's compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990 may contact (650) 329-2368. Sign language interpreters will be provided upon request with 72 hours in advance notice.